



# Study of the Outcomes and Impacts of the Global Forum on Migration and Development and Civil Society Days

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# Acknowledgements

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A Study of the  
Global Forum on Migration  
and Development  
and  
Civil Society Days:

**UNDERSTANDING OUTCOMES, IMPACTS,  
STRENGTHS AND GAPS IN THE GFMD AND CSD**

October, 2012

## DISCLAIMER

This publication was produced at the request of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. It was prepared independently by Richard Blue, Danielle de García, and Kristine Johnston of Social Impact, Inc. The authors' views expressed in this publication are their own; and do not necessarily reflect the views of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

# Table of Contents

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Acronyms .....	i
Executive Summary .....	ii
Introduction .....	1
Purpose.....	1
Key Evaluation Questions.....	1
Project Background.....	2
History.....	2
Structure .....	3
MacArthur Foundation Involvement .....	3
Attendees.....	4
Methods and Limitations .....	5
Design and Data Collection Methodology .....	5
Limitations and Threats to Validity .....	7
Specific Findings and Conclusions .....	9
Theory of Change.....	9
Effects on Civil Society Capacity .....	10
Effects on Civil Society/Government Relationships.....	13
CSD/GFMD External Impacts .....	18
CSD Structure and Institutional Dimensions .....	24
General Conclusions and Recommendations .....	26
Theory of Change.....	27
Effects on Civil Society Capacity .....	27
Effects on Civil Society/Government Relationships.....	28
CSD/GFMD External Impacts .....	29
CSD Institution and Structure.....	29

# Acronyms

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CS	Civil Society
CSD	Civil Society Days
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EU	European Union
FoF	Friends of the Forum
GCIM	Global Commission on International Migration
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GMG	Global Migration Group
HLD	High-Level Dialogue
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KI	Key Informant
MRI	Migrant Rights International
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OD	Organizational Development
PGA	People's Global Action
RCP	Regional Consultative Process
SG	Steering Group
SI	Social Impact
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research

# Executive Summary

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## Evaluation Purpose and Methods

In November 2011, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and accompanying Civil Society Days (CSD) completed their fifth year of operation, with the aim of improving migration policy coherence and enhancing the benefits of migration to sending and receiving countries, and to migrants themselves. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the largest non-governmental donor to this process, commissioned this study to retrospectively assess the outcomes and impact of the CSD and GFMD on policies, practices, issue framing, and government-civil society cooperation; and to prospectively draw lessons learned for the future of the GFMD and CSD.

The evaluation took place from November 2011 through September 2012, allowing the team to observe the CSD and GFMD in Geneva, conduct an in-depth case study in Mexico, distribute online surveys to participants, conduct interviews at the UN offices in New York, and conduct key informant interviews by phone. Using a mixed method approach, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative key informant interviews and an extensive document review, the team has worked to triangulate data and strengthen the validity of findings.

This study is geared towards the main stakeholders of the GFMD and CSD, including governments, civil society representatives, and donors. It is hoped that the aforementioned stakeholders will be able to utilize the findings, conclusions, and recommendations within this report to better inform their work in migration and development moving forward – both within and outside of the GFMD and CSD processes.

## CSD/GFMD Background

The issues of migration and development, migrant rights, and international migration have risen rapidly on the international policy agenda since the mid-1990s, but have lacked a coherent global institutional framework to guide work in the field. The GFMD as a formal mechanism emerged from the first UN General Assembly High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2006. It was decided that the GFMD would not have a decision-making mandate and would be linked to the UN, but would operate as a process outside of the UN system. As such, the GFMD emerged as a voluntary state-led process dedicated to informal, non-binding dialogue. A parallel demand for civil society involvement led to the development of the Civil Society Days, held directly prior to the states-led meeting, with contributions from private foundations, governments, and international organizations.

## Conclusions

In the full version of this report, the following statements have been augmented by specific conclusions based on the findings for each of the questions investigated by the evaluation team. The findings supporting these general conclusions are presented in the body of this report.

### Purpose of GFMD & CSD

Different expectations among and between civil society and government actors stem largely from the lack of a clearly articulated and generally accepted set of objectives, assumptions, and causal hierarchy for the Civil Society Days, which has caused a good deal of frustration on the part of government and civil society representatives.

### Effects on Civil Society Capacity

Networking and knowledge building efforts among civil society actors have been largely successful within the CSD framework, while capacity building and access to government by CSOs have enjoyed a far lesser degree of success. Given the presence of additional processes and organizations which also provide networking and knowledge building to CSOs, some civil society actors question the value added by the CSD.

### Effects on Civil Society/Government Relationships

Data regarding the impact of the CSD and GFMD on civil society and government collaboration are mixed. While there are specific examples of collaboration between civil society actors and member states resulting at least in part from participation in the forum, and more than 30% of surveyed participants believe the CSD/GFMD collaboration has been fairly or very impactful, nearly the same percentage believe there had been very little evidence of impact. This is predominantly due to the fact that the ability of the CSD and GFMD to contribute to collaboration depends largely on external factors, such as the political, economic, and social context within each member state.

### External Impacts

Much of the ability of civil society to influence the agenda of the GFMD occurs during preparatory meetings, while their ability to influence the migration agenda occurs largely at the national level outside of the GFMD process. While most civil society representatives do not feel their issues are adequately incorporated into the states-led discussion, the perspective does seem to have improved in recent years.

A few distinct policies, projects, and policies are reported to have benefited from the CSD/GFMD. However, the ability of the meetings to produce finite policy and project outcomes is a source of both debate and frustration due to differing expectations regarding the goals of the CSD and GFMD.

### CSD Structure and Institutional Dimensions

While 2011 marked a significant positive development in the institutional structure of the Civil Society Days, there remains considerable room for improvement. In particular, there is a need for enhanced sustainability, continuity, and dialogue between different actors (both through enhanced representation of different types of civil society representatives and increased dialogue between government, civil society, and private sector actors). The ideal structure of the CSD cannot be



specified however, as whatever structure is chosen will need to advance an identified theory of change for the process<sup>1</sup>.

## Recommendations

- Stakeholders should consider developing a clearly articulated program design and monitoring process grounded in a credible and validated theory of change. The result will be a more realistic program strategy and implementation process informed and adjusted by a robust and useful program monitoring system. The theory of change should be communicated to all participants and outside stakeholders to ensure that expectations are properly aligned, and that structural and thematic considerations feed into the desired objectives.
- The CSD should consider developing a strategy and program implementation process that supports some form of continuous interaction between CSOs and government, with investment in relevant organizational capacity, advocacy and negotiation skills for CSOs at the national level.
- In any future programs designed to bring widely diverse and varying interests, organizations and responsibilities together to promote a productive dialogue and positive change, it will be important to make sure that the right organizations and representatives are in the room.
- For any continuing program involving the promotion of migrant rights and/or development, develop and/or support two essential elements: 1) a structure by which dialogue can occur in both sending and receiving countries, and 2) a monitoring and information management process by which progress, and problems, can be identified and shared with a wider array of stakeholders in civil society and in governments.
- Consider supporting an international panel made up of CSO and lead government representatives to examine, with the support of the ICMC, the GFMD process and the content of this and other evaluation and research studies, to determine the specific objectives, most effective program design to achieve those objectives, and a sustainable source of financial support.

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<sup>1</sup> A theory of change is an important component of the original program design process, by which the designers invest in an in-depth understanding of the problem to be resolved, and the specific outcomes and objectives to be achieved. Once objectives have been determined, which may be as simple as 'enhanced dialogue', the application of a theory of change specifies what actions, investments, organizational structures and processes need to be introduced to motivate and produce the desired results. Underlying assumptions are identified, if-then hypotheses are constructed, the positions and aspirations of various stakeholders are understood, and the constraints and/or threats to achievement of desired results are anticipated and countered.



## **I. Introduction:**

### **Purpose**

In November of 2011, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and accompanying Civil Society Days (CSD) completed their fifth year of operation, with the aim of improving migration policy coherence and enhancing the benefits of migration to sending and receiving countries and to migrants themselves. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has been the largest non-governmental donor to this process, and has provided a total of \$3.338 million in grant support over the past five years. Given the level of support, the changing context of the Foundation's Migration Initiative, and the upcoming UN High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, the MacArthur Foundation commissioned this evaluation to retrospectively assess the outcomes and impact of the CSD/GFMD on policies, practices, issue framing, and government-civil society cooperation; and to prospectively draw lessons learned for the future of the GFMD and CSD. This study is parallel to the evaluation being conducted via a states-led process and has a special emphasis on the role of civil society within the GFMD process.

This study is geared towards the main stakeholders of the GFMD and CSD, including governments, civil society representatives, and donors. A similar report will be presented to an internal MacArthur Foundation audience, and will include all information in this report. It is hoped that the aforementioned stakeholders will be able to utilize the findings, conclusions, and recommendations within this report to better inform their work in migration and development moving forward – both within and beyond the GFMD and CSD processes.

### **Key Evaluation Questions**

The evaluation team used the following Terms of Reference (ToR) questions to guide their data collection. They have been re-grouped below to better analyze findings and determine practical recommendations.

1. To what extent did the CSD strengthen civil society capacity? (Capacity here includes networking and knowledge sharing.)
2. What have been the effects of the CSD/GFMD on the relationship between civil society and governments?
  - a. To what extent has the CSD contributed to better collaboration between government and civil society on issues of migration and development and on migrants' rights?
  - b. What are the channels of influence for CS input into government policy?
3. What have been the external effects of the CSD/GFMD?
  - a. To what extent have they helped impact the substance and framing of policy debates?
  - b. To what extent have they helped to shape the policy agenda?
  - c. To what extent have they contributed to actual policies on migration and development?
  - d. To what extent have they influenced the priorities of donors on migration?

4. To what extent is the institutional structure effective?
  - a. How can civil society input into global migration debates be effectively organized in the future?
  - b. Has the governance structure of the CSD been effective?
  - c. What are future funding opportunities, should the CSD continue?
5. What are the greatest achievements of the GFMD, and specifically of the CSD? Its greatest failings?

## II. Project Background

### History

The issues of migration and development, migrant rights, and international migration have risen rapidly on the international policy agenda since the mid-1990s. As these themes have large implications with respect to nations' sovereignty and borders, individual rights, and international cooperation, the issues surrounding migration and development are complex and have often been polarizing. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, the field lacks a coherent, global institutional framework to guide its dialogue and work.

The GFMD as a formal mechanism emerged from the first UN General Assembly High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2006. The run-up to the dialogue, including the work of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), contributed to the development of that outcome, with discussions of some of the options and considerations for such a mechanism. While the influence of the GCIM and then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan were apparent in the development of the GMFD, there were a number of actors involved with differing ideas regarding the objectives, processes, and themes which would be linked to such a forum.

Migration and development as thematic areas were combined in an effort to ensure both countries of origin and countries of destination would participate. A key reason for including development in this discussion was the reluctance of some governments, particularly those which primarily receive migrants, to engage in multilateral discussions regarding migration. As the topics are inherently linked, and the UN had combined these topics previously, the grouping was a logical one. Due to the nature of migration and its implications as mentioned above, it was determined that the GFMD would not have a decision-making mandate and would be linked to the UN, but would operate as a process outside of the UN system. As such, the GFMD emerged as a voluntary state-led process dedicated to informal, non-binding dialogue.

Various UN representatives, civil society actors, and key government representatives, particularly from Belgium, insisted that civil society involvement was necessary to ensure credibility of such a mechanism. While no specific objectives for civil society involvement were specified, stakeholders maintained that input from civil society was needed to ground the discussions in the realities migrants were facing; and that civil society participation could both inform the state-led discussion and build off of it. Based on these contributions, the Civil Society Days emerged as a meeting held

directly prior to the states-led meeting, with financial and organizational support from private foundations, governments, and international organizations.

**Figure 1: Hosts and Themes by Year**

Year	GFMD Host Country	CSD Host/Organizer	Notable Themes
2007	Belgium	King Baudouin Foundation	Labor mobility, remittances
2008	Philippines	Ayala Foundation	Migrant rights
2009	Greece	Alexander Onassis Benefit Foundation	Migrant integration and reintegration
2010	Mexico	BBVA Bancomer Foundation	Partnerships, irregular migration
2011	Switzerland	ICMC	Evidence basis, labor mobility, irregular migration
2012	Mauritius	ICMC	Protection, human development

## Structure

Currently, the GFMD and CSD have slightly different operating modalities and supporting frameworks. The GFMD's operating modalities were first set up in Brussels in 2007, and currently include the Steering Group (SG), the Troika, the Friends of the Forum (FoF), and a Support Unit. The Troika includes the past, current, and future Chairs, while the Steering Group includes a number of governments which lend support to the Chair. The Friends of the Forum is a much larger group, including all state members as well as UN observers. The chairmanship alternates each year between developing and developed countries; and they are supported by the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN for International Migration and Development. The Support Unit was established in 2009, and aids with administrative and logistical tasks. The majority of the preparatory work for each iteration of the GFMD falls on the host government for that year.

The Civil Society Days have much less structure, and changed significantly in 2011. For the first four iterations of the CSD, the host government for the year designated a philanthropic foundation based in the home country to be responsible for organizing the CSD. In 2011, with support from the Swiss and Mauritian Chairs and the MacArthur Foundation, a Civil Society Coordinating Office was established under the auspices of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC). The Coordinating Office is supported by the International Advisory Committee for Civil Society, which is composed of a number of civil society leaders who advise and assist in preparations.

Both ways of organizing the CSD have been the subject of previous surveys and were included in the evaluation questions of this report. As such, their effectiveness will be explored further in the findings section of this report.

## MacArthur Foundation Involvement

The MacArthur Foundation has been intimately involved with the GFMD since its inception, providing grants to the host governments (or other activities relating to the intergovernmental

meeting), the CSD, and the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) on International Migration and Development to support the UN-GFMD link. This support has included grants for each of the elements mentioned above; as well as for complementary activities such as research and development of background papers, consultations on specific topics, and trainings for civil society representatives. This support began in the MacArthur Foundation’s Initiative on Global Migration and Human Mobility and is now a part of its newer cross-foundation Migration program area, formed to integrate work on global migration and the Central America-Mexico-U.S. migration corridor with new grant-making on U.S. immigration policy.

**Figure 2: MacArthur Foundation Monetary Support by Year (in USD)**

Year	CSD Support	Government Support	UN Support	Total
2006-2007	\$152,000	\$50,000	\$239,000	\$441,000
2008	\$450,000	\$236,000	\$152,000	\$838,000
2009	\$400,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$650,000
2010	\$250,000	\$136,000	\$100,000	\$486,000
2011	\$125,000	\$0	\$213,000	\$338,000
2012	\$125,000	\$220,000	\$240,000	\$585,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,502,000</b>	<b>\$742,000</b>	<b>\$1,094,000</b>	<b>\$3,338,000</b>

### Attendees

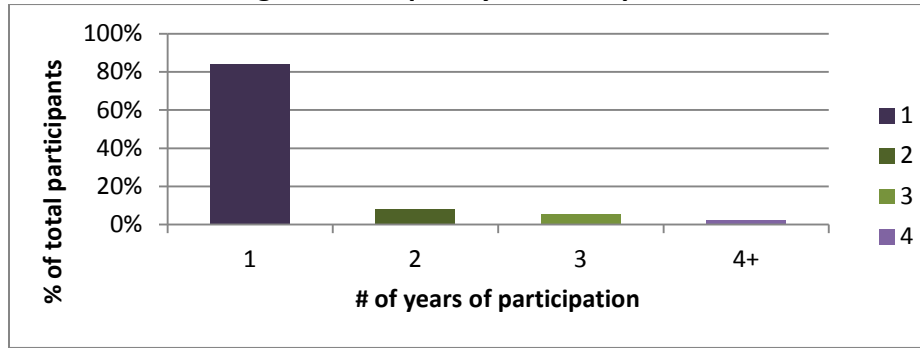
Attendees to the CSD have varied throughout the years, as organizers attempt to ensure there is a balance between sending and receiving countries, geographic distribution, thematic areas of focus, and financial considerations.

**Figure 3: Number of CSD Attendees by Region**

	Africa	Asia	Europe & Eurasia	Latin America & the Caribbean	Middle East & North Africa	North America	Oceania	Total
2007	21	20	87	13	6	42	0	189
2008	13	40	67	26	11	31	4	192
2009	18	44	139	15	15	75	2	308
2010	49	42	107	26	7	248	5	484
2011	24	23	64	11	7	32	2	163
<b>All Years</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1,336</b>

There is a high rate of turnover for both CSD and GFMD participants, with the vast majority of participants attending only one iteration of the process.

**Figure 4: Frequency of Participation**



While turnover is somewhat intentional, as organizing bodies attempt to ensure new voices are heard, it also leads to limitations in retaining institutional knowledge.

### III. Methods and Limitations

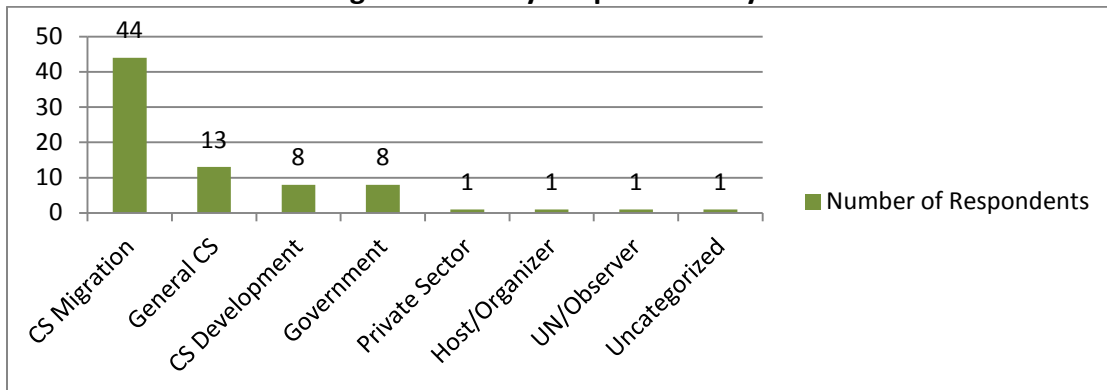
#### Design and Data Collection Methodology

The team used a mixed-method evaluation approach, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative in-depth key informant interviews, program observation, a case study, and document review to strengthen the validity of the findings. This approach allowed the evaluators to obtain and document results beyond participants' perceptions about their experience with the GFMD and CSD.

The evaluation took place from November 2011 through September 2012, allowing the team to observe the CSD and GFMD in Geneva, conduct an in-depth case study in Mexico, distribute online surveys to participants, conduct interviews at the UN offices in New York, and conduct key informant interviews by phone. Specifically, the evaluators conducted the following data collection activities:

1. Desk Review. This review included the agendas, background papers, and recommendations made from each CSD and GFMD meeting from 2007-2011. It also included relevant technical documents, MacArthur Foundation grant documents, previous survey data and reports, and other relevant content-specific materials and assessments.

**Figure 5: Survey Respondents by Field**



2. Electronic Survey. The evaluation team, along with input from the MacArthur Foundation, developed an electronic survey which was piloted and distributed to a randomly selected sample of 618 civil society participants and observers.<sup>2</sup> Of the 94 people who responded, only 61 participants filled out the complete survey, representing an 11.7% response rate overall.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 6: Survey Participants' Involvement with GFMD<sup>4</sup>**

	Civil Society Days	GFMD (State)	Observer	Active in organizing meetings and process	Participated in development of background papers	Response count
2007	85% (17)	10% (2)	15% (3)	40% (8)	30% (6)	20
2008	86.2% (25)	17.2% (5)	10/3% (3)	34.5% (10)	17.2% (5)	29
2009	86.2% (25)	10.3% (3)	6.9% (2)	34.5% (10)	20.7% (6)	29
2010	87.9% (29)	27.3% (9)	24.2% (8)	42.4% (14)	24.2% (8)	33
2011	85.3% (29)	23.5% (8)	17.6% (6)	20.6% (7)	11.8% (4)	34
<b>Total</b>						

3. Semi-Structured Key Informant Interviews. 65 individual and paired interviews were conducted with civil society representatives, academics, CSD/GFMD organizers, UN officials, government representatives, and observers. Interviewees included 28 civil society representatives and participants, 13 observers of the CSD (from the UN, IOM, and other

<sup>2</sup> SI originally randomly selected 500 participants from the master list of (N=1,336) CSD participants from all five years. 100 respondents were chosen from each year, through a systematic random sampling method. Respondents who appeared on the list more than once were then replaced with someone else from the same year. From the initial email to 500 recipients, 72 email addresses were non-functioning. The team identified the invalid email addresses and replaced them with participants from the same year who had not yet received the survey. When an additional 20 email addresses were invalid, the process was repeated but with extra addresses included under the assumption that some would not be deliverable. The final result was that 618 emails were sent, with 102 non-deliverable, for a total sample size of 516.

<sup>3</sup> As a point of comparison with similar surveys, there were forty-eight respondents to the Future of the Forum survey, with 37 respondents providing answers to every question. The States-led GFMD survey had 66 member states responding. As it was sent out to a smaller number of participants (a possible 140 states), the response rate was 47%. For the accompanying survey of observers, the response rate was 22%. Further information regarding the low response to this electronic survey is included under the 'Limitations and Threats to Validity' section.

<sup>4</sup> Participants marked all applicable categories and, as such, figures are not mutually exclusive by year or level of participation.



international organizations), 6 representatives from private foundations hosting CSDs, and 18 government officials.

4. Direct Observation. Observation of CSD and GFMD sessions were carried out in November of 2011 at the meetings in Geneva. This included the two-day CSD meeting as well as the two-day states-led discussion. This observation allowed the evaluation team to better understand the context in which the process takes place, particularly with respect to logistical implementation and dynamics among key stakeholders.
5. Case Study. The team conducted one case study in Mexico in July 2012. The evaluator used this opportunity to speak with key civil society and government representatives, and to delve further into a number of the ToR questions.

### **Limitations and Threats to Validity**

Despite the triangulated approach to data collection and analysis, the evaluation team encountered a number of limitations. This study did not utilize a comparison group against which to measure civil society organizations and/or government relationships for a number of reasons. Those groups and individuals who participate in the CSD and GFMD processes may well be more motivated and/or influential in the migration and development sphere than those who do not participate, providing self-selection bias and thereby limiting the ability to define a naturally valid comparison group. While the team could have compared country outcomes for those countries which were more and/or less involved in the CSD/GFMD process, the social, political, and economic contexts of each country vary significantly and would not have yielded statistically significant results. As such, it is not possible to firmly attribute impact beyond self-reported changes and outcomes.

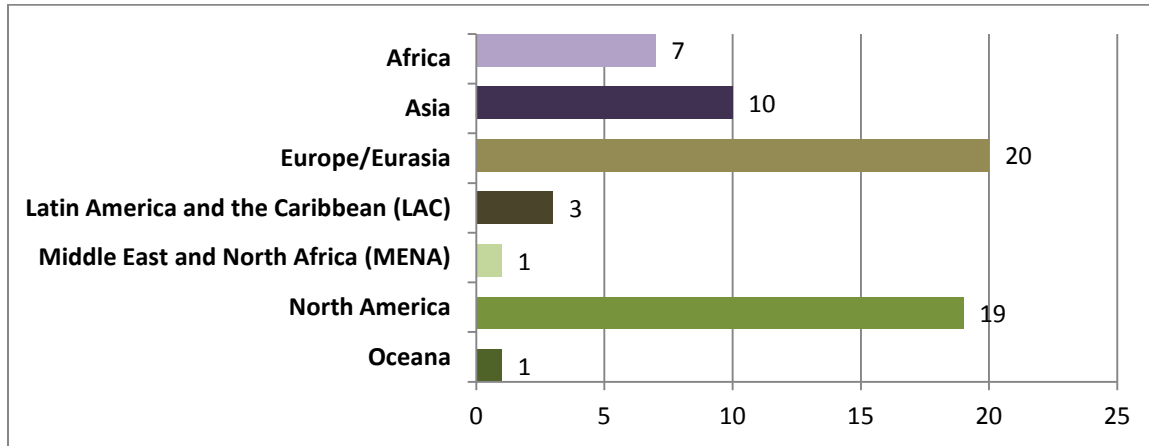
The team also faced difficulties in obtaining complete information in a timely manner. Government, observer, and civil society sources all provided insight and secondary documentation throughout the evaluation process, but there was no one source which had compiled relevant documents, previous assessments and/or studies. As such, the team learned of new key informants, previously conducted studies, and outside networks throughout the course of the evaluation process. Therefore, some data which were communicated later in the process were not able to be fully incorporated into the analysis.

Similarly, there was no comprehensive database of past CSD and government participants; and there were a number of inconsistencies in how the organizers recorded participant information. Contact information for participants was often inaccurate, outdated, or incomplete. As a result, roughly 16% of distributed surveys were unable to be delivered; and there was a low response rate (11.7%) for those which were delivered. There was likely a good deal of survey fatigue with respondents; and this is a factor to be considered in assessing bias<sup>5</sup>. Those who completed the survey over-represented certain geographic regions; namely, Europe/Eurasia and North America.

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<sup>5</sup> Many respondents noted that they had filled out a number of surveys in the past, dealing with similar issues. These surveys were either directly related to the CSD/GFMD (such as the Future of the Forum survey), or were undertaken by researchers or others interested in understanding the contribution of these processes to the larger

**Figure 7: Number of Respondents by Region**



The survey respondents who fully completed the survey skew towards participants who had been active in numerous iterations of the process and are active within networks and groups outside of the GFMD. 92% of completed surveys were done by participants who also belong to and/or participate in other forums and networks relating to migration and development issues, including People’s Global Action (PGA), national and regional networks, and the World Social Forum on Migration. Both survey respondents and interviewees are not fully representative of the larger database of participants, as the majority of respondents and interviewees had participated in the CSD/GFMD for multiple years, whereas more than 80% of CSD participants have only attended one iteration of the process. Therefore, one-time attendees are underrepresented, while those who have been involved throughout the cycle are strongly overrepresented<sup>6</sup>. Geographically, the percentage of survey respondents from each region was very closely aligned with the percentage of actual CSD participants. That stated, given the small number of respondents, the team is unable to characterize those responses as representative of the regions.

Given the nature of the GFMD as a voluntary process which does not have a decision-making mandate, the team encountered a good deal of difficulty getting governments to respond to questions regarding impact or follow-up to recommendations. Similarly, although certain government officials were very open and comprehensive in their responses, others would not respond to requests for interviews or surveys. While the limited access to government representatives may have an impact on the data, the team actively pursued discussions with other government contacts in an attempt to mitigate this bias. The lack of access or willingness to speak with the evaluation team is telling, and therefore is also discussed as an intermediate finding in Section IV below.

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migration and development debate. Given this, the team expected somewhat low response rates but it should be noted that those who continue to respond to requests for information may or may not be representative of the broader base of participants.

<sup>6</sup> While the views of our respondents do not represent the universe of CSD participants, they may represent the universe of activists who have attended multiple CSDs and are active in additional networks and forums.

A final limitation to note is the change in the originally-issued Terms of Reference. As the MacArthur Foundation decided to conduct one case study rather than the three originally anticipated, less in-depth data was available for some of the questions for which those case studies were expected to answer. Given the number and frankness of interviewees, and the abundance of supplementary documentation, the evaluation team is confident in the findings and conclusions made in the report below, but it is possible that other findings could have been uncovered with more data or with more representative data.

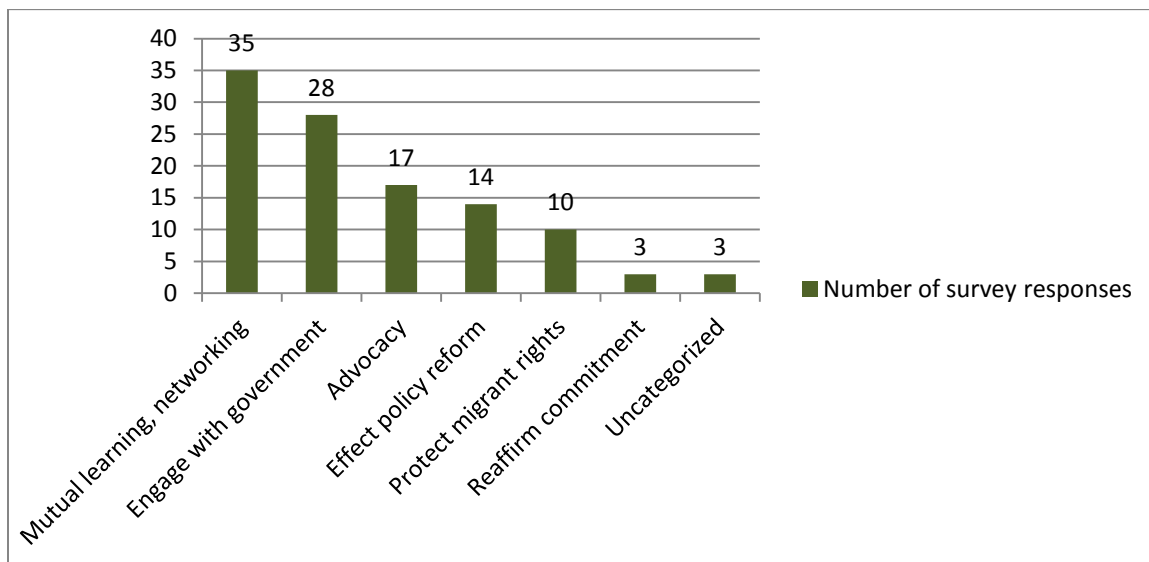
#### IV. Specific Findings and Conclusions

This section is divided according to the five main evaluation question groupings listed in Section I. Here, the evaluation team lists the specific findings and conclusions associated with each. Overarching conclusions and recommendations are included in Section V of this document.

##### A. Theory of Change

The evaluation team found the lack of an explicit theory of change for the Civil Society Days to be a major finding of this study. Goals, objectives, and assumptions were not clearly laid out from the outset of this process, and participants from civil society, government, and outside organizations all stated that this significantly affected their perceptions and the impact of the CSD and GFMD.

**Figure 8: Most Frequently Recognized Objectives of the CSD**



When asked what they saw as the major goals or objectives of the CSD, participant views varied widely – ranging from discussions on policy reform and advocacy to mutual learning and networking with other civil society groups. Similarly, participant perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the CSD and GFMD varied greatly depending on their measures of success. That is, those who believed the goals of the CSD were to network rated the CSD as much more successful than their counterparts who hoped for policy and regulatory changes resulting from the process. Many who

demonstrated frustration, both civil society and from government officials, acknowledged that much of the frustration stemmed from differences in expectations among those involved.

**Key Conclusion:**

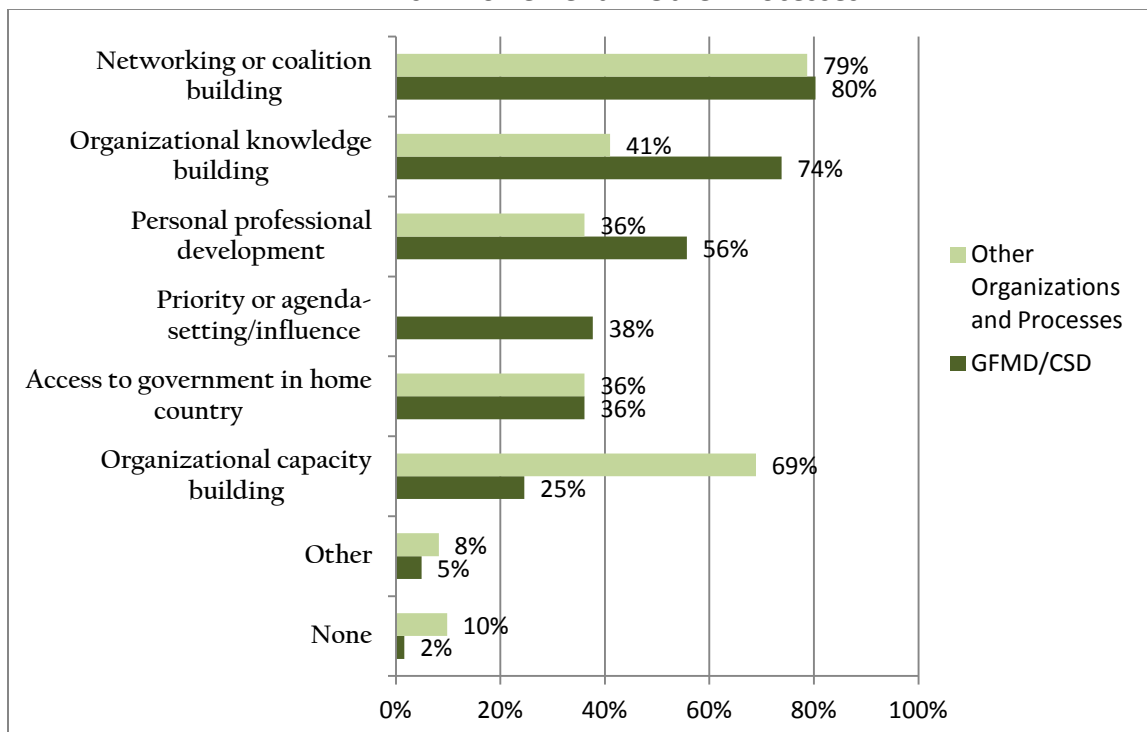
- ❖ Different expectations among and between civil society and government actors stems largely from the lack of a clearly defined and generally accepted theory of change for the Civil Society Days, which has caused frustration on the part of government and civil society representatives.

**B. Effects on Civil Society Capacity**

One of the main objectives of this study was to assess the outcomes and impact on the actual CSOs participating in the Civil Society Days. Specifically, the evaluation team looked at the how the CSD/GFMD contributed to civil society networking, boosted knowledge among CS stakeholders, and enhanced organizations’ work and ability to achieve their objectives. An additional question of how well the CSD/GFMD enhanced the ability of CS groups to influence their national governments is addressed in a subsequent section.

**Networking**

**Figure 9: Survey Responses to Benefits of CSD/GFMD Involvement vs. Involvement in Other Processes**



The biggest benefit of the CSD highlighted in both key informant interviews and in the survey was networking. 80.3% of survey respondents said that networking was a benefit of the CSD for their organization, and they listed a host of organizations with whom they were able to network,

including migrant worker groups, faith-based groups, researchers and experts, government representatives, groups doing similar work in other countries and regions, development organizations, funders, and activists. This is consistent with key informant interviews, which indicated that networking was both an objective of the CSD as well as one of the key successes and benefits of the process.

Although many interviewees stated that the CSD provided a space to interact with counterparts they otherwise would not have met, it is interesting to note that almost the same percentage of respondents, 78.7%, indicated that there were other organizations and/or processes that also provided networking opportunities outside of the GFMD and CSD. The People's Global Action (PGA) was indicated to be an important networking arena, although respondents and interviewees noted that the PGA involved a different group of actors, and would not have been possible without the GFMD (primarily because many attendees were able to participate due to funds to attend the CSD from the MacArthur Foundation and others). Other opportunities for networking mentioned were UN agencies, academic networks and forums, Migrant Rights International, and regional coordination bodies.

Some respondents said that the CSD was unique in allowing attendees to network on a global scale. Furthermore, the nature of the GFMD is somewhat distinctive in allowing migration actors to interact with development actors, although there seems to be a lack of representation from the development community, and it is not clear to what extent the two communities (migration and development) have networked and collaborated. Of the more than 60 survey respondents, for example, only 8 represented organizations that focus on the development field. Civil society participation, as gleaned from the participant lists over the past five years, corroborates this lack of representation from the development community.

“Learning the practices, policies and experiences of migration in a wide range of countries provides a unique point of perspective for the Irish experience - this is experience that we often get through research and academic sources, but welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues with civil society groups on the ground in other countries to see the real perspective.”

– CS participant from Ireland

In addition to acknowledging that networking was a key component of CSD/GFMD, CSO representatives listed several ways that networking specifically benefited their organization. Some indicated that they gained important insights and ideas from organizations working in similar areas. Others said that they gained courage and confidence from seeing other organizations facing similar challenges. Because the majority of survey respondents and interviewees noted networking and knowledge sharing as a primary objective of the CSD, many of those participants believed the CSD was successful in achieving this important goal.

On the other hand, given that there are many other opportunities for networking, though perhaps not at the same scale as CSD/GFMD, many civil society representatives wondered whether or not networking is worth the high cost of attending the Forum. It seems to be an especially relevant question in 2011 and 2012, where the GFMD was held in costly Geneva and will be held in distant

Mauritius. While networking appears to be thriving, it has primarily been among CSOs, rather than between governments and civil society. This will be further discussed in Section C, but it is important to note that there is a growing feeling that networking among CSOs is not sufficient motivation for some organizations to participate, particularly as funding sources decrease. Several people stated that there were less costly ways (in time and money) to achieve networking and therefore CSD participation was not worth the costs. Similarly, once the networks are established, they can be maintained without the cost of the CSD each year; and as a result some state that the value of the CSD may have already been realized. If that is the case, participants wonder what the added value of continued participation is.

### **Knowledge Building**

The second most important benefit for participants was knowledge building, with 73.8% indicating that their organization gained knowledge through attending the CSD. One way in which organizations grew their internal knowledge was through preparing for the CSD, reading background papers, and through consultations with governments. The comparative aspect was also a substantial benefit – organizations could see what other actors are doing in other countries and could learn from their experiences. The ability to have open discussions with a multitude of stakeholders was seen as extremely beneficial for expanding organizations' sphere of knowledge. In addition, the Forum allows those working in specific areas or regions to become more aware of the trends and issues in migration and development at large. Again, however, a large number of participants noted that other organizations and/or processes exist which also provide knowledge-building opportunities. In this regard, the CSD will have to look at where its competitive advantage is in providing knowledge building benefits to participants.

### **Access to Government**

Thoughts on whether or not the GFMD and CSD provided increased access to government were mixed. Only 36.1% of respondents listed access to government as a benefit of the CSD. This is important since the majority of survey respondents listed interaction with government, whether in the form of advocacy, dialogue, or policy reform, as one of the main objectives of the CSD. Therefore, access to government seems to be the largest gap on the civil society side between expectations and experience. The ability of CSOs to interact with their home government seems to depend largely on the government and how open it is (not just at the Forum but throughout the year) to CSO input and engagement. Most interviewees indicated that the opportunity to interact with governments was a major draw of the CSD, but some felt that CSOs were getting frustrated with the lack of progress on that front. One respondent explained that networking among CSOs was useful, but after several years of participation he decided that it wasn't worth the time and cost to come to the GFMD and to not be able to interact with government decision makers.

Additional discussion on the interaction between civil society and governments is provided throughout this study, particularly in Section C below.

## Capacity building

This category was highlighted by the smallest percentage of respondents (24.6%) as a benefit of their organization's participation in the CSD. This is consistent with the findings from the key informant interviews, where most respondents listed networking and knowledge building as key aspects but said that CSOs were not actually given any tools for improving their ability to advocate for their cause, implement programs more effectively, or influence government policy. Not surprisingly, CSD participants felt that they gained personal professional development from the CSD process. When asked for specifics, many listed their new personal contacts from other organizations as well as increased individual knowledge about global issues. They clarified that statement, however, stating that individual knowledge gain did not necessarily transfer to organizational capacity building or an improvement in practical skill sets.

Similarly, there were mixed responses regarding the extent to which civil society as a whole had improved as a result of the CSD and GFMD. Due to networking gains, some participants noted they had increased ability to coordinate with a wider variety of CS actors. Others stated that they had new contacts, but that their ability to leverage those relationships to effect change was relatively low. Likewise, most interviewees again highlighted the importance of factors outside of the GFMD and CSD (including political, social, and security issues) in allowing them to work together collectively to achieve change in the migration and development fields.

When prompted for suggestions for improvement, some indicated that an orientation to the GFMD would help familiarize CSOs with the process and give them tools for interacting with government representatives. Similarly, less than half of the responding CS participants noted that they knew of other options to build organizational capacity. As such, depending on the true goals of the CSD, there may be room to build upon this gap to provide civil society organizations with best practices in financial management, communication, advocacy, and evidence-based decision-making. Key informant interviews indicate that this would be particularly beneficial for migrant organizations, who have not participated in forums of this scale to the same extent as development and larger advocacy organizations.

### Key Conclusion:

- ❖ Networking and knowledge building efforts have been largely successful within the CSD framework, while capacity building and access to government have enjoyed a far lesser degree of success. Given the presence of additional processes and organizations which also provide networking and knowledge building to CSOs, it will be important for the CSD to determine where its competitive advantage lies within this area.

## C. Effects on Civil Society/Government Relationships

Although the Civil Society Days were not a part of the GMFD as originally conceived and, as we've found here, did not have clearly prioritized objectives articulated from the start, they have evolved over the years to become a critical space for civil society representatives to interact with governments, according to about one third of respondents. In 2008 the CSD was expanded from one

day to two days, and in Mexico in 2010 the format changed to include a scheduled "Common Space" which created time for governments and civil society to interact. The Common Space, which operated a bit differently in 2011, occurs during the states-led discussion and invites civil society representatives to interact in the same space as the government representatives. The evaluation team's interviews with UN officials, civil society participants, and government representatives made it clear that this access to government was one of the main incentives for civil society to attend the CSD, as noted above.

Despite the increased space for civil society to interact with governments at the GFMD, impressions have been mixed on the effectiveness of the approach. On the one hand, it is clear that governments in general have become more open to having civil society at the GFMD. In addition, many people who have attended the CSD explained that interaction between the two groups has improved over the years as civil society has learned better methods for presenting their positions, and the Common Space has become more of a presentation of suggested policies and reforms than an unproductive expression of frustration, blame, and a pointing of fingers.

On the other hand, the level of collaboration at the GFMD seems to depend largely on the particular government. Some governments are still fairly hostile to the idea of civil society organizations being present at the forum, while other governments have taken advantage of the opportunity to arrange meetings of exchange between their CSOs and government representatives. A good example of this evolution is in the United States, where state actors did not formally participate in the GFMD during its first two years of operation. In recent years, however, the U.S. Government has sent several representatives from the Department of State, USAID, and other agencies; and organizes a time during the GFMD to meet with U.S.-based CSOs. Many noted the national-level meetings occurring over lunch or after hours as one of the most important aspects of the CSD, despite the fact that only a small number of governments exercise this option. As mentioned above, however, the governments arranging these types of interactions are often the ones which interact outside of the forum as well – demonstrating a need for CSD/GFMD interaction on a more consistent or structured basis for those countries where this does not occur as frequently.

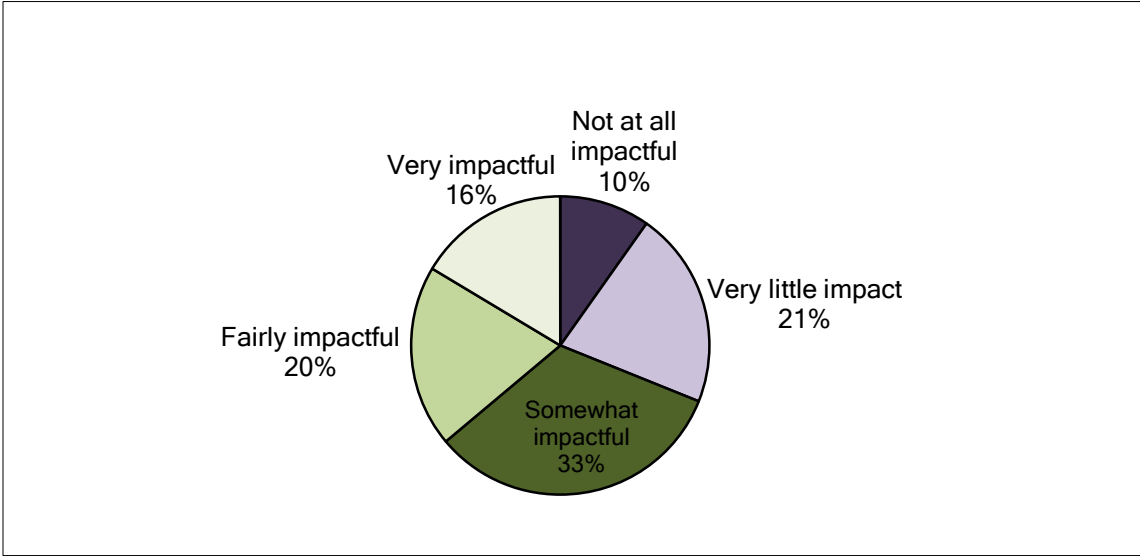
There is also variation depending on the actual officials who attend, and there has been a high turnover among government representatives from year to year. This is truer for government representatives than for civil society representatives, but does create difficulties in building on momentum and relationships established in previous iterations of the GFMD.

While the collaboration between the two groups at the GFMD and/or CSD is undoubtedly a good thing, it is collaboration between the two groups *outside* of the CSD events that is the specific objective. The evaluation team found a wide array of viewpoints among all respondents regarding the degree to which the CSD enhanced collaboration among CSOs and their home governments. Of the survey respondents, 16% said that the CSD was "very impactful," while 20% said "fairly impactful" and 33% said "somewhat impactful." A similar proportion felt negatively about the impact, with 21% saying there has been very little impact and 10% saying there has been no impact at all. These responses seem to be contingent on the respondent's interpretation of the word "collaboration". Open ended responses and interviews revealed that respondents who understood



collaboration as simply interacting with their home government during the GFMD and having the opportunity to present their ideas rated this question more favorably than those who perceived collaboration as a long-term, ongoing process of government and civil society interactions.

**Figure 10: Extent to Which CSD has Contributed to Government/Civil Society Collaboration**



While many had difficulty naming precise policy impact, some respondents gave specific examples of collaboration with their host country outside of the CSD that have produced concrete results and the incorporation of CSO ideas in government policy.

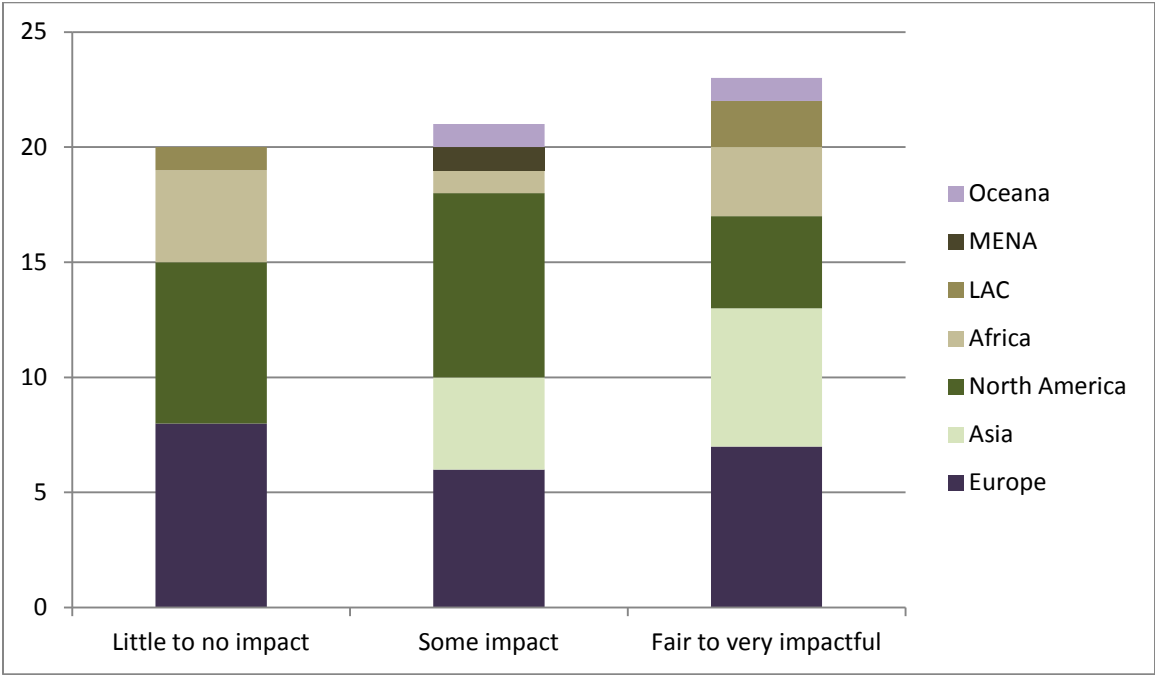
- In Bangladesh the government holds national consultations with civil society prior to the GFMD. This has, according to one survey respondent, “cemented further partnerships between the CS and the government” and has led to progress on a number of national migration and employment policies.
- In the United States, the State Department has hosted consultations in Washington since 2010. These have not, to the respondent’s knowledge, produced actual policy change, but have been “valuable exchanges of information”, according to one civil society participant.
- In Nepal, civil society does extensive preparation and presents their recommendations to the government prior to the GFMD. Civil society also organizes a follow-up meeting between the two groups after the GFMD.
- In the Philippines, CSOs have taken the knowledge gained in the CSD and used it to contribute to government discussion, for example in the Remittance and Development Council.
- In Mexico, civil society has observed and participated in the legislative process of creating a new law to regulate Mexican migration. The collaboration has been strengthened by skills CS gained in the CSD (particularly knowledge about the policy making process), though many remain frustrated that certain recommendations were not incorporated.

In some of the above instances, it seems fairly clear that the GFMD directly prompted governments to consult civil society. In other instances, it is harder to discern whether the collaboration between civil society and governments is a result of the GFMD or if the government has traditionally been more involved with civil society and migration issues and therefore the same collaboration would have taken place regardless of participation. Certainly, the examples of the U.S., the Philippines, and Mexico are among those countries more generally open to and supportive of dialogue with civil society organizations on a wide variety of issues.

On the other end of the spectrum, those respondents who thought that the CSD have had very little or no impact on civil society-government collaboration gave examples from their own experience. In general, those examples focus on two reasons why collaboration has failed:

- A government approach to the CSD that was more about “image promotion” than substantial exchange; and
- Unwillingness by governments to engage civil society (both at the CSD and at home) and/or a general disinterest in migration issues.

**Figure 11: Impact of Collaboration**



While the sample size is not large enough to determine trends within regions, one might expect to see a correlation between the level of engagement of the respondent’s home government and the degree of impact the respondent believes the CSD has had on CSO-government collaboration. Figure 11 above shows some correlation between the response to this question and the respondent’s region. Those who thought there had been little or no impact are concentrated mostly in Africa, Europe, and North America, while all respondents from Asia and Oceania believed that there has been at least some impact.

Another reason why collaboration has failed, which came across more clearly in key informant interviews with government representatives, UN officials, and CSD representatives, was the approach taken by civil society. Although this has improved significantly over the years, some interviewees still felt that the issues proposed by CS were at odds with those on the government's agenda, thereby making meaningful collaboration difficult. This is, of course, more true in certain countries than in others, given differing levels of civil society experience, capacity, and influence.

Moreover, actors from all parties acknowledged that, particularly in the early years of the forum, civil society actors needed to work on the framing of criticisms and suggestions. More emphasis has been placed in recent years on putting forth suggestions which take into account the political, social, and economic constraints that states face in order to provide practical, feasible solutions to problems rather than having both governments and civil society focus on criticism and blame. There is still work to be done in this regard, but progress has been made.

This discussion once again lends credence to the difficulty and frustration many CSD and GFMD participants have regarding expectations. As many civil society actors have expectations which are not aligned with the GFMD's mandate, at least as originally envisioned, they become frustrated. That is, civil society actors are frustrated with the lack of action or follow-through on recommendations, while governments come together under the premise that the GFMD is a forum for discussion rather than decision-making. Similarly, government officials push back against recommendations or criticisms that they feel are unfair or unfounded, because the government's mandate or participation is not associated with this promise or pretense.

It is also worth noting that the impact on civil society and government collaboration may differ for those countries which host the GFMD. Given the somewhat limited data on this topic, it seems that the preparations for the meetings inherently require the government, civil society, and some private actors to work together in order to ensure a smooth meeting. As such, the case of Mexico demonstrates increased collaboration, discussion, and integration both feeding into and resulting from preparatory meetings and processes.

Finally, it is important to note that both government and civil society actors believe there may be more progress in this area than they are aware of. Many respondents noted that there was likely improvement in coordination, but that the coordination was not communicated. Governments stated that they did, indeed, take into consideration many of the CS proposals – but that this was not necessarily communicated back to CSOs. Similarly, many CSOs noted that they often do not know what happens during the GFMD meeting, and are unaware what recommendations and findings are from that meeting. The lack of communication from both sides makes progress in both relationships and implementation of relevant policy and projects much more difficult; and is a problem that could be somewhat easily remedied.

#### **Key Conclusion:**

- ❖ Data regarding the impact of the CSD and GFMD on civil society and government collaboration are mixed. While there are specific examples of collaboration between civil society actors and member states resulting at least in part from participation in the forum,

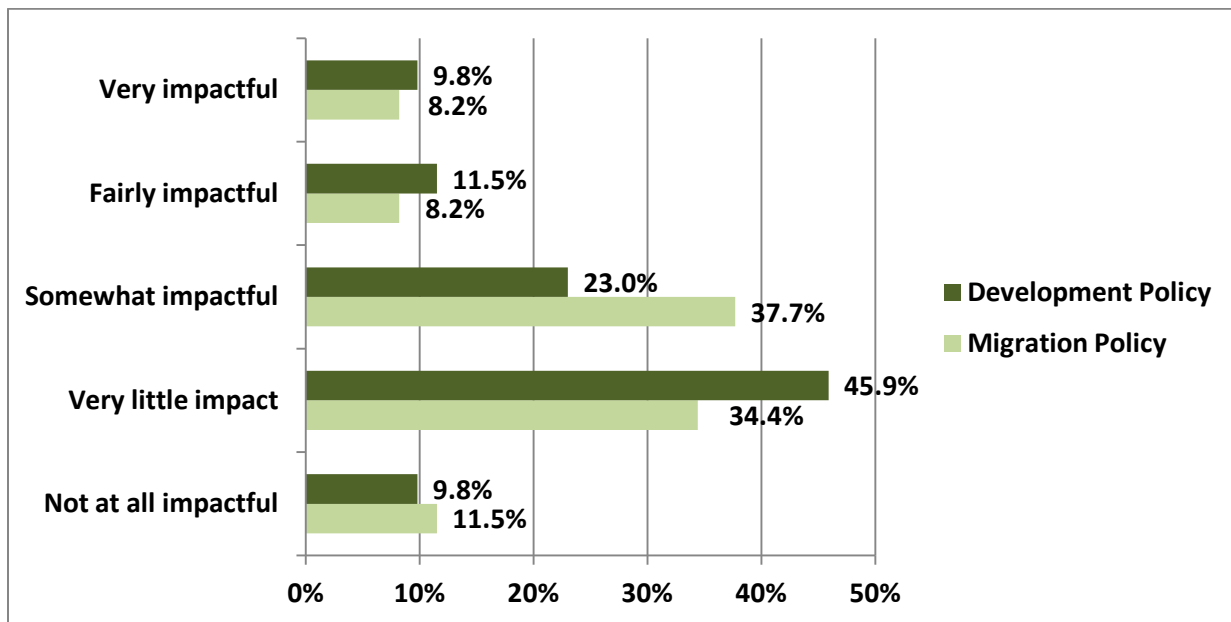
and more than 30% of surveyed participants believe the CSD/GFMD collaboration has been fairly or very impactful, nearly the same percentage believe there had been very little evidence of impact. This was predominantly due to the fact that the ability of the CSD and GFMD to contribute to collaboration depends largely on external factors, such as the political, economic, and social context within each member state.

#### D. CSD/GFMD External Impacts

When understanding the impact of the CSD and GFMD on priorities and policies, it is first important to note that the vast majority of participants in the CSD/GFMD process come from the migration field rather than from the development field. Very few national and/or international development organizations or development-focused CSOs have participated in the process thus far, and while there have been agenda issues which attempt to bring in the development emphasis, nearly all respondents believed the emphasis of the CSD/GFMD is on migration rather than development. This was true for civil society representatives, government officials, and observers, and is not surprising given the makeup of attendees. While many participants commented that this emphasis on migration was needed due to the lack of a developed institutional framework on the issue, it certainly affects the CSD/GFMD’s ability to impact priorities and policies in the development field. As such, much of this analysis looks at the impacts on migration-related issues and policies.

Given the above, it is interesting to note that survey respondents felt that the CSD/GFMD has had a somewhat similar impact on development and migration policy. When asked for specific examples on those impacts both in interviews and in surveys, however, many found it difficult to name concrete illustrations of this influence.

**Figure 12: Survey Responses on CSD/GFMD Impact on Member States**



It is also worth highlighting that among respondents who said that they had seen little or no impact on migration policy, 100% also stated they had seen little to no impact on development policy in their member states. That said, when analyzing responses by geographic region and/or by sending and receiving countries, responses were consistent. That is, for each region – no matter their status as a typically sending or receiving country – answers were mixed along the spectrum for responses to both questions.

### **Agenda Setting**

The discussion regarding both the agenda as well as the substance and framing of policy debates has to be analyzed at two different levels. Outside of the GFMD process, many stakeholders noted that civil society’s ability to impact the agenda setting and policies of the member states primarily happens at the national level. As such, and related to Section B above, civil society representatives stated that there is a lack of adequate opportunity to influence national agendas and policy debates through the GFMD process due to the lack of a defined structure for this to occur, particularly with respect to preparatory meetings and national consultations prior to GFMD participation. While some governments and civil society organizations have a positive relationship and this interaction does occur, this discussion occurs at the discretion of the individual country and/or individuals in leadership positions. As such, few stakeholders believed the CSD/GFMD was a driving factor in shaping the policy agenda of their home countries. Those which have had an influence on member countries’ migration and development agendas stated that the influence had been due to consultations in-country, and sometimes at the regional level, outside of GFMD. It is likely, given the nature of the extent to which this positive relationship exists, that the interaction would have occurred even without the CSD; and was therefore not dependent on the CSD/GFMD process. Only when the GFMD resulted in enhanced relationships between the two entities, or accelerated the dialogue, did that affect civil society’s capacity to influence the national agenda at home.

The other opportunity for impact in this area is during the GFMD process itself. Participants felt that the preparatory meetings leading up to the CSD and GFMD were the primary avenue by which they could influence the agenda and priorities of the process for any given year. Based on the substance and agenda of the CSD, and the GFMD in particular, they felt some topics were able to gain momentum outside of the process. This was particularly true for the topic of diaspora, which is considered to be one of the more successful examples of

“CSOs have direct and indirect influence over the agenda setting and discussion process. The direct impact is through the discussions they have with their government representatives and the participation of ICMC and its predecessors in the various meetings leading up to the GFMD. The indirect impact is through the information and research that civil society makes available to governments in the lead-up. The least effective impact is via the CSD report itself since governments do not have time to digest it... The involvement would be more effective if there were additional ways for CSO and governments at the national level and on a technical level could engage between annual sessions of the GFMD.”  
– Academic and CS Participant

GFMD impact. This may be, in part, due to the fact that GFMD recommendations on this topic are more pragmatic in nature than some of their other recommendations; proposing concrete projects<sup>7</sup>. A somewhat more mixed review came from stakeholders regarding the ability of GFMD, particularly

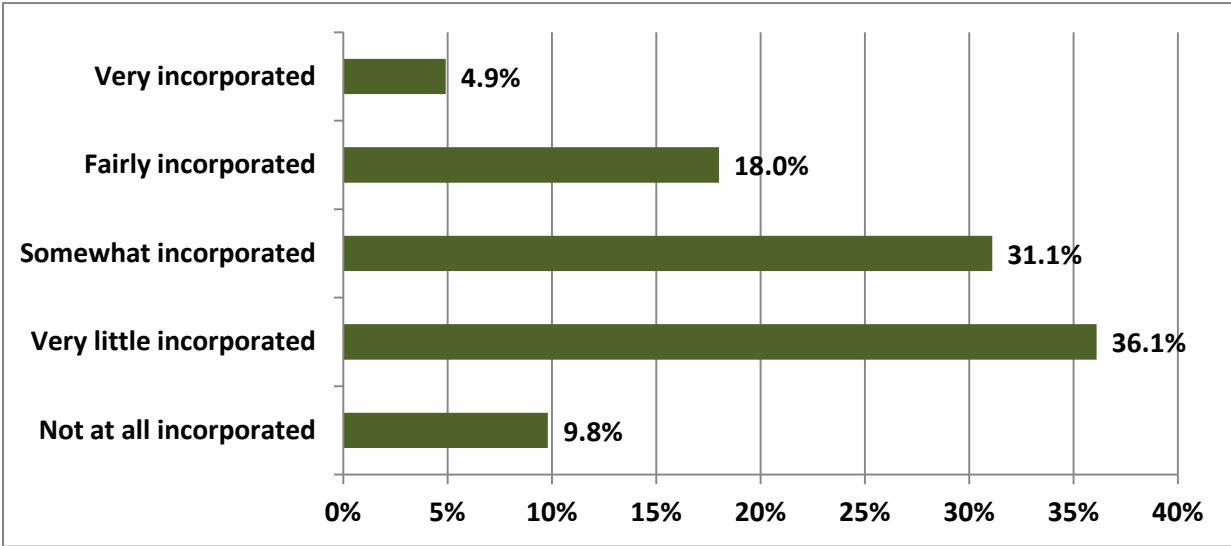
<sup>7</sup> Maas, Wies and Koser, Khalid. *A State of the Art Review: Towards Global Governance of International Migration* (2009).

in Manila, to help shape the policy agenda on migrant rights. While nearly all felt this was an important step forward for GFMD, opinions on whether or not that affected the broader policy debate were varied.

Participants felt that the GFMD did result in the emergence and development of discussions regarding previously taboo subjects, including that of migrant rights, which now may be discussed more openly between relevant parties – potentially including at the High Level Dialogue in 2013. What is interesting to note, however, is that the issues participants say the GFMD has done the most to publicize and clarify are not particularly aligned with the number of recommendations made by civil society and states in each thematic area. That is, while the GFMD has highlighted themes of governance and cooperation, and migration and development in its conclusions and recommendations over the past five years, its greater impacts (according to participant perceptions, at least) have come in areas of research, diaspora, human rights, and irregular migration. Indeed, many of the topics which appear as the theme for each GFMD, and those areas which receive the most recommendations, are listed by participants as areas which have remained poorly represented in the GFMD. The impacts, notwithstanding individual projects, policies, and initiatives, are reported to be the GFMD’s ability to bring issues like irregular migration and human rights to the forefront of dialogue, where they otherwise may have not been discussed given their polarizing nature.

Difficult to analyze, however is the particular impact of the CSD versus that of the states-led discussion. Fewer than 25% of civil society representatives felt that the issues raised by CSOs were ‘fairly incorporated’ or ‘very incorporated’ into the states-led discussion, though many felt that civil society’s ability to influence the GFMD agenda-setting process has improved in recent years – particularly in Mexico and later with the establishment of the ICMC as the coordinating body for civil society.

**Figure 13: Incorporation of CS Issues into State-Led Discussion**



Civil society representation has been somewhat limited during the preparatory phases of the GFMD meetings, both due to the nature of the GFMD as a states-led process, and due to funding constraints. As the preparatory meetings are the primary venue for providing input into the GFMD agenda, lack of adequate participation at that stage leads to civil society frustration regarding their lack of influence and has led many to question the value of the CSD/GFMD event. Even for those who responded that they did participate in preparatory processes with government officials, many civil society representatives stated that such processes “did not help” due to a number of reasons – including lack of enthusiasm from both sides, differing viewpoints, and gaps in communication. There are a number of exceptions to this depending on the country, however, and civil society representatives tended to feel more included when the GFMD was hosted in their home country. Similarly, a few respondents noted that themes taken on by civil society, including that of irregular migration, have been taken up by the states-led discussion in subsequent years - potentially demonstrating some ability of civil society to influence the agenda setting in its global meeting.

It is also important to note here that the different impacts of the CSD do not work in isolation from one another. That is, the CSD’s ability to join together different actors to have a common voice; and/or to influence the relationship between civil society and government in a particular country may, in turn, have bearing on civil society’s ability to change the substance and framing of the policy debate. Depending on the country context and individual personalities, the ability of a civil society representative to establish a relationship with a specific individual in his/her government or from another organization may prove influential in bringing an issue to the forefront of dialogue.

### **Policies and Projects**

With respect to concrete policies on migration and development, many respondents maintained that it was difficult to attribute many policies and processes to the GFMD, although they felt the GFMD may have played a contributing role in their development. Similarly, when asked about specific policies and projects, a number of government officials stated that the GFMD was not intended to produce finite policies nor could they be measured because the GFMD is a non-binding process. Countries with fully developed democratic systems which have processes for soliciting CSO input into decisions tend to also have processes which deal with migrant issues outside of the GFMD. Of course, the outcomes of any policy process will be far more dependent on domestic political considerations than any other single factor, and as such, expectations regarding policies should be set accordingly.

That stated, a number of concrete recommendations have been followed up on, and certain governments and organizations have initiated projects at least in part due to CSD/GFMD conversations. Similarly, the states-led evaluation found that thirty-three countries stated that “there are specific projects and/or processes that have been initiated or influenced by the GFMD”<sup>8</sup> in their respective countries, though most of the follow-up responses revealed that processes were more common than specific policy projects, as is evidenced in the list below.

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<sup>8</sup> Assessment of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, Phase I: Results of the Survey. 2011

A number of respondents demonstrated frustration that the CSD and GFMD tend to be more process-oriented than action-oriented. They mentioned that recommendations from both civil-society and government-led meetings included high-level ideas, but that there were few concrete proposals or recommendations. One presenter at the CSD in 2011 noted, “We’ve said all there is to say, but haven’t done what needs to be done”. It is interesting to note, however, that despite being few in nature, many of the concrete recommendations and proposals have received some level of follow-up, at least in part due to the CSD and GFMD discussions. These recommendations are complemented by new initiatives which are undertaken following roundtables and best practice exchanges. While some may lead to specific policies and policy implementation actions, many of them are process or pre-policy efforts and include<sup>9</sup>:

- Feasibility study of a market-based approach to reducing migration costs (funded by the Netherlands) (+)
- Circular migration programs between countries (e.g. Mauritius and France, Ukraine and Portugal, and Costa Rica and Nicaragua) (+)
- Project Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and Its Application in Bangladesh (+)
- Overseas Filipinos Remittances for Development (OF ReD) project by the Commission for Filipinos Overseas (CFO) (+)
- Enhanced support and ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention (+)
- Extended Migration Profiles (\*/+)
- Development of the Joint Migration and Development Initiative by the EU (\*/+)
- Establishment of two global ad hoc working groups (on Protecting and Empowering Migrants for Development, and on Policy Coherence, Data and Research) (\*)
- Inclusion of migration in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers country development plans (\*)
- A variety of research undertakings, trainings, and seminars (\*)

It is difficult to track follow-up actions in a more systematic way, as there is no one body which attempts to do so for either the GFMD or CSD. One civil society representative stated that, “Every year GFMD makes very good suggestions, recommendations and commitments ...the implementation of those commitments are lacking. There is no proper mechanism to follow up and monitor the recommendations of the GFMD process.” Many civil society organizations and governments work together at the national level to implement recommendations, but they are not necessarily communicated back at the global level. As many recommendations from civil society are directed towards governments, and governments do not consider the GFMD a decision-making body, it is often difficult to determine which actions, if any, are taken up by various actors.

This both reflects the lack of communication and contributes to it; as many participants stated that they are unaware of what happens after the meetings finish. As one representative put it, “the Civil Society Days are seen as an event, rather than a process”, and often the follow-up meetings are more

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<sup>9</sup> Examples here were given by civil society representatives, government officials, and/or were taken from the document review. (\*) signifies that it is more process-related, while + signifies more of a policy or project action.



worried about the logistics, organization, and topics of the next global meeting than on ensuring actions are taken or communicated on the previous one. Similarly, there is no formal mechanism which transmits messages from the states-led conference to civil society beyond what is posted online. As such, both at a global and national level, even when advances are made and civil society may have contributed to impact, that impact is not documented systematically. It also demonstrates that while there may be substantial contributions, it is somewhat unrealistic to attribute policy, regulatory, and specific legally enforceable government actions to the CSD/GFMD. Policy making and policy implementation at the nation-state and bilateral level is multi-faceted and affected by a large number of actors and factors, and it is unrealistic to expect that a single event can, or even should, cause change on its own.

Both government officials and civil society representatives noted that the substance of dialogue and recommendations stemming from the CSD have improved significantly over the years. Interviewees in sending and receiving countries noted that one of the impediments to action was the critical and unfeasible nature of many discussions, particularly in the early years of the forum. Government officials echoed these thoughts, stating that there was little dialogue in the first two years of the forum, and that they felt civil society was being “critical rather than constructive.” Nearly all consulted stakeholders acknowledged that the substance and framing of dialogue within the CSD has improved, thereby making the resulting recommendations much more viable.

“Sometimes the workshops have been more of a ‘wish list’ for what we would like to see from governments, without any sense of strategy on how the proposals might be achieved.”

- CS Representative/Participant

That stated, all recognize that a number of recommendations coming out of both the Civil Society Days and states-led discussion still require further development and pragmatism. As there is no formal means by which these are developed further and assigned to action, and due to the nature of these issues as dependent on political processes within the individual states, they become relatively inconsequential. Having said that, the CSD/GFMD does appear to contribute to the long-term gestation period that precedes any major policy decision.

#### Key Conclusions:

- ❖ Much of the ability of civil society to influence the agenda of the GFMD occurs during preparatory meetings, while their ability to influence the migration agenda occurs largely at the national level outside of the GFMD process. While most civil society representatives do not feel their items are adequately incorporated into the states-led discussion, the perspective does seem to be improving in recent years.
- ❖ While a few distinct policies, projects, and policies are reported to have benefited from the CSD/GFMD, the ability of the meetings to produce finite policy and project outcomes is a source of both debate and frustration, again due to differing expectations regarding the goals of this process.

## **E. CSD Structure and Institutional Dimensions**

In analyzing the institutional dimensions of the Civil Society Days, it is important to note that the CSD structure and governance changed significantly in 2011. Until 2011, the CSD did not have a continuing support structure which ensured knowledge transfer between each iteration of the meetings. Each host country selected a foundation to host and organize the CSD, some of which were more involved in the migration field than others. In 2011, the ICMC took leadership of the Civil Society Days for at least two years. This change has strongly impacted participants' perceptions with respect to CSD's institutional effectiveness. The following analysis looks at both phases of this institutional evolution, with an understanding that the new structure has not yet had time to fully develop and/or manifest itself.

### **Hosting**

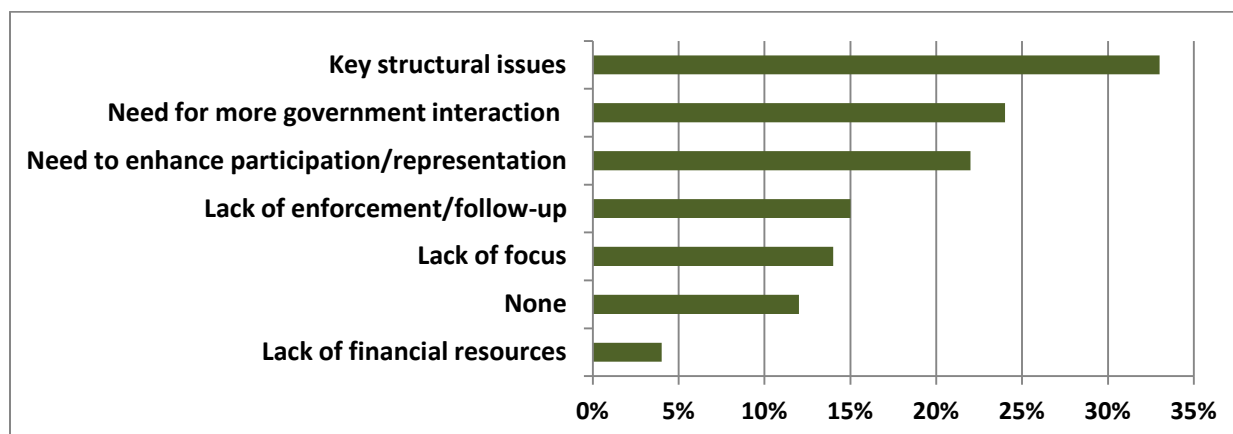
When asked about the CSD as an institution from 2007-2010, approximately 80% of interviewees responded that the structure was 'not very' or 'not at all' effective. They cited the lack of continuity, difficulty transferring knowledge, fundraising barriers, and lack of technical understanding as key obstacles to success. That is not to say that participants did not benefit from those meetings; nor is it to say that it was the fault of individual foundations which hosted the CSD each year. Discussions with representatives from a number of those foundations showed an immense effort by each organization to document lessons learned and to take on a great deal of work despite, at times, lack of organizational incentive to do so. When asked what their organizational incentive was, one foundation staff member noted that, "There was not much to gain, but that was not the purpose. We were trying to help!" They cited the reputational risks, workloads, and disparate expectations of stakeholders as obstacles, and hosting foundations had varying levels of interest and engagement in the migration and development sector prior to CSD involvement.

At least one organization mentioned that they "made clear they didn't want to work in migration at an international level," and participants commented that it was clear some hosting organizations had more familiarity with the relevant actors and technical areas than others. Others said that they thought the idea of foundations being the hosts was a good idea, as they were more neutral actors. Only when the ICMC took charge of hosting and created a support structure did that opinion change. Numerous stakeholders noted that, while the previous arrangement had "done its job", the transfer to the ICMC was one of the most positive changes they had seen in the CSD. This comment was made both due to the new capacity to ensure continuity of themes, staff, and ideas; but also due to the individuals, reputation, and relationships that the new support structure and committee bring to the table. Given that this structure has only been in place for one full CSD meeting thus far, however, it is difficult to assess whether or not this capacity is able to be fully realized.

### **Structure**

Despite these improvements, one third of survey respondents listed structural issues as a current significant gap or failing of the CSD, with nearly a quarter of participants listing problems with equitable/representative participation and the need for more government involvement and integration.

**Figure 14: Survey Responses to Gaps and Failings of the CSD**



The call for more representative or inclusive participation included requests for more private sector involvement (which has had very little presence in past CSD meetings and was recognized by most as a missed opportunity), more equitable geographic representation, and more migrants present. The need for structural refinements and enhanced government participation or integration was echoed by the vast majority of interviewees as well. The key obstacle with respect to both of these needs, however, has been the lack of definition regarding the key objectives of the Civil Society Days themselves.

When asked what they view as CSD's main objectives, and how they fit into the overall goals of the GFMD, participant responses varied widely. Although not all are mutually exclusive, some of these views included:

- Bringing together a variety of CS actors involved in the migration field to improve networks and/or find a common voice for advocacy
- Build CS capacity to effect change
- Enhance relationships between CS and governments working in the field, particularly at the national level
- Ground state-led discussions in migrant realities
- Provide practical recommendations for governments to implement
- Follow up on government recommendations and implementation
- Come up with new ideas that CS can implement to improve migration and development

Because of the disparate views on the expected outcomes of the CSD, ideas on the ideal structure needed to achieve those goals also differed. Many interviewees stated that the current structure is useful in allowing different civil society actors and organizations to get to know one another and create coalitions, but that it is not conducive to providing useful interaction with government actors or in creating or implementing practical recommendations. Many stated that while the common space is one of the best changes to have come about in the CSD, it does not provide enough time, particularly in large groups, for meaningful interaction. Others stated that one meeting per year may

be too much, as not enough happens or changes within that timeframe; and the financial burden for some CSOs is significant. Ideas regarding whether or not the CSD should be held much earlier than the states-led conference were mixed. Some believed holding the meeting a few months earlier would allow the states to then digest the CSD recommendations and consult with CSOs for follow-up prior to the meeting; while others felt that it was absolutely essential for the two events to happen at the same time in order to maintain legitimacy and interaction. As to be expected, many of these perceptions stemmed from individual country experiences and expectations on anticipated CSD outcomes.

There are a number of alternate structures proposed by participants which would be effective mechanisms to organize civil society input into global migration debates, but the ideal structure would again depend on the theory of change envisioned for the CSD. Many participants agreed that more emphasis needs to be placed on regional meetings between the global conferences. This is particularly necessary to ensure that the CSD/GFMD is viewed as a process, rather than just an event. Similarly, participants noted that national consultations (government with civil society and private sector actors) both before and after the meetings would improve the transparency, trust, and grounding of recommendations in realities. More than anything, the participants desire a regular process by which civil society actors, private sector actors, and government actors can meet, work together, and prepare a common agenda.

The Common Space, while a positive improvement, leaves little room for meaningful interaction at the plenary level. As such, respondents discussed the need for more government officials to participate in the Civil Society Days, and for select CS representatives to be involved in the states-led discussions, either via working groups or roundtables. While full integration is neither feasible nor desired, nearly all interviewed and surveyed stated that the structure would be much more effective if there were more interaction, consultation, and integration between the two sides. This could be via elected representatives, enhanced national or regional consultations, or through some more informal mechanism.

#### **Key Conclusion:**

- ❖ While 2011 marked a significant positive development in the institutional structure of the Civil Society Days, there remains considerable room for improvement. In particular, there is a need for enhanced sustainability, continuity, and dialogue between different actors. The ideal structure of the CSD is unable to be specified however, as any structure chosen will need to advance an identified theory of change for the process.

## **V. General Conclusions and Recommendations**

The following conclusions are based on and presented according to the structure set out in the preceding section on findings.

## Theory of Change

Although the MacArthur Foundation and various state, civil society, and other actors involved in the creation of the CSD process expressed a strong normative commitment to the need for and value of a civil society participation and dialogue with the GFMD, the team could not find evidence of a well articulated theory of change, a common feature of an increasing number of similar grant-related programs. While there is much that is positive that has come out of the CSD/GFMD process, the evaluation team concludes that the absence of a well articulated theory of change and program design and results monitoring process has created significant tension among actors. Participant frustrations with the CSD have been growing in large part due to a mismatch between expectations and mandate, stemming primarily from a lack of communication or clarity on what the objectives of the CSD are. This both highlights and exacerbates the lack of communication between government and civil society actors, and hinders progress in key programmatic areas.

## Recommendation

- If the CSD is to serve as a mechanism to facilitate the inclusion of civil society in the development of more informed, fair and mutually beneficial policies and procedures involving migration at the global or regional level, stakeholders need to develop a clearly articulated program design and monitoring process which is grounded in a credible and validated theory of change. This theory of change should be based on an analysis of comparative advantage, and should outline both expected objectives as well as the means necessary to achieve those objectives. The result will be a more realistic program strategy and implementation process informed and adjusted by a robust and useful program monitoring system. The theory of change should be communicated to all participants and outside stakeholders to ensure expectations are properly aligned, and that structural and thematic considerations feed into the desired objectives.

## Effects on Civil Society Capacity

The CSD process has produced positive but limited results for many of the CSD organizations and leaders who have participated in the program. On the positive side, the evidence supports the conclusion that CS participants formed or engaged with networks of activists and leaders, developed new knowledge, exchanged best practices, and developed a better understanding of the array of interests and issues that affect state policy making. Less positive were gains in organizational capacity and access to government, although some benefits did occur in those states which already had a more open and accessible government and political system, as is evidenced in the Philippines. A main underlying factor contributing to less-than-success has been the intermittent nature of the CSD process. CS respondents felt that, had there been some more continuous process by which issues and themes identified might have been discussed between government and civil society at the country level between the annual meetings of the GFMD, CSOs would have developed organizational capacity and advocacy skills to a greater extent, and would have engaged with government policy and regulatory decision makers in a more productive manner.

Similarly, while the CSD has some mechanisms in place to facilitate this organizational capacity building, it is not done in a consistent and deliberate manner.

### Recommendation

- The CSD should consider developing a strategy and program implementation process that supports some form of continuous interaction between CSOs and government, with investment in relevant organizational capacity, advocacy and negotiation skills for CSOs at the national level. Should stakeholders determine that organizational capacity building is a key objective of the CSD, workshops, themes, and activities should be designed in a way to best meet the current gaps and competitive advantage of this process. This might include the addition of seminars at or between CSD meetings aimed at enhancing CSOs' ability to manage for results.

### Effects on Civil Society/Government Relations at CSD/GFMD

Several conclusions emerge from the findings regarding CSD/GFMD effects of civil society/government relationships. First, there is strong evidence to support the conclusion that the access and opportunity to engage between CSOs and government at the CSD/GFMD has substantially improved, with the expansion of the CSD to two days, the Common Space, and the increased opportunities for informal consultation. Evidence is strong to support the conclusion that governments have become more receptive to the idea of engaging with CSOs at the GFMD.

Second, there has been a gap between participating CSOs' expectations and concerns on the one side, and on the government side, the mandate and charter of state representatives at the GFMD. The formal purpose of the GFMD is to discuss and share information on the link or potential link between migration and development; hence the U.S. delegation has included USAID in recent years. GFMD is not a decision-making forum. Very few of the attending CSOs are focused on development; instead their primary concerns have been migrant rights, fair treatment, labor, and the like. And while the inclusion of Diaspora groups was a major improvement, private sector involvement has remained very limited. While there is evidence that this gap is narrowing, it remains a source of misunderstanding, and for some, there is a growing sense of disenchantment and frustration with the entire process. Similarly, many CSD participants feel the CSD has not provided adequate space for meaningful interaction between civil society and governments – both due to structural and thematic reasons. This lack of interaction, access, and follow-up was believed by many to be one of the key failings of the CSD as currently designed.

### Recommendation

- In any future programs designed to bring widely diverse and varying interests, organizations and responsibilities together to promote a productive dialogue and positive change, it will be important to 1) make sure that the right organizations and representatives are in the room, and 2) make sure that all participants have a clear understanding of the nature of the objectives and limitations of the process. Again, if stakeholders believe enhanced access and interaction with government to be a key objective of the CSD, this needs to be agreed at the

State-led meeting and the structure and activities will have to be modified accordingly. This would have implications on preparations and follow-up to the meetings, as well as on the structure of the discussions themselves.

### **CSD/GFMD External Impact**

The extent to which the positive gains in discussion and agenda setting at the GFMD are extended to substantive impact on the policy process at the national level between the GFMDs is much more difficult to determine. The lack of a follow-up monitoring and information system to track and communicate various efforts hinders analysis and weakens the overall potential for impact of the CSD/GFMD. A number of factors seem to affect this desired outcome, including the nature of a given state's political system, whether one is a sending or receiving country, and the extent to which the CSOs have developed advocacy and dialogue skills that go beyond voicing complaints and concerns. Even in nations with a more open political system, as well as better organized CSOs, the lack of a defined and systematic structure for continuing dialogue and negotiation is a major constraint.

While both key informants and survey respondents remain skeptical about GFMD impact on actual policies, laws, and implementation mechanisms, the evaluation team can conclude that the CSD/GFMD process has had a positive effect on state level consultations, most of which, as noted in the examples in Section D, might be categorized as part of the "pre-policy" process, including investments in research, seminars, conferences, special committees and the like.

### **Recommendation**

- For any continuing program involving the promotion of migrant rights and/or development, support and/or develop two essential elements: 1) a structure by which dialogue can occur in both sending and receiving countries, and 2) a monitoring and information management process by which progress, and problems, can be identified and shared with a wider array of stakeholders in civil society and in governments.

### **CSD Structure and Institutional Dimensions**

With respect to hosting and organizing the CSD/GFMD, the evidence supports the conclusion that the CSD/GFMD organizing structure has improved, primarily through the Common Space and the more recent decision to engage the ICMC as a potentially permanent secretariat. However, considerable disagreement remains as to what should be the objectives and who should participate in the CSD/GFMD process in the future. Unless external support for CSO attendance is found, it is likely that many current participants will no longer attend. The consequences of this may be that those better organized and more active groups will find means to participate if there are strong incentives to do so. This may be beneficial in some ways; but will likely also mute the voices of grassroots migrant organizations and stifle innovative networking opportunities.

With regards to the broader issue of "structure", the conclusion is that improvements in the CSD/GFMD events do not translate into impact on what must be the continuing process of policy

dialogue and engagement between CSOs and governments. As noted, CSD/GFMD is characterized as an "event", not a process. Unless a way is found to promote a process in at least some of the most important sending and receiving states, the gains achieved by improvements in the "event" will continue to dissipate.

### Recommendation

- Consider supporting an international panel made up of CSO and lead government representatives to examine, with the support of the ICMC, the GFMD process and the content of this and other evaluation and research studies, to determine the following:
  - What should be its specific and measurable (qualitative and quantitative) objectives and what kind of program design and theory of change is most appropriate?
  - What kind of monitoring and information management system would be needed to assess progress, make timely adjustments, and support widespread dissemination of relevant information?
  - Is the "big tent" model for both CSD and GFMD still viable, or would a more select group of smaller meetings be more effective, structured perhaps around several collections of sending-receiving dyads?
  - What can be done to transform CSD/GFMD from an 'event' to a process, again perhaps taking on more limited sets of countries?
  - Is the inclusion of "development" as an objective still valid, and if so, what can be done to achieve greater focus in both the GFMD event and in any forthcoming structure supporting a process of CSO/Government interaction?
  - If a re-invented CSD/GFMD process were to emerge, the question of sustained financial support for a secretariat and related process expenses needs to be addressed.



For more information on this study, or to obtain the methodological annexes for this report, please visit: <http://www.macfound.org/programs/migration/>.





# MacArthur Foundation

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