



International
Civil Society
Centre

Let's Make Lemonade

**Legitimacy and Impact
in Times of Scrutiny**

30 Oct - 1 Nov 2019

Addis Ababa

globalperspectives.online

Global Perspectives is an annual conference bringing together leaders of civil society organisations (CSOs) with high-level representatives from governmental, inter-governmental, corporate, philanthropic and academic sectors. Every year around 150 participants engage in interactive formats, discussions and co-creation sessions to analyse the world's most pressing challenges and devise strategies to bring civil society forward in pursuit of solutions.

Last year's conference was centred on the theme "Engaging a #NewGeneration" – which led to the creation of Yes! For Humanity, a global, youth-led response to the climate crisis.

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade

In a world of rising authoritarianism and populism, civil society actors are under attack for our work, and our shared values of equality, justice and sustainability. As large sections of many populations turn their back on these concepts, compassion itself – according to the Civicus "State of Civil Society Report"* – is in retreat.

At the same time, civil society organisations should be doing better. More citizen engagement, power transfer, and fresh partnerships with local actors would increase impact. Both internal and external accountability are crucial to legitimacy, while efforts to be more representative of the communities we serve can boost trust. Finally, by living up to our shared value of solidarity, we can present a more coordinated and sustained response to urgent challenges like the climate crisis. That is the underlying purpose of Global Perspectives.



*Civicus "State of Civil Society" Report 2019:
<https://tinyurl.com/civicusreport>

One pathway can be through reinforcing successful approaches, for example in the area of accountability. Another by developing new ways of engaging with a broader, more diverse audience. Additionally we can implement proactive, positive responses to anti-liberal voices and be clearer on the role civil society plays in transforming people's lives for the better.

As a global community, we form the largest independent force for tackling poverty, social injustice and the climate crisis. We occupy an invaluable role in holding governments and business to account. We must make a stronger case for civil society.

Three Pillars

At Global Perspectives 2019 we will showcase successful approaches, share successes and failures and devise new approaches, within three pillars:

► The Changing Environment:

An increasingly authoritarian and right-wing populist political environment is accompanied by growing public scepticism towards civil society. We will highlight and develop new strategies for adapting to this context.

► The Role of CSOs:

The struggle of many civil society organisations to engage with people, strengthen accountability and build fitting power relations is an ongoing challenge. We will review fresh approaches and new partnership models.

► The Unwritten Future:

How will trust and legitimacy look in five years? What trends could affect their development? We will examine potential scenarios for the international community and determine pathways to a flourishing global civil society.

Innovation Report 2019

The first edition of the International Civil Society Centre's Innovation Report will be launched at Global Perspectives. This publication showcases innovation in the sector, aimed at facilitating exchange and mutual learning. The 2019 edition focuses on "Responses to Populism in a Digitally Enabled Era", analysing opportunities and challenges as technologies mobilise public support for – and facilitate attacks on – the work of civil society.

Location

This year's conference will be held in Ethiopia – a country that has seen significant positive developments since Abiy Ahmed became prime minister in 2018. The new government has been driving an ambitious reform agenda and the context offers an optimistic future for CSOs to participate in shaping public life. As part of Global Perspectives, we will explore the country's situation and improve our understanding of national and international civil society role there. Many actors on the ground have spoken of the need for greater accountability. With the ambition of leaving a positive footprint, the Centre has initiated a process between our partner Accountable Now and Ethiopian organisations to trigger the development of a globally inspired but locally owned accountability framework. Global Perspectives 2019 will form a milestone in this process.



Aerial view of Africa's largest market – the Merkato of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Format

The conference will be made up of high-calibre panel discussions, interactive peer-to-peer exchange, and use of music, poetry and the arts to communicate our messages.

Interactive engagement is crucial to the unique atmosphere of Global Perspectives. To that end participants are invited to contribute in various ways, from holding an ideas lab and leading side meetings to showcasing initiatives. Keep an eye on our website and social media for ideas!

People & Partners

Around 150 diverse leaders and change makers are invited to Global Perspectives; hailing from the global civil society community, as well as philanthropy, business, governmental and academic sectors. All are joining a platform for regulars and newcomers alike to exchange and jointly develop an agenda to boost the legitimacy of civil society organisations.

Participants will leave Global Perspectives 2019 with:

- ▶ A better understanding of developments in our political environment
- ▶ Insights on how to strengthen civil society accountability
- ▶ Knowledge of trends likely to affect legitimacy and trust in coming years
- ▶ A rich network of peers from civil society and other sectors working on these topics
- ▶ Inspiration and ideas for collaboration and exchange
- ▶ An awareness of the political and civil society context in Ethiopia today



The International Civil Society Centre

As the global action platform for civil society, we work with ICSSOs to develop strategies for successfully navigating change. We scan the horizon for exciting opportunities, enable learning and cooperation among such organisations and their stakeholders, assist in developing effective leadership, and promote robust accountability to strengthen legitimacy. We strive to set high standards in management, governance and strategy for ICSSOs and the wider sector. The Centre is a non-profit organisation fully owned by the organisations it serves.



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