

Management Report 2023



CONDUCTIVE SPACE · FOR PEACE

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1. Organisational Status

Conducive Space for Peace (CSP) is a Danish civil society organisation established at a constitutive general meeting in November 2016 and was registered as a non-profit association with the Danish Business Authority on 1 January 2019. The organisation had existed in various forms and phases up to the end of 2018, when it became an independent non-governmental organisation. Based on a request from CSP management, the board decided to change the organisational management structure as of 1 January 2023. CSP management now consists of two co-directors: one responsible for strategy, innovation, finance; and the other for organisational leadership. The former remains overall responsible to the CSP board with regard to all regulatory requirements. In 2022, in connection with the proposed change in the management structure, the articles of association were reviewed by a lawyer. A few minor changes were made to organisational decision-making structures, including the approval of the annual accounts and elections to the board to take place at the general meeting.

2. CSP Goals and Strategy

The overall goal of CSP is to strengthen local peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries and bring about changes in the international system for it to become better at supporting local peacebuilders and strengthening their role in building sustainable peace. CSP work focuses on support for change agents, knowledge development, and strategic communication in collaboration with international and local actors from conflict-affected countries.

In line with the CSP strategy for 2024–2026 (which was fully developed in 2023), the organisation has intensified focus on creating new thinking around the global peacebuilding structures. This rethinking is happening at a critical time when geopolitical realities are undergoing radical change, the number of armed conflicts is increasing and having impacts on regional and international structures and alliances, and levels of forced displacement continue to rise. As CSP operates in a world that is in flux, the organisation continues to employ different and responsive ways of strategising, planning activities, and managing the organisation. This involves more space for sensing

the context in which CSP operates, ongoing strategic thinking and learning, as well as responsiveness and readiness to develop new initiatives with relevance to changing global realities.

3. Developments in 2023 Activities

As part of a strategic shift toward developing a radically new and/or transformed global peacebuilding system, CSP launched a new initiative called RESPACE - Reimagining Equitable Global Spaces and Infrastructures for Sustainable Peace. Reimagining peacebuilding process has been part of the strategic foundation at CSP since 2016, but has faced various obstacles, including financial ones, to bring this ambitious and forward-looking initiative to fruition. In 2021, CSP carried out the first reimagining peacebuilding process in collaboration with Humanity United (HU), which provided additional insights for implementing the initiative. With additional funding from the Robert Bosch Foundation (RBSG) and hiring a dedicated staff person (a senior programme manager) for the initiative, RESPACE kicked off in mid-2023.

A RESPACE design workshop was held in Copenhagen with the participation of relevant CSP staff and REOS Partners, a CSP partner and collaborator since 2016. A third partner, NEAR (Network of Empowered Aid Response), a network-based organisation in the Global South, joined the collaboration in late 2023. Throughout the year, the initiative went through iterative design processes. A core group of RESPACE participants consisting of 27 thought leaders from around the world was also formed and in this mobilisation phase, planning meetings were held in Europe and Kenya. In parallel, the design of processes and methods, development of visual designs, fundraising, discussions with similar change initiatives, and outreach to the RESPACE participants took place.

Influencing work related to both RESPACE and other CSP activities saw staff participate in relevant events across the globe, including the Shiftthepower Summit in Bogota, the KPRSRL (Dutch-funded knowledge platform) conference in Nairobi, the People Power conference organised by Action Aid in Copenhagen, and Geneva Peace Week. For some events, CSP participated as a dialogue partner and provided discussion inputs. At the KPRSRL conference, CSP was



the co-creator of the central panel discussion titled, Aid Architecture: moving from practical advances to systemic change for local leadership. Building on previous work with European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), CSP held two learning events aimed at European peacebuilding NGOs. The 2022 strategic decision to significantly minimise the amount of time used for organising conference panels was maintained throughout 2023, at the same time, CSP recognised the need to be present and visible at key events. Where optimal, this can also entail joining in to shape the design and content of conference sessions in order to influence the change agenda CSP aims to promote.

CSP advocacy work in Denmark continued with participation in various working groups under Global Focus and other spaces. Due to Danish candidacy for the UN Security Council in 2025 and membership in the UN Peacebuilding Commission in 2023 and 2024, as well as the focus on local leadership and localisation at both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and among other Danish NGOs, CSP shared knowledge and insight at several relevant forums to inform discussion and learning. With a grant from Global Focus and building on previous training efforts with Danish NGOs, CSP conducted two workshops and initiated a learning series on the specific needs identified in the previous workshop series in 2022. One workshop explored how monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) processes can be adapted to better promote local leadership and the other focused on the change needs and opportunities of large multi-mandated organisations.

Based on CSP analysis that momentum for change has increased significantly in recent years, with many more organisations now advocating for system change and shifting power, it was critical for CSP to develop a sharper understanding of its role. This meant exploring and assessing the added value and comparative advantages of the organisation in relation to the broader system. Two primary insights emerged. First, the organisation can make only a very limited contribution to the development and implementation of innovative practices in collaborations and partnerships between international and local organisations. Second, CSP does have a key role to play in creating productive spaces for actors and innovators to share

knowledge, mutually learn, and inspire one another to create more systemic change. Based on the CSP collection of documentation on innovative practices, the organisation launched a digital platform: Innovators Hive. This platform serves as a resource base for system change and decolonising aid. Innovators Hive is updated regularly and information is continuously shared via LinkedIn Group, which is the community space for the platform. In the future, CSP will convene online learning sessions among the members of Innovators Hive, thereby fulfilling its primary role as a resource base, a learning space, and a community-building space.

In 2023, CSP published a report about its country-based work entitled “Challenges and Opportunities in International Support to Local Actors – Evidence and Recommendations from Myanmar, Colombia, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo”. Reflecting CSP engagement in these four countries, this publication collates the findings of a series of interviews and surveys completed by local and international actors. CSP also produced an “Innovative Practices Learning Note” that presents a comprehensive overview, including a Kumu map, of the various practices peacebuilding, development and humanitarian organisations use to promote local leadership and equitable partnerships. The publication highlights the need for transformation in addition to innovation. In collaboration with the German organisation forumZFD, CSP developed an analysis on global trends in peacebuilding to strengthen organisational development at forumZFD and to rethink its role as an international NGO. The internal report based on this analysis was developed in close dialogue with forumZFD staff and management, which provided insights about how CSP could further develop its work on accompaniment. This internal document will be adapted for a public report that will serve as a useful knowledge product to support RESPACE.

Several areas of CSP work, most notably the workshops and convenings with Danish NGOs, form the stepping stones for further work to accompany international organisations in their internal change processes in 2024. Similarly, initial work on RESPACE will grow into a series of in-person and virtual workshops to develop plausible scenarios for the future, based on



the collaborative action efforts that emerge in 2024 and 2025.

4. Financial conditions

In 2023, CSP received grants from HU, RBSG, and Global Focus, along with additional income from smaller consultancy assignments; namely, the Danida Fellowship Center and forumZFD. The total income/turnover was DKK 4,305,313, which is only one minor deviation from the budget approved by the board. At the start of 2023, RBSG provided an additional grant of approximately DKK 800,000 to the existing grant of approximately DKK 2 million. In part, this grant was used for expected expenses for RESPACE activities. This took place in the period between the approval of the preliminary budget at the general meeting in December 2022 and the board meeting in March 2023. The anticipated expenses for implementing RESPACE were partially postponed to 2024, which resulted in reduced expenses in 2023: DKK 4,109,882, compared to the DKK 6,262,406 budget approved by the board.

In addition to this income, DKK 6,372,000 was transferred forward from 2022 grants from HU (DKK 3,000,000), Porticus (DKK 3,000,000), and RBSG (DKK 372,000). CSP requested and received a no-cost extension from Porticus, which enabled unused funds to be carried forward to 2023. The funding contracts with HU and RBSG continued into 2023, thus allowing for unused funds to be carried forward without restriction. Due to delays in implementing RESPACE activities, which resulted in lower 2023 organisational expenses, a larger amount was accrued and transferred to 2024. Utilised 2022 funds amount to DKK 3,000,000 from Porticus and DKK 1,109,882 from HU. Funds carried forward to 2024 amount to DKK 1,890,118 from HU and DKK 392,000 from RBSG. The funds transferred forward will be used to implement RESPACE in the first half of 2024. The total funds allocated from 2023 to 2024 are DKK 3,332,353 from HU; DKK 3,151,284 from RBSG; and DKK 13,536 from Global Focus.

An important part of the CSP funding strategy is to ensure the organisation has enough equity to use in one of two ways: either as a buffer for any unforeseen circumstances or to meet funding shortfalls if there are periods when CSP is waiting for a new grant. The

intention is to accrue no more equity than is strictly necessary, based on meeting one of the following criteria: 1) the amount corresponds to 2% of annual turnover; or 2) the amount corresponds to three months of total staff salaries. The CSP board decided that the latter should constitute the organisational equity target. With a total expected salary amount of DKK 3,286,844 per year (DKK 273,904 per month), and with the current staff size, the 2024 equity target is DKK 821,711. An additional consideration to bear in mind, however, is that 2023 is the first year CSP received a large grant from RBSG. Since this grant is in EUR, and salaries are paid in USD or DKK, exchange rate fluctuations have become a risk factor in relation to ensuring that the organisation has the stipulated equity at all times. Therefore, the equity target is set 20% higher than DKK 821,711 (the total amount for three months of staff salaries) for the expected staff in 2024. In 2022, the amount of equity was DKK 790,569. At the end of 2023, CSP equity totalled DKK 986,000.

5. The expected financial development

The organisation expects a positive result for the coming year.

6. Events after the end of the financial year

No significant events have occurred after the balance sheet date that are considered to have a significant impact on the assessment in the annual report.

