

# For People. With People. By People.

## Strengthening Governance and Civil Society (GCSP III) in Uganda



### General context

Good governance and civil society form the backbone of a functioning democracy and sustainable development. Effective governance ensures transparency, accountability, and the rule of law - essential for public trust and for fostering an environment in which citizens can thrive.

Uganda, with 75% of its population under 30, holds significant potential for innovation and development. Harnessing the full potential of the youth requires inclusive governance structures and a vibrant civil society that reflects the different interests and needs of the population.

The Government of Uganda has reaffirmed its commitment to human rights, good governance, and accountability through constitutional provisions, institutional reforms, and the ratification of international agreements. Accountability institutions are in place, and efforts to enhance transparency and combat corruption are ongoing.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a constructive role in this process by promoting rights-based approaches, supporting democratic governance,

and fostering citizen participation. Strengthening collaboration between state and non-state actors is key to advancing inclusive governance and ensuring that young people and marginalised groups can meaningfully participate in decision-making processes.

<b>Project Name</b>	Strengthening Governance and Civil Society in Uganda
<b>Partner Countries</b>	Uganda
<b>Volume</b>	44,7 Mio. EUR (including EU cofinancing 30 Mio. EUR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme (CUSP II)</li> <li>Strengthening and Advancing Governance and Accountability (SAGA)</li> </ul>
<b>Duration</b>	January 2022 to December 2027
<b>Implementing Partners</b>	Office of the Auditor General Uganda (OAG); National Planning Authority (NPA); Inspectorate of Government (IG); Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC); Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA); Department of NGO Management; SDG Secretariat under the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM); Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Implemented by

## BMZ's approach and activities

To address the need for relevant state and non-state actors to fulfil their respective roles in accountability, implement good governance principles, and realise human rights more effectively, the project focuses on collaboration and capacity-development.

The Strengthening Governance and Civil Society Project (GCSP III) in Uganda, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), is currently in its third phase. It implements two initiatives co-financed by the European Union to bolster governance and civil society engagement: the Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme (CUSP) and the Strengthening and Advancing Governance and Accountability (SAGA) Programme. GCSP works country-wide with a base in Kampala and regional presence through subnational Hubs in Gulu, Mbale and Mbarara.

CUSP aims to enhance the civil society's role in ensuring democratic governance and inclusivity in development processes. The interventions under CUSP include supporting capacity development for CSOs at both the national and sub-national level. Civic participation and engagement in governance foster equality - especially for women, youth, and marginalised persons, such as persons with disabilities and refugees. For more sustainable change, selected state actors responsible for the civil society sector are engaged to advocate for a more conducive and operational environment.

Meanwhile, the SAGA programme focuses on fostering accountability and human rights adherence in Uganda. Various activities are carried out to improve citizen engagement, ensure access to quality information - such as public procurement data, audit results, and human rights violations - and to facilitate effective cooperation between state and non-state actors. These efforts aim at strengthening institutional capacities to meet the needs of all citizens, including women, youth, and other vulnerable and marginalised groups as defined above.

### 1. Strengthening accountability

'I was able to upload critical issues, such as the sharing of maternity beds, inadequate supplies of malaria medication for pregnant mothers, and the lack of a changing room for girls. This shows that the CFP [Citizen Feedback Platform] is an efficient tool, allowing us to report issues directly to the relevant offices', says Musenero Deborah, member, Participatory Budget Club in Kibuku District.



GCSP fosters transparency, accountability and anticorruption in Uganda by supporting structured collaboration between the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), the Inspectorate of Government (IG), and the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA). This collaboration is guided by a jointly agreed Collaboration Strategy and operationalised through committees and three Technical Working Groups (TWGs): TWG I on collaborative audits and investigations, TWG II on capacity building and TWG III on stakeholder engagement.



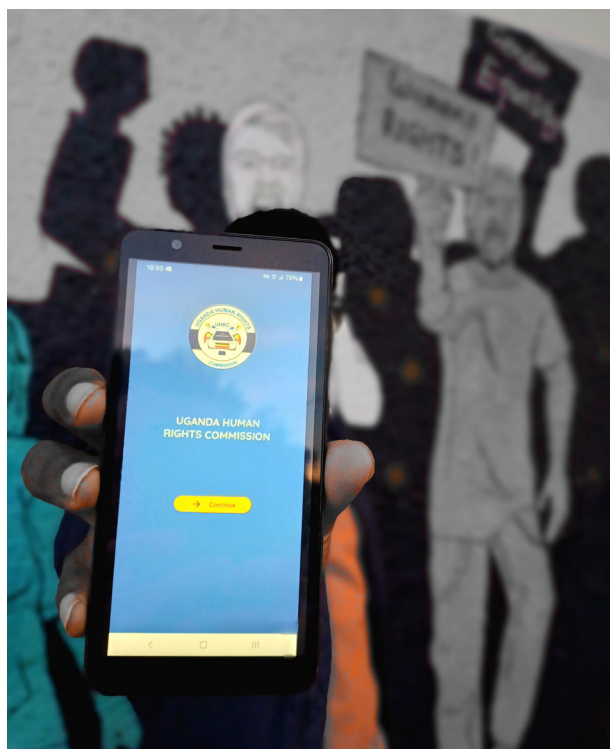
Complementing these efforts, GCSP has facilitated the development of the Citizen Feedback Platform (CFP), which enables Ugandans to report service delivery concerns directly to the OAG, and the



Contract Monitoring System (CMS), which allows civil society organisations to track contract implementation and flag irregularities to the PPDA.

Civil society remains a pivotal partner, ensuring inclusive oversight and amplifying citizen voices in the fight against corruption. Although Uganda has made significant strides in strengthening its accountability frameworks, limited social accountability, fragmented processes, and organised corruption persist. GCSP contributes to mitigating these risks by supporting collaborative oversight efforts, awareness campaigns, and initiatives that enhance social accountability, reinforcing Uganda's accountability ecosystem and promoting more effective use of public resources.

## 2. Strengthening human rights



UHRC App is a digital tool to enhance the reporting and tracking of human rights violations in Uganda, representing a vital step forward in leveraging technology to strengthen accountability and improve the human rights landscape. © GIZ / Benedikt van den Boom

GCSP contributes to embedding a human rights-based approach (HRBA) in Uganda's development eco system by collaborating with the National Planning Authority, the Uganda Human Rights Commission and a network of CSOs. GCSP provides institutional support, focused training and technical advice on the five HRBA principles - participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, and legality - so that Ugandan frameworks such as the Vision 2040 and the National Development Plans

(NDP) mainstream these standards. By integrating these principles into the NDP and local government guidelines. As a result, public programmes are better equipped to address the needs of marginalised communities and enable all citizens to claim their social and economic rights.

Besides this, GCSP has supported the inclusion of HRBA in the results-based monitoring and evaluation framework that keeps track of the implementation of the NDP. At the local level, the project supported the development of the Simplified Parish Action Planning Guidelines, placing HRBA at the heart of grassroots development and empowering communities to shape their own futures.

GCSP brings together government bodies, CSOs and rights holders in structured partnerships and through facilitating multi stakeholder policy formats, encouraging open dialogue. GCSP additionally utilises the approach of supporting all its partners in using simple digital tools to boost accountability, transparency and feedback. It helps CSOs track government performance, run community outreach and elevate citizen voices on issues from women's rights to disability inclusion. Through these joint platforms and stronger institutions at both national and local levels, GCSP builds an accountable, people centred system that empowers all Ugandans to take part in decision-making and uphold their human rights.

## 3. Strengthening civil society

Through CUSP, GCSP enhances its CSO partners' capacity to participate meaningfully in development, advocate for citizens' rights, and hold state actors to account. The programme focuses on strengthening organisational resilience and bolstering long-term financial sustainability.

Through tailored capacity development, GCSP supports CSOs in improving their compliance, strategic planning, and internal governance systems. The programme promotes collaboration and knowledge exchange among CSOs while assisting their structured engagement in policy processes, especially at the sub-national level, where local voices are often underrepresented.

To reduce dependence on donor funding, GCSP also supports selected CSOs in exploring alternative financing models, including social enterprises. By strengthening the institutional foundation of civil society, GCSP enables Ugandan CSOs to operate more independently, advocate more effectively, and contribute meaningfully to inclusive governance.

## 4. Achievements and highlights



**1,700 jobs** created for women and youth

Since 2022, GCSP has supported the creation of 16 social enterprises operated by CSOs, generating over 1,700 jobs for women and youth. Targeted training in business planning and fundraising has helped CSOs diversify their income and strengthen their sustainability. A flagship example is the Fish Innovation Centre by the Uganda National Women Fish Organisation, which secured €225,000 from the Gates Foundation and successfully exported Ugandan fish to Canada in 2024.



**10 policy submissions**

GCSP strengthens grassroots influence on policymaking by supporting local CSOs. Since 2022, 10 policy submissions have been developed with GCSP's help - six of them focused on women and youth.

Four submissions have been adopted into Uganda's National Development Plan IV, including inputs on gender by the Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), disability inclusion by the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU), youth issues by Restless Development, and broad civil society recommendations by the Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNGOF).



**900 citizen-reported cases** resolved

Since 2022, 2,300 citizens registered on GCSP-supported platforms – the CMS, CFP and UHRC App - resulting in the resolution of 900 citizen-reported cases related to corruption, service delivery and human rights. These tools help citizens hold duty bearers to account and improve responsiveness at local and national levels.



**15 million Ugandans** reached

Beyond structural support, GCSP works to shift societal norms and foster a culture that values rights, inclusion and civic engagement. Through nationwide campaigns, GCSP has raised awareness through radio talk-show, debates and newspapers among over 15 million Ugandans, especially women and marginalised communities, on human rights and anti-corruption.



Silver Fish Processing at the Fish Innovation Centre by the Uganda National Women Fish Organisation. © GIZ / Daniella Murungi

GCSP works on amplifying young people's voices in decision-making across Uganda and East Africa. Through Subnational Youth Parliaments, that inform national and regional policymaking, the programme upholds the political participation of Uganda's biggest population segment - its youth.

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