Solidarity Action Network (SANE)

SANE aims to strengthen resilience of and solidarity among civil society actors when faced with civic space restrictions or changing operating conditions. It connects international and national civil society organisations – (I)CSOs – across all sub-sectors and brings them into discussions on civic space challenges and opportunities.

Within the network we share experience, lessons learned and best practices, explore different forms of solidarity (especially beyond public advocacy), and encourage joint actions. A Working Group – consisting of (I)CSO representatives – provides strategic guidance to set SANE priorities and develop activities close to needs of civil society actors. SANE is currently supported by the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Ford Foundation. The Open Society Foundations, Deutsche Postcode Lotterie and Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung support phase two of four of the "Anticipating futures" initiative (see page 2).

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SANE activities

Anticipating futures for civil society operating space

▸ A three-year initiative (2022 – 2025) aims to strengthen anticipatory capacities and future readiness of civil society professionals who are working to defend civic and civil society operating space.

▸ The initiative will increase awareness and readiness of (I)CSOs to address future challenges at the intersection of civic space and crises, offer a collaborative space to develop future scenarios, and translate them into concrete organisational strategies.

▸ Watch this video introducing the initiative and check out our landscape mapping outlining what (I)CSOs have been learning from past and present crises, and identifying gaps that require collective sector commitment (Phase 1).

▸ In 2023, we focus on developing future scenarios for civic space through a collaborative online exercise using a narrative, scenario-writing and signals-scanning method ParEvo. The outcomes of the ParEvo exercise will be summarized in a report, which will be widely shared in the following dissemination phase and workshopped at the International Civic Forum in November 2023 (Phase 2).

Sharing resilience and solidarity mechanisms

▸ We collect case studies and best practices in the so-called Solidarity Playbook to help (I)CSOs respond to undue scrutiny and challenges, and to enable learning on how to act in solidarity with civil society actors, particularly local partners.

▸ We convene virtual events and curated conversations on different civic space issues to discuss challenges as well as exchange experience and lessons learned.

Strengthening cybersecurity

▸ In partnership with the CyberPeace Institute, we captured case studies on cybersecurity to share examples of how (I)CSOs dealt with actual cyberattacks and provide insights into how organisations can prevent and mitigate similar incidents. The key findings outline main observations, lessons learned, and opportunity areas from the collection.

▸ An accompanying guidance "Navigating cybersecurity: Guidance for (I)CSO professionals" explores action steps to better protect organisations online.

Resource hub

▸ A public page where we collect resources on selected civic space topics (e.g., tackling mis- and disinformation, building narratives or addressing anti-rights groups).

▸ The hub consists of strategies, tools and guidelines to respond to threats and clampdowns faced by (I)CSOs as well as expert organisations and programmes that can help with a swift and suitable response.

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