Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity

Response to and impact of the COVID-19 crisis

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in collaboration with

WILDE GANZEN
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VASTENACTIE

west-vlaanderen
de gedreven provincie

eu can aid!

La Guilde

CISU CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEVELOPMENT

Colofon

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Table of contents

Executive summary 4

1. Introduction 7

2. Methodology 10

3. Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity 12

3.1 The CIGS' landscape 12

3.2 CIGS organisations 15

4. CIGS' response to COVID-19 20

4.1 Impact of the crisis on regular projects and programmes 21

4.2 Emergency aid 24

5. The impact of COVID-19 on CIGS 27

5.1 Financial impact 27

5.2 Concerns and Opportunities 29

6. Concluding remarks 32

Bibliography 34

Appendix 1. 36

Executive summary

This study provides insight into the role of citizen-led, small-scale, voluntary development organisations in the COVID-19 crisis and sheds light on the impact of the crisis on these organisations. The study took place among Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS) and their support organisations in Belgium (with a focus on Flanders), Denmark, France, and the Netherlands. Without claiming to present a complete and representative picture of these so-called CIGS in the participating countries, let alone CIGS in other European countries, this study is the first to present a systematic cross-country study of CIGS in four different European countries. We find that, despite the differences between the different countries in terms of composition of civil society, type of support provided to CIGS, and the reasoning behind this support, there is sufficient common ground between the CIGS in the different countries to speak of a shared, cross-country phenomenon. While individual organisations might be relatively small, our study shows that, as a group, CIGS are able to mobilise significant resources both in terms of human resources, expressed by the large number of volunteers being actively engaged in the organisations, and in terms of financial resources.

- The 541 CIGS participating in our study represent 7,573 volunteers, 526 paid staff, and a total annual budget of EUR 29,900,812; together, they are active in 104 different countries across the globe where they currently support over 885 projects.
- The COVID-19 crisis directly affected 88% of CIGS' regular projects and programmes between January and September 2020. Overall, 64.8% of the CIGS experienced a decrease in income, and 52% of the CIGS in our dataset started new activities related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- While CIGS mostly aim to contribute to more long(er) term development processes, many CIGS started providing emergency aid to the partners and communities they are working with. Their often long-standing presence in specific regions and their durable partnership with local organisations resulted in a strong commitment of CIGS to respond (despite their own organisational challenges). In addition, it allowed them to respond quickly. Their funding base enabled them to make funds available in the short term or to generate new funding to finance the COVID-19 response of their counterparts.
- In the period of March till November 2020, four CIGS support organisations in four different countries (CISU, La Guilde, Province of West-Flanders, and

Stichting Wilde Ganzen) supported a total of 327 projects in 58 different countries, worth a total amount of over EUR 5,390,000. Together these projects aimed to reach approximately 2,087,786 beneficiaries.

- We find that fundraising strategies applied by CIGS are of strong influence on how the COVID-19 crisis impacted CIGS so far. CIGS in Belgium and France are more strongly reliant on direct fundraising activities, with many of these activities being put on hold due to the COVID-19 regulations. This is being reflected in the fact that the income of CIGS in both countries is more heavily impacted by the crisis so far.

- Consequently, CIGS in Belgium and France are more concerned about the future, whereas Danish and Dutch CIGS, despite having concerns as well, see more opportunities resulting from the crisis. Important to notice here is that CIGS build their fundraising strategies in response to the traditions of giving in their countries and the resulting composition of both private and institutionalised funding actors. An in-depth analysis of these differences goes beyond the scope of this study. However, we do see how, for example, the omnipresence of private foundations in the Netherlands and their (increased) tendency to support CIGS, clearly provided CIGS with a safeguard against the impact of the crisis. These private foundations steadily continued or even upscaled their support to CIGS.

- In addition to the above, we also see indications that the identity of civil society in the different countries and therewith the rationale behind supporting CIGS, affects fundraising strategies and therewith the impact of the crisis. Results of the study tend to indicate that both in Belgium and France, support organisations of CIGS and CIGS themselves see a clear role for CIGS in their own society as contributors to global citizenship. This is being reflected in the more privatised fundraising strategies of CIGS in France and Belgium (in schools and community centres): informing and involving citizens in the work of CIGS is seen as a clear mandate of CIGS. In the current crisis, this results in a stronger negative impact of the crisis on the incomes of CIGS, and it hampers them from realising their goals in reaching people in their own communities.

- We do not only find country differences in terms of fundraising strategies determining the impact of and the response to the crisis. We find that Danish CIGS are overall larger and more professionalised organisations. This results in these organisations being less impacted by the crisis. The results also show that larger organisations especially decided to set up COVID-19 emergency

projects. At the same time, these more professionalised organisations also express different concerns related to, for example, the health of their staff both at home and in the countries they support.

- Overall, we see strong resilience among CIGS, with many of them finding ways to continue their regular work and/or by starting COVID-19 interventions. They showed great dedication to provide continued support to their local counterparts and the communities where they work. Whereas some CIGS paused their regular activities, most of them are confident they will be able to continue supporting their partners and their work in the near future.

1. Introduction

Traditionally, in the field of international development cooperation, three aid channels are being distinguished. The first group are governments bilaterally supporting countries in the global south by providing government-to-government support (Develtere & De Bruyn, 2009). The second channel is formed by multilateral organisations such as the United Nations. The third channel consists of traditional non-governmental organisations (NGOs), also referred to as indirect, private, or civilateral development aid (Develtere & De Bruyn, 2009). Actors in these three channels are often seen as 'traditional donors' in the sense that they find 'their raison d'être in international development co-operation', and they essentially form 'one community . . . with a domain-specific set of values and norms, codes of conduct, and their own discourse and vocabulary' (Develtere & De Bruyn, 2009). Globally, these traditional actors receive increasing 'competition' from an onrush of alternative development actors. For different reasons, celebrities, private foundations, and companies have increasingly become active players in the field of international aid (Kinsbergen, 2014; Richey & Ponte, 2014).

More and more the rise of non-traditional actors in the field of international development is the subject of (academic) study and increasingly has the attention of policymakers. Interestingly and indicative for their position in the field of international development, an omnipresent actor in many Northern countries remains largely untouched: the thousands of individuals that actively engage in the fight against poverty by starting their own small-scale, voluntary development organisations. In this study, we refer to these organisations as Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS). A European mapping in 17 countries concludes that, although differently named and in different numbers, citizen initiatives are common and widespread across Europe (Pollet et al., 2014). However small as the individual organisations are, the following numbers illustrate that citizens establishing and running their own development organisation is not an anecdotal affair but omnipresent in Europe[1]. For the Netherlands, the current estimate for what scholars there call private development initiatives (PDIs) is around 5,000 CIGS. In 2014, 4% of the Dutch (adult) population was said to be actively involved in a PDI, which comes down to half a million participants (Plaisier & Schulpen, 2014). In 2018, PDIs received about 20 million euro from Dutch households. In Flanders (the northern part of Belgium), estimates on the number of PDIs

1. Also outside Europe, such as in the United States and Canada, there is an increasing number of CIGS. This current study however will focus on CIGS in European countries.

vary from 1,000 to 6,000 (Develtere & De Bruyn, 2009; Mevis, 2016). The total annual budget of Flemish citizen initiatives comprises about 63 million euro.

CIGS are certainly not a new phenomenon. However, their number has increased considerably since mid-2000 under the influence of macro-processes such as globalisation and the related democratisation of travel and individualisation. As a result, in many countries in the global north, CIGS are playing an increasingly prominent role in civil society. Today, it is therefore impossible to talk about (the playing field of) international cooperation without taking this heterogeneous group of organisations into account. As a global community, we entered the 'decade of action' in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda (SDG Agenda). This agenda, also referred to as 'project everyone', calls upon everyone, from individuals to companies, NGOs, and multilateral actors, to actively contribute to reaching the goals by 2030. As part of this agenda, it is critical to both recognise CIGS in their role as development actors and understand what role they (can) take up in contributing to the agenda.

Whereas CIGS are commonly known for their role as development actors, contributing to long(er) term development processes, this current study analyses the role of CIGS in a humanitarian crisis. More precisely, it questions if and how CIGS responded to the COVID-19 crisis in the countries wherein they operate. In addition, we question how the pandemic affected the organisations. Before presenting these findings, a sketch of the CIGS landscape in the different countries of study will be presented. The study focuses on CIGS in Belgium, Denmark, France, and the Netherlands. This study provides the first systematic cross-country comparison of CIGS.

This study is conducted by Radboud University, the Netherlands and is commissioned by the Research & Action Network on European Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity. This network consists of civil society organisations in Belgium (4de Pijlersteunpunt, eu can aid! and the Province of West-Flanders), Denmark (CISU), France (La Guilde), and the Netherlands (Stichting Wilde Ganzen, Vastenactie and Partin[2]. All these organisations provide different type of support to the CIGS in their respective countries and/or in the global south. Consequently, we will refer to these organisations as

2. The organisation eu can aid! provides direct support to southern-based development organisations and does not provides support to northern based CIGS. Vastenactie provides both direct support to CIGS in the Netherlands as well as to southern based development organisations. This report will especially focus on the work of CIGS based in the global north and those network members supporting them in their work.

support organisations. Funding has been provided by Stichting Wilde Ganzen and Radboud University.

2. Methodology

The study took up an exploratory, mixed method design and was conducted in close cooperation with the support organisations that commissioned the study. Data collection took place between June and November 2020. To gain insight into the context wherein CIGS operate in the different countries in the global north, multiple in-depth interviews took place with staff members of the eight different support organisations. In addition, previous studies and policy documents have been analysed. Insights into the response of CIGS to the COVID-19 crisis were gained through project administration files provided by those CIGS support organisations that provided financial support to CIGS (La Guilde, Province of West-Flanders, CISU and Wilde Ganzen).

To understand the impact of the crisis on CIGS, a survey was conducted among CIGS in the participating countries. The survey was distributed via the support organisations through email, newsletters, and social media and resulted in a response of 562 CIGS (see Table 1 for information on the response).[3] It is hard to make statements on the representativeness of the sample for the entire population of CIGS in the different countries. Since we approached CIGS via support organisations, it could be that especially younger and smaller organisations might be underrepresented in the study since they might not (yet) cooperate with support organisations. This might also account for diaspora organisations, which risk to be underrepresented in the network of CIGS support organisations. In addition, since we did not include all CIGS support organisations in our study, we do not claim to present a complete, representative picture of CIGS and the CIGS support system in the participating countries. However, since we included the largest support organisations in each country, we are convinced that we managed to reach out to many CIGS in all these countries.

3. Since CISU also supports larger development organisations and does not use a strict definition of CIGS, we applied an upper limit of an annual budget of 1 million euro. By doing so, 15 organisations were excluded from the study.

Country	Reach	N	Response rate
Belgium	1047	113	10.8%
Denmark	268	84	31.3%
France	1000	106	10,6%
The Netherlands	2615	264	10.1%

Table 1. Survey sampling
The network of Wilde Ganzen, Vastenactie and Partin partly overlaps. This most probably results in a biased response rate for the Netherlands.

Finally, both to enlarge our understanding of CIGS' role in the crisis and the way they are impacted by it, in-depth interviews with core members[4] of 12 CIGS in Belgium (4) and the Netherlands (8) took place. All interviews were conducted in October 2020. The interviews took between approximately 1–2.5 hours and were held online. To not further complicate participation of CIGS in this part of the study, we decided to conduct interviews with only Dutch/Flemish speaking CIGS members, limiting this part of the study to CIGS in Belgium and the Netherlands. The case studies were selected from the survey respondents. When sampling the case studies, we aimed for a group of CIGS reflecting the variety both in terms of organisations characteristics, type of interventions, and their response to and impact of the crisis (see Appendix I for more elaborate information on the sample). Throughout the report, four cases will be presented more in-depth, illustrating the impact of the crisis and CIGS's response to it.

4. The term 'members' refers to both paid and non-paid staff of CIGS.

3. Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity

3.1 The CIGS' landscape

This section provides insight into the context wherein CIGS operate. We describe if, how, and why CIGS are being supported and recognised as actors in the field of international development cooperation. While this study will be able to provide first insights into these differences, it is beyond the scope of this study to present a systematic, in-depth understanding of the differences and communalities of the identity, role, and positioning of CIGS in the participating countries.

In Belgium, in the northern part CIGS are referred to as 'Vierde Pijler organisaties' (fourth pillar organisations), referring to all those initiatives that do not belong to the established first to third development aid channels (Develtere & De Bruyn, 2009). Within this pillar, CIGS are being distinguished from more institutionalised organisations and defined as the entire group of initiatives that developed themselves outside an (already existing) institutional structure and for whom development cooperation is their main reason of existence (Develtere & De Bruyn, 2009). Mappings of Flemish CIGS so far show that organisations are characterised as small-scale, voluntary development organisations. In the French speaking part of Belgium, CIGS are named 'Initiatives Populaires de Solidarité Internationale (IPSI).

Currently, there is no federal support for CIGS. The Flemish government decided to start supporting CIGS from 2009 onwards with the establishment of the 'Vierde Pijler Steunpunt'. This was the first step in the recognition of CIGS in Flanders. This support organisation provides CIGS with advice, training, network events, and since 2017, limited funding. Currently, 838 CIGS are registered in the database. This process of recognition went hand-in-hand with the commissioning of two academic studies aiming to shed light on an actor thus far unknown and/or unrecognised. Since 2012, Vierde Pijler Steunpunt has been integrated in 11.11.11, the North-South coalition of NGOs, unions, movements, and various solidarity groups in Flanders. Since 2013, CIGS are also represented in the general assembly and the board of directors of 11.11.11. The coalition wants to give voice to CIGS as part of the broad and diverse landscape of actors in the field of development cooperation. Whereas the idea is not to co-opt them in the system of established development actors, the coalition expresses the intention to recognise CIGS and include them as part of the development community. Since 2017, there is an '11-fund' specifically targeting CIGS; a fund distributing part of the budget (EUR 100,000) resulting from joint fundraising of the coalition members.

Notwithstanding regional differences, also on provincial and community levels, CIGS can count on (financial) support. They are seen as a pivotal actor in strengthening global citizenship at local levels. As part of the Fourth Pillar support organisation, a panel was established, currently composed of 280 CIGS. This panel safeguards and monitors the common interest of the Fourth Pillar organisations within the coalition and in relation to different stakeholders. While on the one hand, CIGS are being recognised as part of the same community, at the same time their distinctive features are recognised and valued. Stimulating dialogue, mutual respect and recognition, and the ambition to join forces for the sake of achieving shared goals form the starting points of the cooperation between CIGS and established development actors in Flanders. In the French speaking part of Belgium, the 'Cellule d'Appui pour la Solidarité Internationale Wallonne' (CASIW) is the most prominent focal point for CIGS. CASIW aims to promote citizen involvement and partnership in international development cooperation. Currently, CIGS in the French speaking part of Belgium cannot count on similar support compared to those based in the Flemish speaking part of the country.

In the Netherlands, CIGS are commonly referred to as 'Particuliere Initiatieven' – Private (development) initiatives. The Netherlands is the only country as far as we know that has a formal definition of CIGS, formulated by Radboud University (Kinsbergen, 2014). CIGS are being defined as (1) a small scale (less than 20 core members or a budget lower than EUR 1,000,000), (2) voluntary (less than 20% paid core members) initiative, with (3) development cooperation as their 'reason of existence', and (4) no direct funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kinsbergen, 2014). Globally, the Netherlands has the most long-standing tradition of studying the work of CIGS. From the late 1990s onwards, the Dutch government has been supporting and facilitating the process of 'mainstreaming' in the field of international development cooperation. For a long time, this resulted in significant, indirect, financial support of CIGS by the national government. It was expected that, by doing so, development cooperation would change 'from an exclusive field to an integrated part of different sectors and spheres. One could refer to this as mainstreaming of development cooperation' (Herfkens, 2001, p. 8). Above all, it was said, these activities would contribute to the public support for development cooperation (Herfkens, 2001, p. 9). In 2008, the ministry launched a fund, which turned out to be a one-off fund, for 'young and innovative' initiatives as a way to encourage CIGS and CIGS-like organisations to get access to government funding (Mofa, 2008). The policy letter accompanying this new fund stated that the aim of the fund was that applicants would eventually be enabled to access regular government funding. Therefore, organisations receiving funding via this scheme

would be 'offered the opportunity to professionalise in terms of business operations. This all shows that the Dutch support systems for CIGS on the one hand strongly focused on the role of CIGS as catalysts in the process of strengthening public support and, on the other hand, explicitly aimed for professionalisation of these organisations, resulting in an inclusion of CIGS into the regular system, requiring them to 'become' more like existing organisations.

This support was provided to CIGS via Dutch-established development organisations that received funding from the government as part of its multi-annual policy plans. From 2011 onwards, budget cuts and, related to this, policy changes at the level of the national government and established development organisations, resulted in gradual phasing out of this support. In 2006, nine established Dutch development organisations together co-financed nearly 2000 PDI projects with a total budget of about 40 million euro. In 2018, this amounted to less than 500 projects receiving a total of 10 million euro distributed by four organisations. Currently, Stichting Wilde Ganzen and Vastenactie are the only two established development organisations still providing support to CIGS, and they do so mainly with private funding. In 2009, an umbrella organisation for CIGS, named Partin, was being formed by and for Dutch-based CIGS. Partin aims to give CIGS a voice in discussions on development cooperation and advocates for the interests of CIGS. In addition to this, Partin provides CIGS with practical advice and tools. Currently, Partin counts 355 CIGS members. Partin is being financed through membership fees. Contrary to Belgium, Partin has no formal partnership with Partos, the umbrella organisations for more established development organisations.

In France, CIGS are referred to as 'Associations de Solidarité Internationale' (ASI), initiating and/or supporting 'Microprojets' (small projects). Since the 1990s, CIGS have been supported by the French national department of development cooperation. In addition, there is a strong regional network of organisations active to support CIGS in their role of strengthening global citizenship. Recently, private (family) foundations have increasingly expressed a willingness to support the work of CIGS, either directly or via specialised CIGS support organisations. Currently, the French government explains its support for CIGS by stating that development interventions of CIGS are considered of equal importance compared to the support provided by other actors: they are being cherished for their innovative working manner and are seen as holding a lot of potential evolving into more established organisations. In addition, CIGS are being considered an important reflection of a strong local mobilising force, therewith stressing also the importance CIGS hold as contributors to global citizenship. The above makes clear that CIGS are being

recognised, in their own specific nature, as legitimate development actors, both offering valuable contributions in the countries in the global south where they operate as in France itself. At the same time, CIGS are being said to often require support and training to further professionalise their working manner and their organisational structure and to increasingly learn from and cooperate with other actors (AFD, 2019).

In Denmark, larger development organisations can enter into a direct strategic agreement with Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). The support for smaller NGOs is mandated to a few larger NGDO and umbrella organisations. With 272 member organisations, CISU is the biggest umbrella organisation and supports both small CIGS as well as larger organisations, with support ranging from 53,000 – 175,000 euro annually. In Denmark, there is no clear distinction between smaller, medium-sized, and larger development organisations. So far, no (academic) research into Danish CIGS has taken place, making it a rather unexplored area.

3.2 CIGS organisations

In this part, we present background information on CIGS in the different countries of study. Although this study does not provide an in-depth profile of CIGS members and their motives, previous studies show that, overall, CIGS members are often higher educated and are, on average, of middle age. Most CIGS result from a personal encounter during a holiday or longer stay in a country in the Global South (Develtere & De Bruyn, 2009; Godin, 2013; Kinsbergen, 2014; La Guilde, 2016; Mevis, 2016).

In all countries, CIGS can be defined as (relatively) small-scale organisations. With an average number of 35 members and an annual budget of around EUR 147,000, Danish CIGS are by far the largest CIGS compared to CIGS in the other countries in this study. In addition, Danish CIGS are also more professionalised, indicated by the share of paid staff members in the organisations. We did not study the characteristics of CIGS members in this current study, but previous studies show that whereas CIGS members in Belgium, the Netherlands and France are on average of middle age, Danish CIGS are composed more diverse in terms of members' age, with more younger people being involved as well. Although comparable to the Netherlands and Belgium in size, the higher number of paid staff members suggests a more professionalised context in France. Although CIGS across the countries share the voluntary character, this feature is the most prominent among Belgian CIGS, with nearly 97% of the organisations being completely run by volunteers. Dutch CIGS are

the smallest CIGS in terms of core members and annual budget. Table 2 presents an overview of the main features of CIGS in the different countries.

With a total of 7,573 volunteers, 526 paid staff, and a total annual budget of 29,900,81 euro, 541 European CIGS are active in 104 different countries, currently supporting a total of 885 projects.

	The Netherlands	Belgium	Denmark	France
	Particuliere initiatieven *(Private Development Initiatives)*	Flanders: 4de pijler-organisaties *(4th Pillar-organisations)* Wallonia: Initiatives Populaires de Solidarité Internationale	No specific terminology	Association de Solidarité Internationale *(International solidarity association)*
	10 members	13 members	35 members	17 members
	Volunteers: 92.1% Paid staff: 7,6%	Volunteers: 96.6% Paid staff: 3,4%	Volunteers: 90.6% Paid staff: 9,4%	Volunteers: 92.9% Paid staff: 7%
	Annual budget: €51.331,-	Annual budget: €63.503,-	Annual budget: €147.123,-	Annual budget: €56.599,-
	+/- 5,000 CIGS	1,500 - 6,400 CIGS	unknown	4,000 CIGS
	1. Private individuals 2. NGOs 3. Private foundations	1. Private individuals 2. Government grants 3. Schools	1. NGOs 2. Private individuals 3. Private foundations	1. NGOs 2. Private individuals 3. Government grants
	1. Donations via website 2. Direct mailings 3. Social media campaigns	1. Organising events 2. Direct mailings 3. Direct sale of products	1. Donations via website 2. Organising events 3. Direct mailing	1. Organising events 2. Collections 3. Direct mailings
	1. Uganda 2. Ghana 3. Indonesia	1. DRC (Congo) 2. Kenya 3. India	1. Kenya 2. Uganda 3. Tanzania	1. Burkina Faso 2. Senegal 3. Benin

Table 2. Main features of CIGS in the different countries

The four countries participating in this study all experienced a peak of new CIGS being established between 2007–2010 (see Figure 1). Compared to CIGS in the other countries, with an average of 22 years, Danish CIGS are the oldest. With an average age of 13.67 years, French CIGS are the youngest organisations, followed by the Belgian CIGS (14.34 years), and the Dutch (16.11 years).

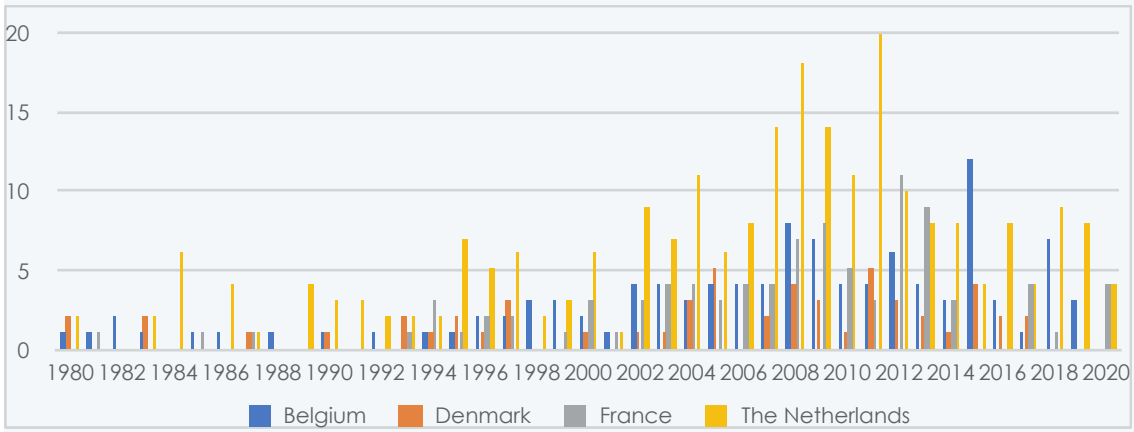

Figure 1. Number of CIGS established per year

Although European CIGS can be found across the world, there is a strong concentration of CIGS operating on the African continent: 71% of the CIGS are active in Africa, followed by nearly 30% working in Asia, and 8% of the CIGS support organisations and projects in South America. The three most popular countries are Kenya (13.5% or 53 CIGS), Uganda (12% or 46) and India (11.5% or 43) (see Figure 2). With a total of 259 CIGS active in 86 different countries, Dutch CIGS are the most omnipresent around the world. On average, Belgian CIGS are active in 1.42 countries, Dutch CIGS work in 1.5 countries, French in 1.73 countries, and Danish CIGS in 2.23 countries.

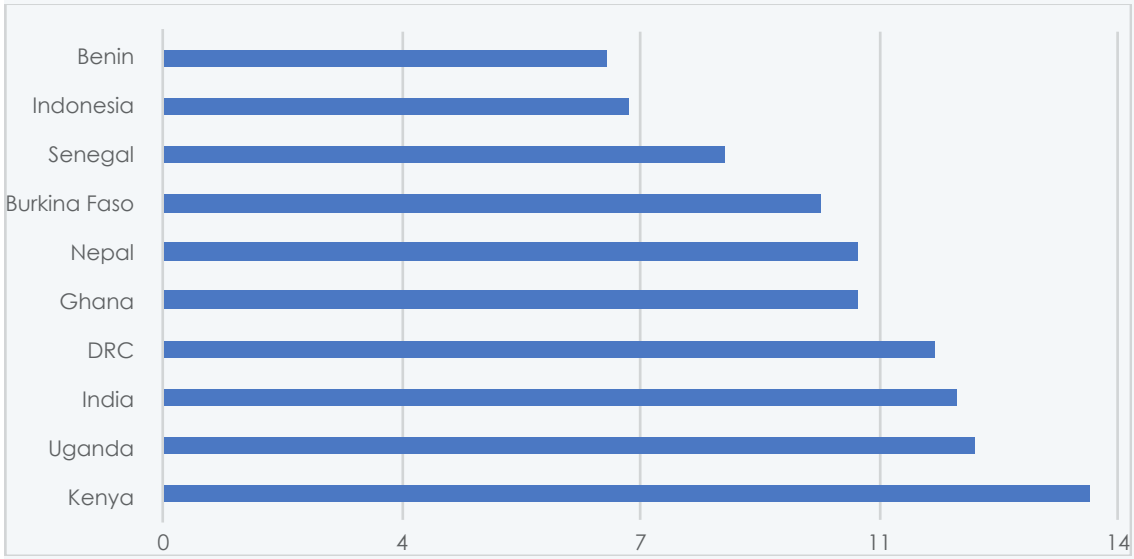

Figure 2. Top 10 countries of intervention (%)

Figure 3 shows the importance of different revenue sources of CIGS. The overall picture shows that CIGS rely both on private donors and public, more institutionalised types of donors. First, we see that Belgian and Dutch CIGS depend

mainly on private individuals, whereas CIGS in Denmark and France are most reliant on NGOs. Both in Denmark and in the Netherlands, private foundations contribute to a considerable degree to the work of CIGS. Striking is the important role of government funding in Belgium. In particular, municipalities and provinces in Belgium are known to be highly supportive of the work of CIGS. Belgium also stands out with the strong support provided by schools. Support by religious institutions is most apparent in the Netherlands.

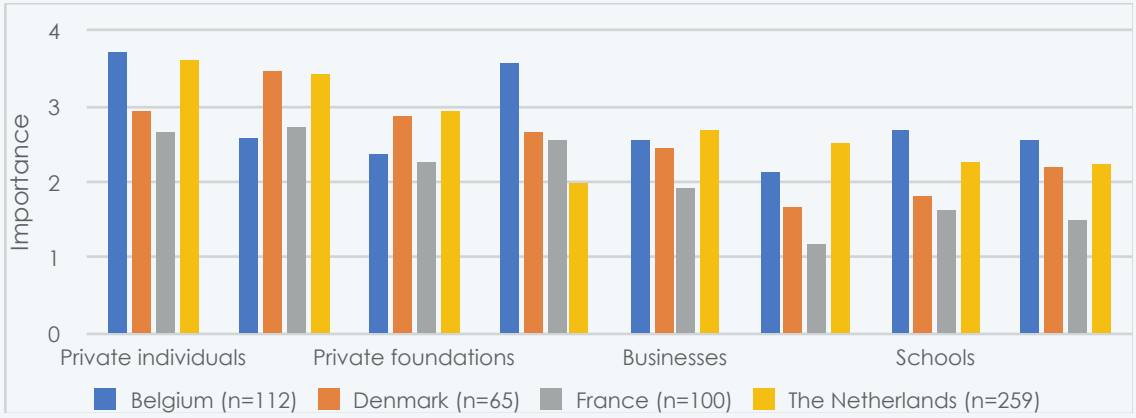

Figure 3. Importance of different revenue sources of CIGS

Furthermore, CIGS undertake a wide variety of fundraising activities. First, it is apparent that CIGS in France depend to a large extent on direct (offline) fundraising activities. Dutch and Danish CIGS especially rely more on online fundraising activities (see Figure 4).

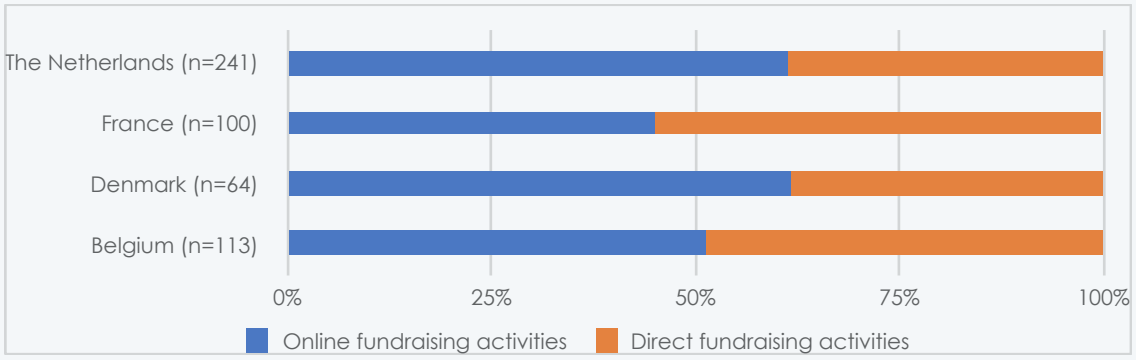

Figure 4. Online and direct fundraising activities per country

Figure 5 provides an overview of the usage of different fundraising activities by CIGS. It is striking that 83% of the Belgian CIGS indicate they organise fundraising events, compared to only 44% of the Danish CIGS. CIGS in the Netherlands tend to focus

more on donations via their website and direct mailings for their funds, while France focuses most on organising events and collections.

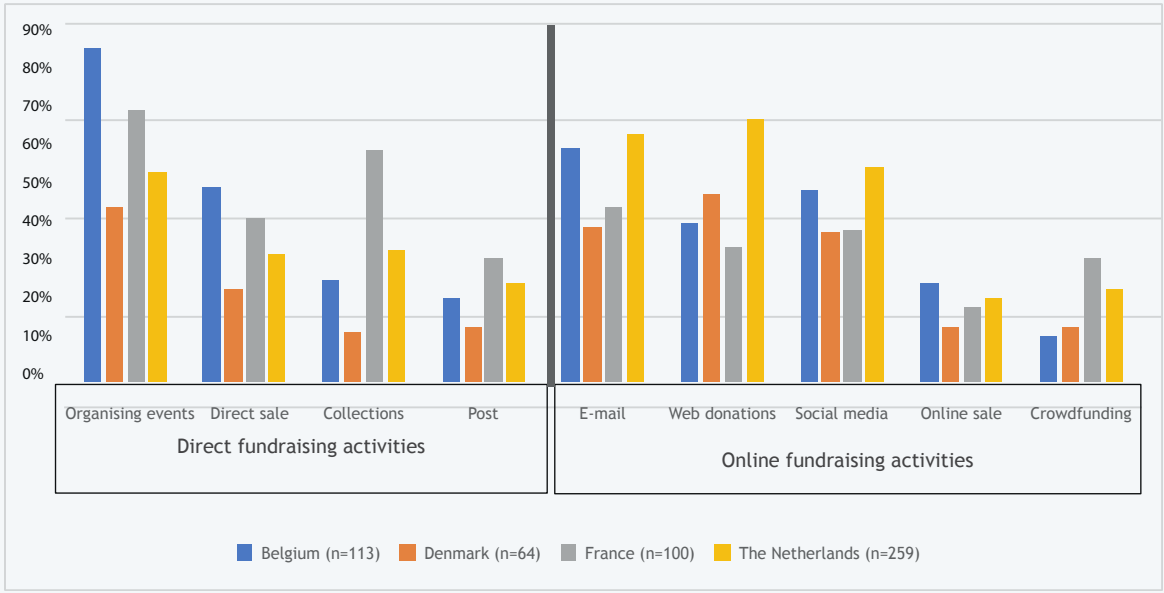

Figure 5. Different fundraising activities per country

The type of donors and fundraising activities both French and Belgian CIGS rely on, could result in a stronger public presence of CIGS in these countries compared to CIGS in Denmark and the Netherlands where CIGS undertake more online fundraising activities and are supported by institutionalised donors, which often require less of a public presence of organisations. Assuming that direct, face-to-face interactions are required to contribute to a strengthened public support for development cooperation, this could affect the role CIGS undertake in this area.

4. CIGS' response to COVID-19

Whereas most CIGS are generally involved in long(er) term development interventions, the COVID-19 crisis was for most of the organisations their first experience of acting in an emergency setting. In this section, we first describe how the COVID-19 crisis affected the regular interventions of CIGS and if and how they started new interventions in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Secondly, we analyse what determines the response of CIGS, looking at core characteristics and country differences. Table 3 introduces 4 case studies, highlighting how they responded to the crisis and what the impact of the crisis is on the organisations. The work of these 4 cases will be presented throughout this part of the report.

	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3	Case study 4
	Netherlands - India	Netherlands - Ghana	Belgium - Congo	Belgium - Peru
	2007	1989	2002	2002
	Projects of a facility nature aimed at the development of children	Projects of a facility nature to improve healthcare, education and employment	Several projects to support a small city, mostly aimed at children and healthcare & agriculture project	Improvement of education for children and young adults
	Annual budget ± €50.000	Annual budget ± €99.500	Annual budget ± €31.500	Annual budget ± €50.000
	- Private individuals - NGOs - Private equity funds - Religious institutes	- Private individuals - Companies - NGOs - Private equity funds	- Private individuals - Companies - NGOs	- Private individuals - Government
	10 volunteers	12 volunteers	12 volunteers	2 volunteers
	Started new projects related to the COVID-19 pandemic	Did not start new projects related to the COVID-19 pandemic	Started new projects related to the COVID-19 pandemic	Started new projects related to the COVID-19 pandemic
	Impact crisis income: substantially increased but expects this to decrease in the future	Impact crisis income: substantially increased and expects this to remain the same in the future	Impact crisis income: substantially decreased and expects this to further decrease in the future	Impact crisis income: somehow increased and expects this to remain the same in the future

Table 3. Case studies emergency aid projects

4.1 Impact of the crisis on regular projects and programmes

The COVID-19 crisis directly affected 88% of CIGS' regular projects and programmes between January and September 2020. Around half of those continued their regular activities less intensively (46%) and/or postponed their regular activities to the future (62%). Nearly 30% of the CIGS had to permanently stop (part of) their regular activities. Belgian CIGS more frequently (39.4%) permanently stopped (part of) their regular activities, followed by Danish (36.2%) and French CIGS (27.4%). Only 19% of the Dutch CIGS decided to stop their regular activities. A small part of the CIGS started offering their activities online (17%), and a small number of CIGS accelerated the implementation of their regular activities (6%). Danish CIGS appeared most flexible in continuing to offer their activities online. CIGS in Belgium (17.2%), France (15.5%), and the Netherlands (19.2%) did so to a lesser extent. The larger resources of Danish CIGS, both in terms of finance and staff, partly explains the larger number of CIGS that managed to continue offering their activities online. We find a significant positive relation between both the number of paid staff members and the annual budget of organisations and the possibility of organisations offering regular activities online.

Reasons to adapt or stop the (implementation of) their regular activities, range from limiting the health risks for local employees and/or the target group (60%), local (travel) restrictions from authorities in project countries (58%) or in CIGS' home countries (48%), followed by the health risks for employees and volunteers in the CIGS countries (32%). Only in the 5th place, do CIGS mention a decreased income (27%) as a reason to stop or adapt their interventions. In particular, younger CIGS and CIGS in Belgium are more likely to adapt their interventions due to decreased income. Also, here we find that these country differences can be (partly) explained by CIGS' core characteristics. CIGS with a higher annual budget and/or paid staff more often changed their projects to limit the health risks for local employees and/or the target group. Travel restrictions in CIGS' home countries also have a significant negative effect on the continuation of the regular activities for organisations with a higher annual budget. CIGS with more volunteers more often changed their projects to limit health risks for employees/volunteers in the CIGS' country.

Conversations with CIGS (see Table 4) show that the impact of the crisis on the (future) continuation of their projects also depends on the nature of their interventions and on the current situation in the project country. While some projects that were 'on hold' during the lockdown are currently running as normal (e.g.,

construction work), others have experienced a more fundamental impact. For example, the latter is the case for CIGS supporting schools or day-care centres. In those cases where the school already reopened, parents are often no longer able to pay the tuition fees, hampering them sending their children to school, but also affecting the financial self-reliance of the schools. In addition, the lock-down resulted in many children currently still being out of reach of the schools. All this results in some CIGS expressing feelings of insecurity. 'It feels like all the efforts of the past years of both ourselves and our partner organisation have faded away' was mentioned by the interviewee of case study 3. However, even though most CIGS indicate they are (heavily) influenced, almost none of them question the survival of their organisation, and all of them are planning to continue their work in the future:

> No way . . . There is really no way that we will let our partner organisation down now. They are getting back on track after the lockdown, and with all the problems going on now . . . There is really no way that we will let them down (Interviewee case study 3).

Whereas CIGS express no concerns regarding the continuation of their current partnerships, CIGS do indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions because of the pandemic will negatively impact starting new partnerships. 'Being able to look someone in the eyes' and 'getting a certain feeling about someone' are considered crucial for starting new collaborations. However, most CIGS indicate that there are still plenty of possibilities for starting new projects with their current partners.

	Case Study 1	Case Study 2	Case Study 3	Case Study 4
Regular activities	Infrastructure projects in the field of education and the development of children in India	Infrastructure projects in the field of education and the development of children in Ghana	Several projects (orphanage, schools, pharmacy, bakery) to support the citizens of a city in the Congo, mostly aimed at children, healthcare, and an agriculture project	Access to education for children and young adults in a small village in Peru
Impact regular activities	Financing for the planned projects for 2020 (construction of a new kitchen and sanitary building) was already complete before the COVID-19 pandemic started. After a delay during the lockdown, the construction activities have started again	Financing for the planned project for 2020 (construction of a school) was delayed, which caused a delay in construction work. This was not directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic	The lockdown in the country had major consequences for the continuation of the projects. For example, schools were closed, the bakery had to shut down because of the rationing of flour, and people could not pay for their medicine at the pharmacy anymore because they had lost their jobs. Currently, the schools opened again, but the consequences of the financial crisis are still palpable, with a lot of families not being able to pay tuition fees, endangering the continuation of the projects	Education for children has temporarily stopped, but other projects that were already planned could continue. Like the construction of a classroom
Future perspective	Travel restrictions will make it difficult to start new collaborations. However, there are enough possibilities to start new projects within current partnerships	It will take 2–3 years to finish the project, and there are no plans to start a similar project again	It is predominantly a lack of funding and income that makes this organisation worried about surviving the COVID crisis and thus also about starting new projects in the future	Strong relations with several NGOs in Peru (due to migration background of core members) and stable income from vast donors will enable starting new projects in the future, preferably within already existing partnerships

Table 4. Case-studies: impact of COVID-19 pandemic

4.2 Emergency aid

This section provides an analysis of the emergency aid projects supported by CIGS and their local counterparts based on insights gained through the survey and the project administration files of CISU (Denmark), La Guilde (France), Province of West-Flanders (Belgium), and Stichting Wilde Ganzen (the Netherlands).

Although some have been heavily affected by the COVID-19-pandemic themselves, CIGS nonetheless felt strong solidarity with their local partner organisations and provided them with support: 61% of CIGS experienced an increased demand for support from their partners. Interviews with CIGS show that those CIGS that started COVID-19 projects only did so in response to a request form their partner organisations. In particular, partners of Danish CIGS made an increased appeal (71%) for support from their partners in Denmark, and 52% of the CIGS in our dataset started new activities related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We do not find significant differences in the number of CIGS that responded to the crisis. We find a significant, positive relation between the budget of CIGS and the start of COVID-19 emergency projects. Table 5 gives us some more insights into three of these projects.

	Case Study 1	Case Study 3	Case Study 4
Type of emergency aid	Financial support for two projects that offered emergency food assistance	- Emergency food assistance - Medicine and protection material	- Delivery of medicine - Emergency food assistance (three food packages: in July, August, and September)
Target group	1. Parents of children with a disability that make use of the day-care facilities offered by a local partner organisation 2. Families who live in slums and whose children normally go to the school of a partner organisation	Children of the orphanage and the most vulnerable inhabitants of the city	(Vulnerable) Inhabitants of the village
Selection of target group	Local partner organisations decided who to include and who not	Local coordinator of the project, who is also a pastor and therefore knows the local context very well, selected whom to include	Local coordinator of the project consulted the board of the local village to decide whom to include

Table 5. Case studies emergency aid projects
Case study 2 did not start COVID-19 emergency projects and is therefore not included in this overview.

Even though the survey results show that CIGS with a higher budget were more likely to start new projects related to the COVID-19-pandemic, there were also plenty of

CIGS with a small budget that started new activities. Of the 454 CIGS that provided insight into their COVID-19 response, 236 CIGS mentioned they started COVID-19 response interventions. Strikingly, most interviewees that started new activities even indicated that they immediately agreed on helping their partner organisations when they were approached by them, without even having thought about ways to raise new funds. Most CIGS that were interviewed (both small and larger ones) indicated that they sent their regular donors a newsletter introducing the emergency aid projects of partner organisations. These fundraising appeals were answered with a large number of donations. Besides the income generated by these newsletters, several CIGS also funded the emergency aid projects from their financial reserves and/or came up with creative ways to generate extra income, like making and selling face masks, baking cookies, or selling products made in their project country.

In the period of March till November 2020, CISU, La Guilde Province of West-Flanders, and Stichting Wilde Ganzen supported a total of 327 projects in 58 different countries, worth a total amount of over EUR 5,390,000[5]. Together these projects aimed to reach approximately 2,087,786 beneficiaries. Figure 6 illustrates that 68.2% of these projects focused on health (e.g., supply of face masks and alcohol gel) combined with food security (e.g., distribution of food packages); 55% of all projects did not have a specific target group but focused on the entire community. One out of five (21%) of all projects targeted children (below 18 years), and nearly 20% of the projects involved the support of hospitals. A majority of the projects (60%) took place in a rural environment. A bit over half of the interventions of French CIGS (52%) were located in an urban setting (see Figure 7).

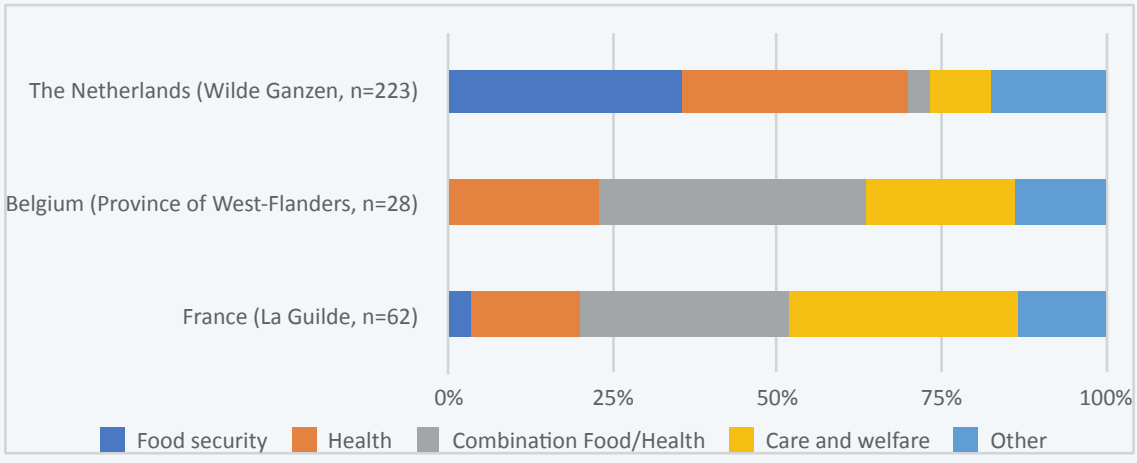

Figure 6. Major sector allocation
Data on sectors is not available for CISU's emergency fund.

5. This is an underestimation of the support provided by the CIGS supported by the four emergency funds. Not all funds were able to provide information on the amount of co-funding provided by the CIGS themselves.

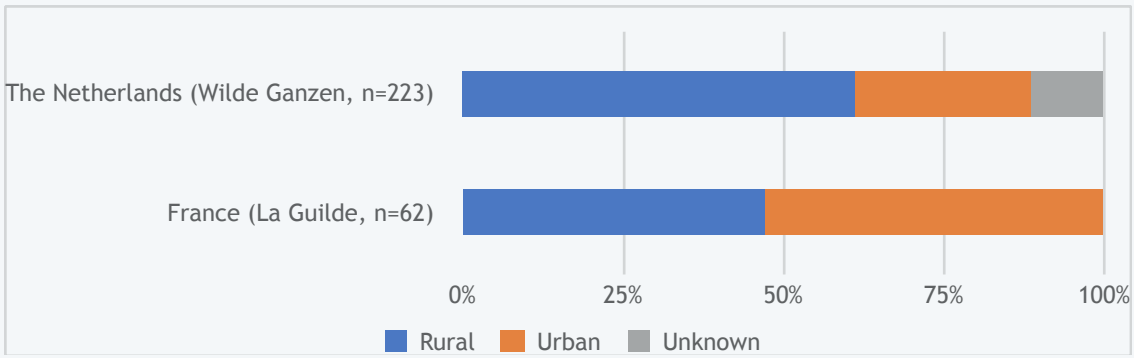

Figure 7. Urban - rural divide
Data on sectors is not available for CISU's emergency fund

Figure 8 illustrates the geographical focus of the COVID-19 emergency aid projects initiated by the CIGS. Of the 327 emergency aid projects, 221 (68%) were executed in Africa, with Kenya (n = 25) and Uganda (n = 23) as its most popular project countries. With 17 projects, India holds the most projects in Asia, and Peru (14 projects) stands out in Latin America. One out of three projects of Danish CIGS took place in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, we see a strong focus for West Africa by French CIGS, which can undoubtedly be linked to France's colonial past in the region. In general, it can be said that the top project countries receiving COVID-19 support of CIGS are comparable to countries where CIGS regularly intervene.

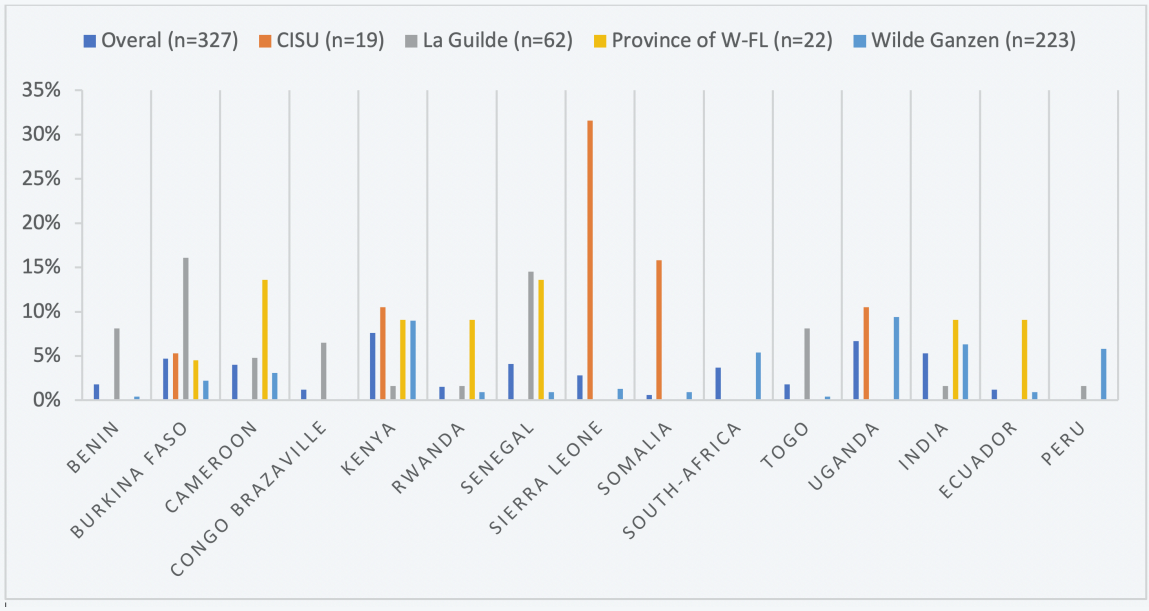

Figure 8. Country overview of COVID-19 CIGS emergency aid projects

5. The impact of COVID-19 on CIGS

Although many CIGS rapidly responded to the COVID-19-pandemic in solidarity with their partner organisations and the communities wherein they work, CIGS themselves were also heavily affected.

In this section, we describe the impact of the crisis on CIGS. We especially look at the financial impact. Secondly, we analyse what determines the impact of the crisis on CIGS, by looking at core characteristics and country differences. We furthermore highlight the concerns expressed by CIGS and the opportunities the crisis brings along.

5.1 Financial impact

Overall, 64.8% of the CIGS experienced a decrease in income, 23.5% indicated their budget so far was not affected by the crisis, and a bit over 10% of the organisations' budget even increased.

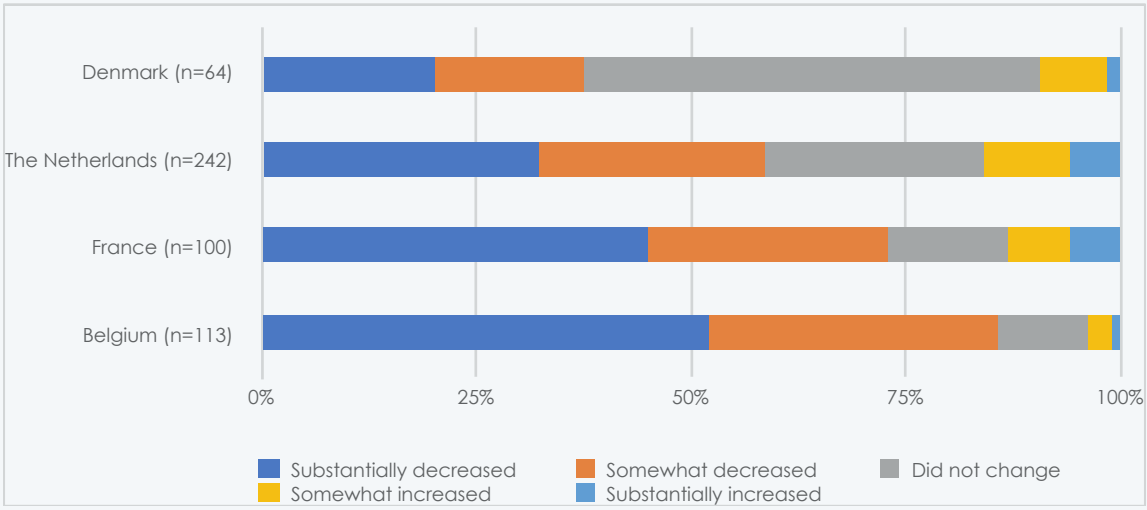

Figure 9. Impact of crisis on CIGS' budget

So far, the crisis impacted CIGS significantly differently in the countries of study. While the majority of Danish CIGS did not experience a negative impact of the crisis on their budget so far, Belgian CIGS took the hardest hit with more than half of the CIGSs' budgets substantially decreased, followed by France and the Netherlands (see Figure 9). As explained in paragraph 3.2, Belgian CIGS heavily rely on direct fundraising activities such as charity dinners, fundraising by schools, and (Christmas) markets. Due to the lock-down, a large part of the fundraising activities of Belgian CIGS could not take place. One of the CIGS interviewed indicated that at the

beginning of 2020 they had more than 20 festivals scheduled where they were supposed to be present. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, all these festivals were cancelled, and consequently, the CIGS saw a big part of their income vanish into thin air (case study # 3). Whereas CIGS explain that their regular donors continued to support their work so far; they sometimes even increased their donations.

We find that organisations that are strongly dependent on direct fundraising activities and on donations of private individuals, government grants, and schools are more likely to experience a decreased income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. So far, we cannot explain the negative effect of government grants, normally known to be a stable source of income. Finally, we find that CIGS with a smaller annual budget are significantly harder hit by the crisis (See Figure 10).

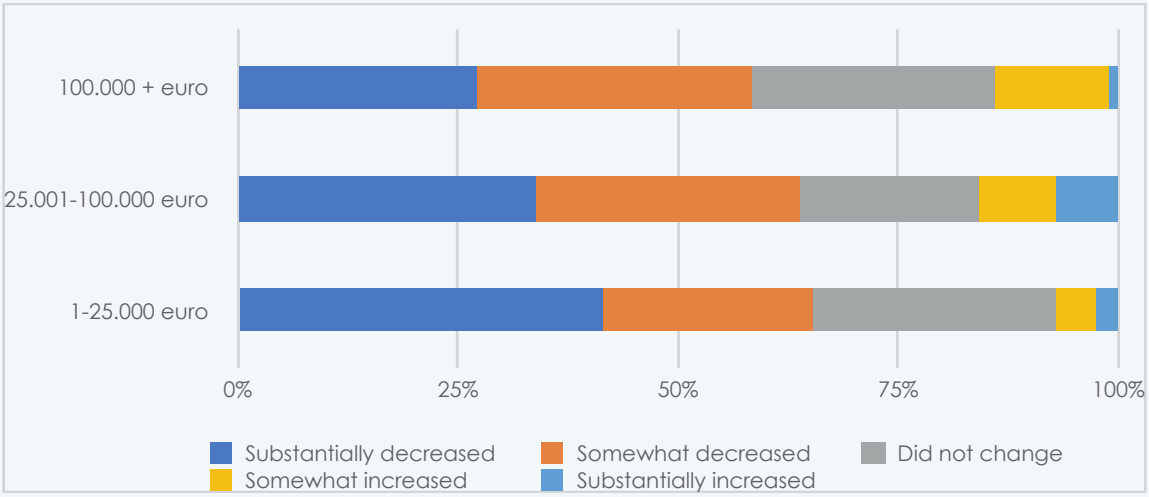

Figure 10. Impact of crisis on CIGS' budget by organisation size

In all countries, CIGS especially experienced a severe loss in income of their direct fundraising activities (see Figure 11). CIGS did not manage to compensate for this loss via online fundraising activities. The on average older age of CIGS members might hamper the organisations in developing and implementing a successful online fundraising strategy. The online fundraising activities merely functioned as a damage reduction strategy, as CIGS struggled to reach the status quo of normal financial circumstances. Only Danish CIGS on average managed to generate increased revenues via online mailings and social media campaigns.

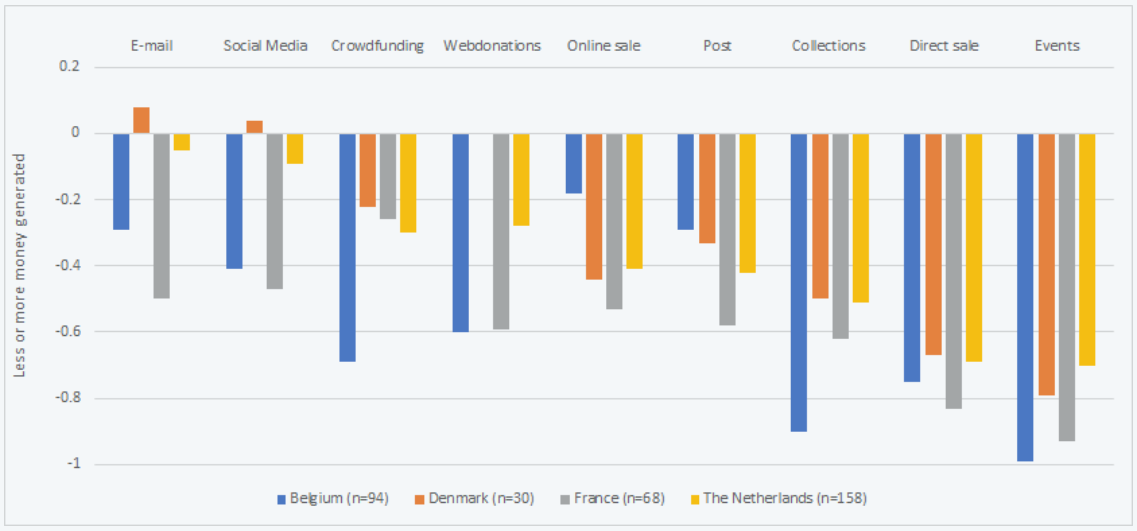

Figure 11. Change in income from fundraising activities

When asked how they expect the crisis to continue to affect their income in the near future, 65.9% expect a decrease, one quarter of them expect the budget of the organisation to remain stable, and 8.5% anticipate an increase in their income.

5.2 Concerns and Opportunities

Overall, we find Belgian and French CIGS to be most concerned about the future. With the majority of CIGS organising events, it comes as no surprise that CIGS are overall most concerned about the ability to organise fundraising activities. Here we find that especially Belgian CIGS, followed by French organisations, are most concerned about this. This stems most probably from their heavy reliance on direct fundraising activities. Danish CIGS express more concerns related to upholding relations with their local counterparts and meeting donor conditions.

In addition, the impact of travel restrictions to project countries on the motivation of CIGS members is one of the major worries of CIGS. In the interviews, CIGS express how they miss the positive energy resulting from visiting their local counterparts and projects. Not being able to see the results of their (fundraising) efforts, makes the work to be done by CIGS members harder.

> I am still very motivated, but the annual visit is very important for me. But also for them [local counterpart]. They are so proud to show us everything they achieved in a year. And the contact with the children, that is also very important to me. . . . When you live together with them for a couple of weeks, day in, day out, and you have the opportunity to talk to them in real-

> life. That gives me so much energy that enables me to continue for another year.

Despite the negative impact of the crisis on the financial situation of CIGS and on their interventions, overall, CIGS are not as worried about the continuation of their own organisation or the survival of their local counterpart. French CIGS are more worried about this compared to CIGS in the other countries. Figure 12 shows an overview of the level of concern experienced by CIGS.

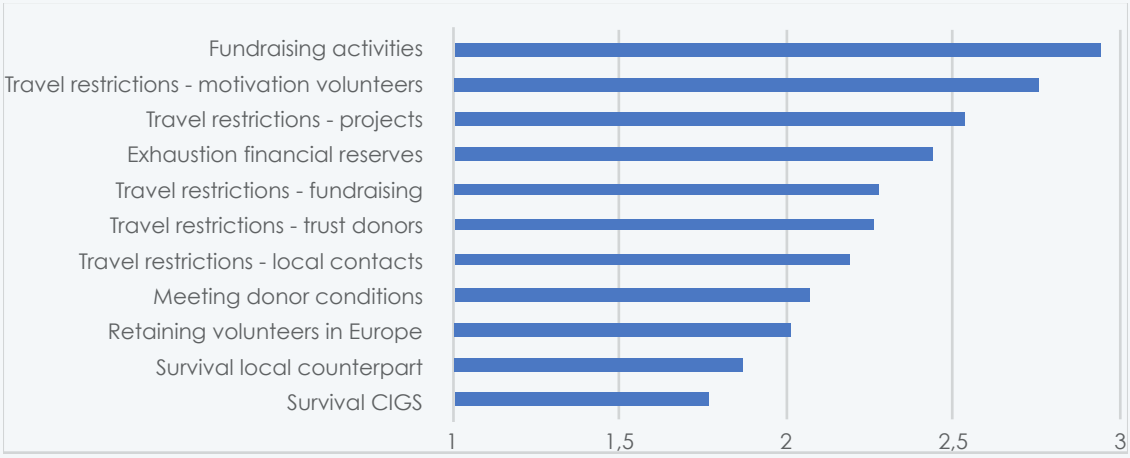

Figure 12. Level of concern
Values X-axis: 1. Not concerned 2. Somewhat concerned 3. Concerned

Overall, we see that CIGS in France followed by CIGS in Belgium are most concerned. Danish and Dutch CIGS are significantly less concerned. We find that CIGS that are more reliant on direct fundraising activities and/or government grants experience more concerns overall.

CIGS do not just mention the negative impact on their income because of the cancellation of direct fundraising activities. During the interviews, one of the Flemish CIGS mentioned that because of this, they also had fewer opportunities to inform people about the situation of people living in the global South. Said differently, this CIGS experienced the cancellation of these events as a threat to their role as contributors to global citizenship. This is a concern also being expressed by a core member of case study 3:

> In the beginning I had the impression the COVID-crisis had a positive effect on feelings of solidarity with our projects. After I sent the first mailing, people spontaneously donated money, but I don't think that this will last. People

> become saturated as well. I also believe that these days people are more likely to take care of each other here [in Belgium]. The projects in the global South are far away for them and we cannot organise events anymore to keep them involved. Normally, we would show up everywhere, on Christmas markets, everywhere. . . . So, I think that people will rather take care of people close by.

Despite the negative impact of the crisis on CIGS, they also identify opportunities resulting from it. Overall, Danish CIGS see most opportunities resulting from the crisis, followed by Dutch CIGS. Most opportunities are seen in increasing the local ownership of the partner organisation(s) (see Figure 13); 12.3% of CIGS indicated their southern partner has gained ownership to execute the project due to the COVID-19 crisis. We do not find significant country differences here. The findings show that larger and more professionalised CIGS, in terms of budget and number paid staff, experience an increase of local ownership due to the COVID-19 crisis. Some CIGS also express a concern related to local ownership. They mention how the current crisis negatively impacts the (financial) independence of their local counterparts and at times even stagnate or reverse their exit strategy.

We expect that the different measures taken by the governments in the different countries in response to the COVID-19 crisis, might affect the level of concern and opportunities and the (nature of the) response of CIGS. However, the current study does not allow to make firm statements on this.

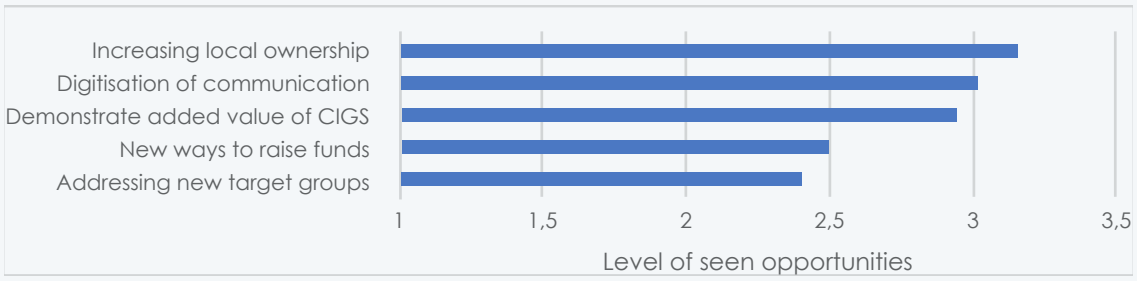

Figure 13. Level of opportunities
Values X-axis: 1. No opportunities – 5. Many opportunities

6. Concluding remarks

The findings of our study, shows strong resilience among CIGS, with many of them finding ways to continue their regular work and/or by starting COVID-19 interventions. They show great dedication to provide continued support to their local counterparts and the communities where they work. Whereas some CIGS paused their regular activities, most of them are confident they will be able to continue supporting their partners and their work in the near future. To end this report, we share some overall concluding remarks.

- Those CIGS that were working on an exit strategy experienced a drawback in this process resulting from the crisis. With, among others, limited possibilities for local fundraising because of the impact of COVID-19 regulations on the economic situation, local counterparts increasingly became (again) financially depending on the support of CIGS. At the same time, CIGS experience that the current crisis might result in a shift in power between them and their local counterparts with an increasing role in decision making processes and implementation.

- Throughout the aid chain, all actors involved decided to only provide COVID-19 funding to familiar partners. CIGS only provided support to their regular local counterparts, CIGS support organisations only opened their fund to regular partners and also other donors, such as private foundations, applied a similar criterium. Although understandable, this decision might have negative consequences for, both northern and southern based, organisations that managed to provide their support so far independently and are currently in need of support to continue their work.

- With the personal encounter being at the heart of the work of CIGS, prolonged travel restrictions might disable CIGS and their local counterparts to personally meet. These personal encounters have a motivating role for the CIGS members and a catalysing role for (mobilizing) their donors. Continued travel restriction might hence have severe impact on the functioning of CIGS.

- The on average middle age of CIGS members in most countries might be an extra obstacle in overcoming this barrier since this might limit CIGS ability and willingness to adapt offline, personal communication and fundraising strategies into a durable online strategy.

- In case the impact of the crisis continues to affect societies in the global north, this might challenge the abilities of CIGS to raise funds from regular (private) donors to reach out to new (private) donors.

- In addition, a longer duration of the COVID-19 crisis might impact the visibility of CIGS in their own communities: not only affecting their fundraising activities, but also the role they play in contributing to global citizenship.

- The current travel restriction takes away the most important incentive for starting a CIGS: a personal encounter between individuals from the global north with individuals, communities or organisations in the global south. Therefore, on the longer run, there is the question: how will this crisis impact the community of CIGS in broader terms, with currently expectedly no, or only a limited number of, new CIGS being established?

The above requires a thoughtful reflection of CIGS, their local counterparts and CIGS support organisations on how to best adapt to the current circumstance and circumvent some of the signaled short term and longer-term challenges and on how to capitalise on the opportunities that arise from the crisis.

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Appendix 1.

Overview casestudies						
Nr	**NL/BE**	**Founding year**	**Intervention**	**Projectcountry**	**Core-members***	**Budget**
1	BE	2002	Mainly focusses on the improvement of (access to) education for children and young adults	Peru	2	€ 50.000,00
2	NL	2004	Several projects with a different nature to support the residents of the province of Nyanza	Kenya	3	€ 24.738,00
3	NL	2016	Socio-cultural projects for children	Brasil	5	€ 45.000,00
4	NL	1973	Supports the construction and maintenance of orphanages	Indonesia	5	€ 50.000,00
5	NL	1996	Focusses on the improvement of the health care and the training of medical staff	Uganda	5	€ 115.000,00
6	NL	2012	Several projects aimed at the development of children who live in townships	South-Africa	6	€ 30.000,00
7	BE	2019	Support of socio-cultural projects	Senegal	6	€ 3.936,00
8	BE	2009	Improving education and healthcare for children with a disability	India	8	€ 15.000,00
9	NL	2007	Projects of a facility nature aimed at education and the development of children	India	10	€ 50.000,00
10	NL	2010	Projects of a facility nature aimed at education and healthcare	Ghana	12	€ 99.399,00
11	BE	2002	Several projects (orphanage, schools, pharmacy, bakery, agriculture) to support the citizens of a city in Congo, mostly aimed at children and healthcare	Democratic Republic of Congo	12	€ 31.411,55
12	NL	1991	Reducing poverty and improving education and healthcare	Peru	15	€ 170.000,00
	**None of the case-studies indicated to have paid-staff, thus all the active core-members are working as volunteers*					