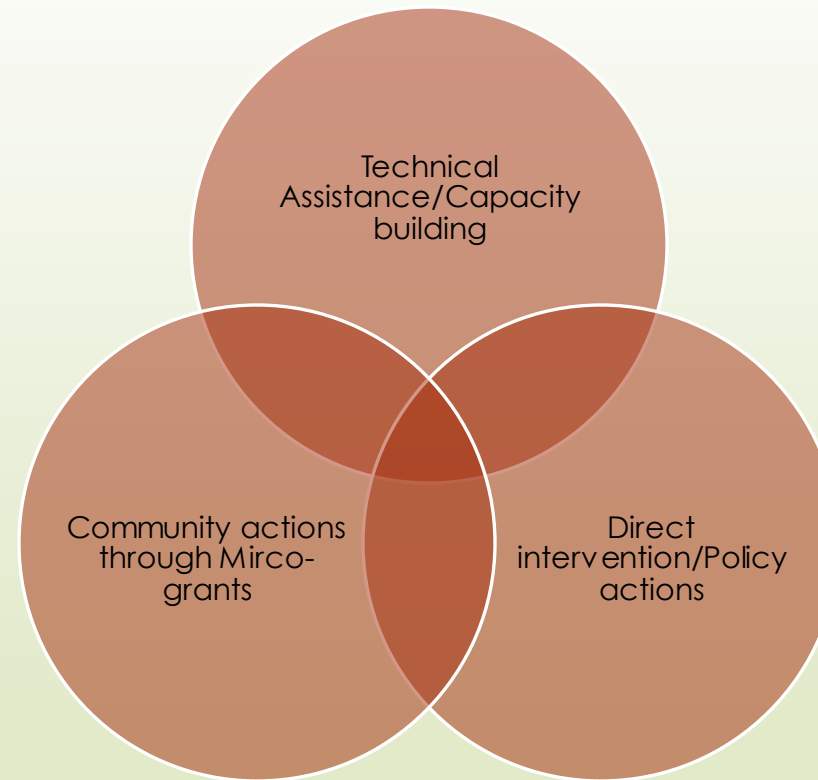




# GETTING FUNDING TO WHERE IT MATTERS: THE MICRO- GRANT EXPERIENCE

# Overarching Project Approach



# The Micro-Grants Dimension

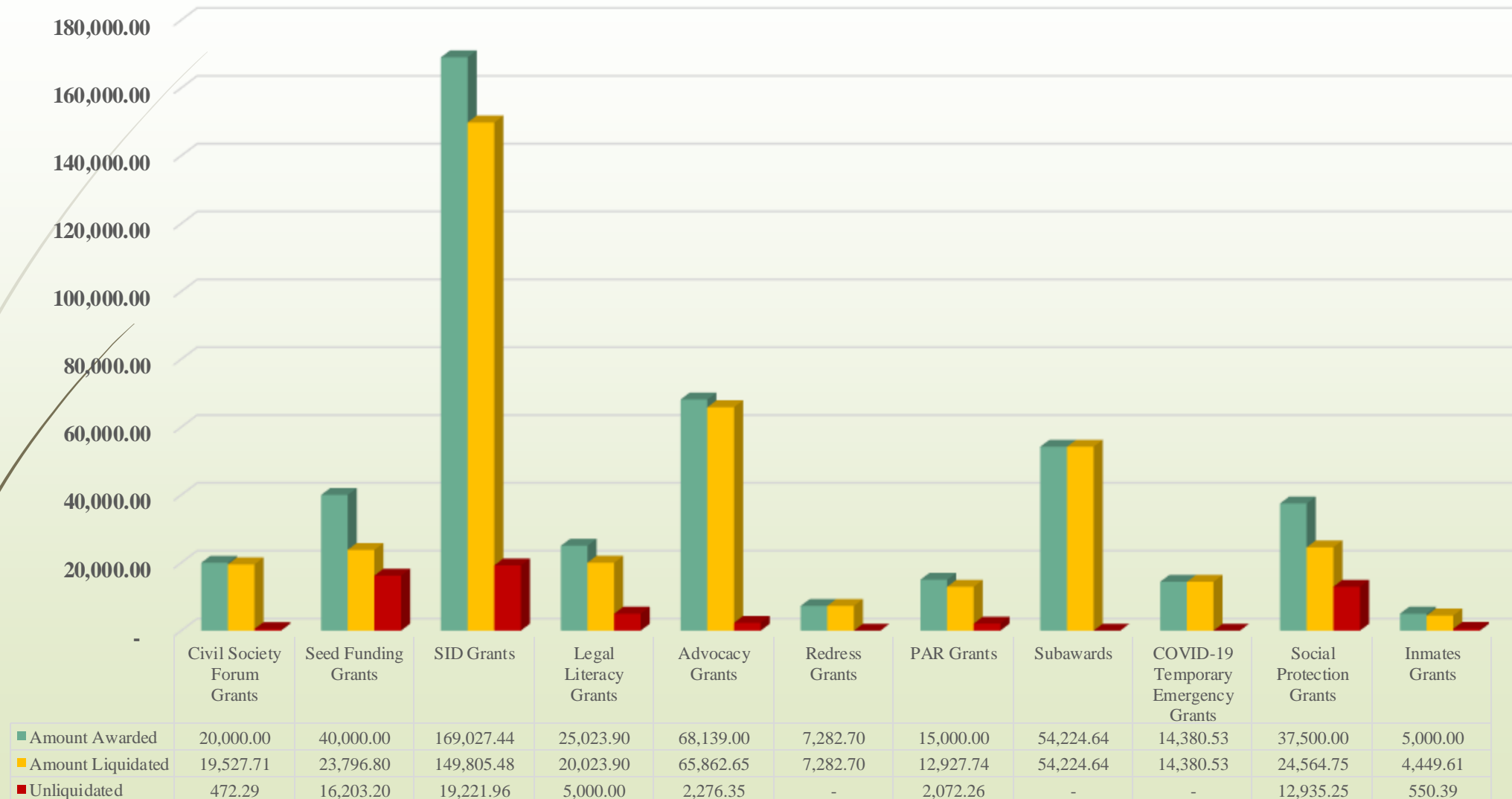
- The “mini-grant” program supports CSOs in a variety of areas:
  - Design and implement national **advocacy plans/campaigns**;
  - Design and implement organizational **resource mobilization** plans;
  - **Monitor and document** reports of human rights abuses;
  - Assist victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) to navigate the legal system and seek **redress** and;
  - **Sensitize** government and legal professionals to key populations.
  - **Learning exchanges** between CSOs;
  - Indicators reported against are input and output type (e.g. Position paper on policy reform presented or number of people trained), which are appropriate for grants of this size and duration

## Size of Grants



Types of Grants	Size of Grants
Advocacy Grants	\$5,000
Civil Society Forum Grants	\$5,000
Temporary Emergency Grants	\$5,000
Inmates Grants	\$5,000
Legal Literacy Grants	\$5,000
PAR Grants	\$5,000
Redress Grants	based on need
Seed Funding/Social Enterprise Grants	\$4,000 - \$12,000
SID Grants	\$5,000 - \$7,500
Social Protection Grants	\$2,500
Multi-Purpose awards (Regional Networks)	\$20,000

## Grants Issued Between 2019-2022



# Benefits of Micro-Grants to CSOs

Allows expansion in coverage of many existing services or expand into other important areas

Support capacity development within the smaller CSOs

Assisted with formalization of smaller CSOs

Provides a baseline for further funding and resource mobilization efforts

Assist with providing some structured approach to financial management within CSOs

# The Selection Process

Guided by a comprehensive Grants Manual which inform management of the entire mini-grant life-cycle.

Selection usually through open and transparent calls for proposals

Rely on objective and transparent criteria when evaluating proposals

Apply at least a minimum screening of applicant capacity.

Inclusion of an outside technical expertise on evaluation committee

# The Grant Management Process

- Strict requirements on liquidation of advances
- Grantees receive initial advance disbursements:
  - 50% of grant value (40% for first-time grantees)
- Required to liquidate 70% of the amount received before additional disbursements.
- Liquidations are done through grantees' submission of monthly reports and documentation supporting programmatic achievements and validating expenditure





# **Grant management issues and responses**

# Issue #1 – Size & Duration of Grants

## Challenges

- The size of the grants offered is small (between \$2500-\$7,500)
- Mini-grants are designed to be short-term.
- Grants are not continuous and no guarantee the same entity will be awarded again in the next project year or cycle.

## Response

- Offer a suite of grants that provide entities the ability to benefit from several types of grants at once

# Issues #2- Staffing

## Challenges

- Responsible persons have **no background in grants or financial management**
- Most times an accounting staff hired only when a grant is awarded
- **High staff turnover** due to the amount paid or because of the lack of continuity of grants
- **Lack of institutional knowledge** due to frequent changes in personnel

## Achievements

- Through orientation sessions and continuous capacity-building sessions, CVC was able to assist many entities in completing financial reports.

# Issue #3 – Record Keeping

## Challenges

- Grantees do not always obtain invoices from all suppliers
- Contracts sometimes have gaps – *(incorrect dates or names, not properly signed, Tasks and deliverables do not reflect the role being contracted)*
- Bid process not correctly documented
- Payment Vouchers not provided or not completed correctly

## Responses

- CVC provides Templates and Checklists and encourages Grantees to use them or to ensure that their own documents have all the clauses and sections as the templates
- Some grantees use the reminders provided by the Finance team as a checklist to ensure that they are able to present all documents for each reporting period

# Issue #4 – Reality in Territories

## Challenges

- Grantees Sometimes don't have access to online banking which results in higher cash payments
- Suppliers in some territories will not provide quotations and for some, you have to pay for the quotations
- Some Grantees very informal in their approach

## Responses

Grantees are encouraged to:

- Use online banking services where possible
- Develop relationships with suppliers

# Issue #5 – Leadership



## Challenges

- Some grantees express they do not think the amount of reporting is reasonable/they don't see the format as necessary.
  - Results in poor reporting and difficulty in liquidating.
- Diverse motivations to take up grants

## Achievements

- A few who had this attitude have come to realize that the CVC approach actually improves their personal skills, increases their competencies, and will serve them well in growing their organization as they are able to apply for, and manage grant funds from other donors

# Lessons from experience

- Mini-grant reporting requirements – programmatic and financial – are frequent and comprehensive.
- Frequent reporting used as common control to minimize risk on a grant program sometimes presents an unnecessary burden to stakeholders considering the short duration and monetary value of each mini-grant
- Although lots of time is spent with these entities to get their proposals approved –ready” 95% of the time these entities are able to adequately implement and liquidate their programmatic activities successfully.
- Over the last 3 years, CVC **only rescinded 2** grant agreement



# Lessons from experience

- Grants are mainly between 3 to 9 months (additional rounds made until the new project year)
- Grant management has presented many challenges over the years
- Some grantees encounter problems throughout grant cycle from completing the proposal templates through to the liquidation of the grant funds:
  - This, however, is not an indication of the inability to implement
- Liquidation of the grants is labour intensive for both the entities and reviewers
- Need to adapt grant approach to reality of CSO context
- Gaps between mini-grants make it difficult for grantees to sustain momentum with the community and political/policy actors



