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Tracey Crouch MP  
Minister for Civil Society  
Office of Civil Society  
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport  
100 Parliament Street,  
London,  
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Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018

Dear Minister,

It is my great honour to be able to send to you today a copy of my Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship report which has investigated the role of civil society in the policy making process with a specific focus on the role of young people. This report has been built from meetings with a range of actors in the USA and Canada in order to share experience and knowledge with UK based organisations. This report investigates the role civil society can play at local level, regional, national and international level. Civil society organisations do not just engage with the policy process because they want to challenge decision makers but because there are times that to solve that organisations social challenge or mission, it can only be completed through working with decision makers such as campaigning to get a national government to ratify an international convention.

Each year the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Awards Travelling Fellowship grants to enable Churchill Fellows to carry out study visits overseas to be able to find examples of good practice which they then can bring back to their communities to improve their own organisations. My fellowship was also kindly supported by the Lloyd George Foundation.

From the range of meetings which were had with a variety of actors that thinking about civil society is not just relevant to your department in Government or the Cabinet Office but from the discussions which I had it is clear that civil society at all levels from local to international, plays an important role in every department. It is clear how there are examples of how civil society can work in the policy process from Department for International Development, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for Education, BEIS, DEFRA, Department

for International Trade, DWP, DHSC and the list can go on to include all areas as civil society can provide experience and expertise which could be required.

The report which I launched recently, includes four main chapters within it. The first chapter looks at the motivation for engaging with the policy process for civil society or the reason for engagement for Government and decision makers. The second chapter, which is also one of the main chapters of the report which looks at the best method of engagement for civil society organisations to get their policy issues heard. The next chapter is a chapter which connects to much of my experience which is how young people can be involved in the policy making process. The final chapter really starts to look at some of the challenges which these organisations face in their engagement with policy making either internally or externally and internationally and tries to begin to touch on some ideas presented on how these issues can be solved but some of them are challenges which need to be worked with rather than being able to solve them. Throughout the whole report each chapter has been supported by case studies from some of those that were engaged with meetings during my fellowship which I believe truly shows some of the best practice or opportunities for learning internationally.

Within the report I make five key recommendations to both Government, International Organisations and to Civil Society Organisations how they can work better together in the policy making sphere. The recommendations are:

- For a 'knowledge hub' to be created to support, share and publish, all organisation size, research for it to gain further traction.
- For enhancements to be made of CSO using innovative technology (such as VR) to promote their agenda and to gain wider interest in the topic.
- For the UK Government to consider and investigate ways of increasing the level of citizen and youth voices in its work with International Organisations. (e.g. through full commitment to the Youth Delegate Programme)
- For the Government to investigate ways that Civil Servants can be utilised to support youth understanding and engagement in the policy process.
- For institutions to provide information about their working practices in an open environment so that organisations are of the best ways to engage with those bodies.

I was further pleased to have heard that the Government is starting to take steps to make sure that lessons learned by other organisations are now being drawn together as forms of best practice within Government.

Also, I wanted to note that I am currently aware that your office is currently carrying out a consultation into the 'Civil Society Strategy' which I am pleased to see is wanting to hear of organisations experiences and is keen to identify a new way for Government and civil society to work better together.

Furthermore, I was pleased to see in the Secretary of State recent speech, on the 16<sup>th</sup> May to civil society groups that you have already identified the need for Government to work with all size of organisations or that funding should not always be based on results.

In the promotion which I have done in relation to the launch of this report I have repeated one ask or call which is that this report "[...] is a call for civil society organisations, citizens and Government to work together to make sure that we have the best engaged population in order to create the best policy." I hope that you will be able to join me in this call with your Government colleagues as the Secretary of State has mentioned that civil society can play a useful role in our society.

I would be more than happy to discuss this report with yourself or one of your officials if it is of interest.

Kind regards,

Jack Gillum

CC: Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP

Enc: Copy of WCMT Report, 'Role of Civil Society in Policy Engagement'