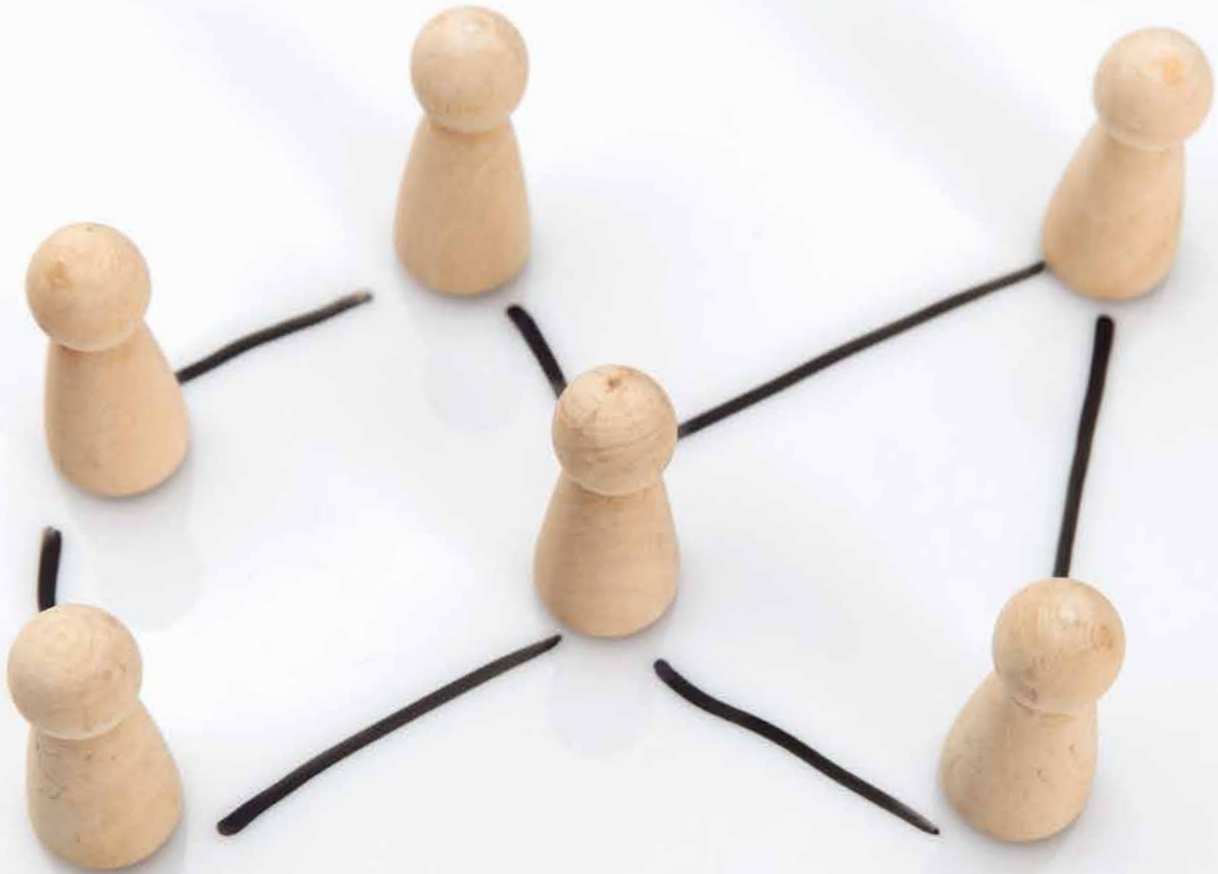


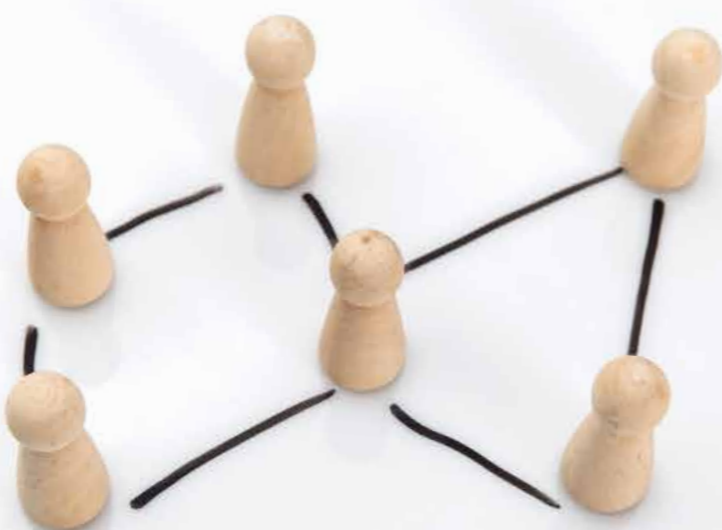
PLANNING & IMPLEMENTING CAPACITY BUILDING WITHIN THE EEA GRANTS ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND PROGRAMMES

REPORT FROM THE REGIONAL EXCHANGE WORKSHOP

Athens 21-22 November 2022



CONTENTS



This report was produced in the context of the Regional Capacity Building Workshop to support ACF Fund Operators in their capacity development role, co-organised by Active citizens fund Greece with Active citizens fund Portugal and Active citizens fund Romania.

The Active citizens fund in Greece is supported through a € 13.5 m grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway as part of the EEA Grants 2014 - 2021. The programme aims to develop the sustainability and capacity of the civil society sector in Greece, and to strengthen its role in promoting and safeguarding democratic procedures, active citizenship and human rights. The Fund Operator for the Active citizens fund in Greece is Bodossaki Foundation in consortium with SolidarityNow.

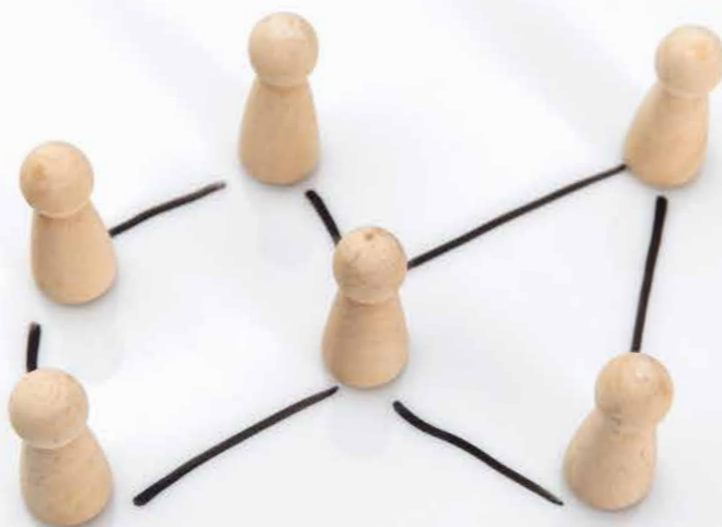
More information: www.activecitizensfund.gr/en/

FOREWORD	5
INTRODUCTION	7
PART I SETTING THE FRAMEWORK FOR AN EFFECTIVE CB PROGRAMME	8
1. Mapping needs for Capacity Building within the ACF	9
2. Engaging small and rural CSOs in CB	15
PART II CAPACITY BUILDING IN ACTION: ESTABLISHING HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS	20
3. Promoting effective management of CSOs	21
4. Adapting Capacity Building programmes to the pandemic	24
5. Innovative approaches to Capacity Building	27
PART III TAKING CAPACITY BUILDING A STEP FORWARD: ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY AND MEASURING IMPACT	30
6. Promoting networking and collaborations	31
7. Promoting funding diversification and financial sustainability	36
8. Measuring and communicating impact	44

FOREWORD

Jennifer Clarke, PhD

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Capacity building is an essential feature of EEA Grants civil society programmes, which is highly valued by supported CSOs.¹ Fund Operators are expected to actively support the capacity development of project promoters and wider civil society. However, Fund Operators have varying levels of expertise and capacity for this role.²

Fund Operators for the Active Citizens Fund (ACF) programmes, implemented as part of **EEA Grants 2014 – 2021**, faced additional challenges to their role in supporting civil society capacity development due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Programmes had to adapt planned capacity-building activities, and CSOs reported setbacks to their organizational development, particularly in the field of fundraising and financial sustainability.³

In this context, the Fund Operator for the ACF Greece, in partnership with the Fund Operators for the ACF in Romania and Portugal, jointly organised two training and regional exchange workshops to support ACF Fund Operators and CSOs in their capacity development role. The first event was a two-day regional exchange workshop on planning and implementing capacity-building programmes. The second was a training-of-trainers (ToT) workshop focused on core capacity-building topics.

The workshops, which took place in Athens between 21-25 November 2022, brought together participants from 14 ACF programmes, and representatives of the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO), the Norwegian Embassy in Greece and CSOs.

It was a privilege for Bodossaki Foundation to coordinate these events, being responsible for capacity building within ACF Greece. Bodossaki Foundation's journey to becoming a leading provider of capacity-building support to civil society in Greece through its award-winning capacity-building hub Social Dynamo has been greatly bolstered by the expertise gained through its role as Fund Operator and the sharing of good practices between EEA Grants programmes.

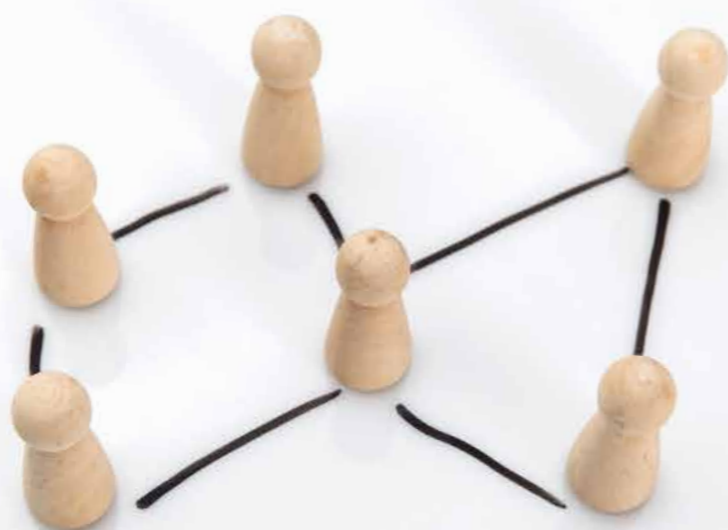
The presentation in this report of the key points and good practices shared during the regional exchange workshop, may hopefully become a valuable resource to current Fund Operators, those involved in future EEA Programmes, and all those interested in civil society capacity development.

¹ End review of the EEA Grants 2009 – 2009 Civil Society Programmes, p. 42.

² End Review of the EEA Grants 2009 – 2009 Civil Society Programmes, p.39.

³ Survey of Greek CSOs conducted by Bodossaki Foundation in 2020

INTRODUCTION



The two-day workshop on planning and implementing Capacity Building within the EEA Grants Active Citizens Fund Programmes gathered 45 participants from 14 ACF programmes: ACF Bulgaria, ACF Croatia, ACF Cyprus, ACF Czech Republic, ACF Estonia, ACF Greece, ACF Latvia, ACF Lithuania, ACF Poland National, ACF Poland Regional, ACF Portugal, ACF Romania, ACF Slovakia, and ACF Slovenia. It aimed to create a mosaic of knowledge and experiences in various local contexts regarding the design, implementation and evaluation of Capacity-Building Programmes to share good practices and create a common ground for growth.

The workshop's content was based on a survey carried out among FOs before the event. The agenda was structured around 8 themes: mapping needs for capacity building within the ACF, engaging small and rural CSOs in capacity building, promoting effective management of CSOs, adapting capacity-building programmes to the pandemic, promoting innovative approaches to capacity building, promoting networking and collaborations, promoting funding diversification and financial sustainability, measuring and communicating the impact of capacity-building programmes.

To produce a participative result deriving from the sharing of every FO's valuable knowledge and lessons learnt, the participants were asked to give short presentations sharing their good practices and experiences, which were followed by various facilitation activities: interactive brainstorming, Q&A sessions and collaborative note-taking, world café and mini pro-action café activity, appreciative enquiry and gallery walk style activity.

We would like to give our special thanks to the Financial Mechanism Office, who supported this initiative, and to all participants, who generously shared their experience and contributed with their input to the creation of the following report.

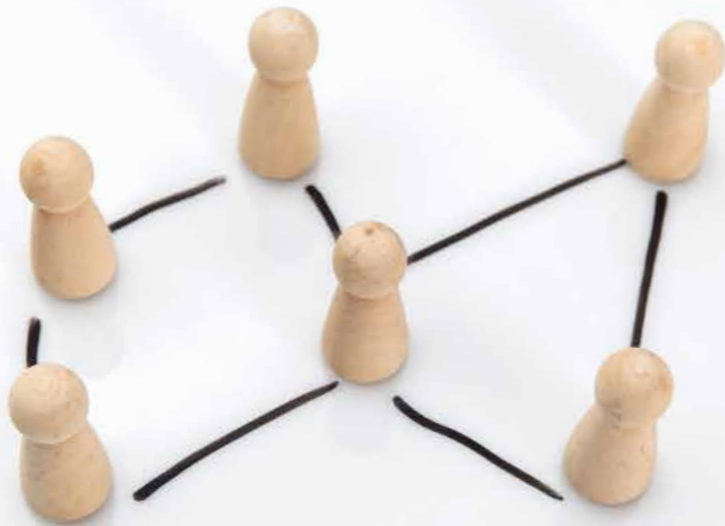
The report divides the topics into three sections:

- i Setting the framework for building an effective CB programme
- ii Establishing high professional standards when implementing a CB programme
- iii Measuring the impact and ensuring the sustainability of capacity building.

The report's content reflects the key points from each presentation and groups the findings of the participative interactive methods employed, along with the lessons learnt.

PART I

SETTING THE FRAMEWORK FOR AN EFFECTIVE CB PROGRAMME



1. Mapping needs for Capacity Building within the ACF

ACF Poland Regional

A multi-faceted approach in mapping needs

Katarzyna Zakroczymska

Programme Director

Magdalena Krasowska-Igras

Capacity Building & Communication Manager, Foundation in Support of Local Democracy

The CB Programme in Poland (Regional) emphasised the participative aspect of mapping the needs of supported CSOs. Asking CSO representatives what they needed most involved disseminating questionnaires and polls, and opening questions during educational and other meetings. The Programme also made use of different sources of information, such as data from researchers and various types of partners in civil society and insights from NGO events. Extensive outreach was possible via the FO's website, social media channels and regional consultants (the FO is running regional offices in 9 cities in Poland). In addition, the Programme created a CRM database of local and regional stakeholders, through which regular mailing and newsletters could be sent out, and statistics on organisations' interest could be reported.

The Programme's methodology also included a wide option of educational and co-financing possibilities for organisations, allowing them to create their own development path. Balance was ensured by providing reserve funds for CB and designing different call formats for different types of organisations:

- A separate call for organisational macrogrants addressed to large organisations with regional impact.
- A separate call for organisational microgrants addressed to small/start-up organisations.
- An integrated component to thematic calls for institutional development grants addressed to all types of organisations.

As for the Programme's tutoring priorities, an individual approach was adopted for sharing good practices, and teaching financial management and strategic development.

Find out more

Educational needs survey (in Polish)

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/17ot7JpjkXsy9uaK_Vx574a4WVsMMYKjspHsQa3M9Lg/viewform?edit_requested=true

ACF Estonia

Sorting out the crucial capacity-building sectors to develop

Reelika Alunurm

Supervisory Board member, Network of Estonian Non-profit Organizations

In Estonia, the CB programme used various tools (surveys, interviews, reports, assessments etc.) to map out the various organisational needs with a view to providing strategic planning.

However, these tools did not necessarily point out which capacity sector was **crucial to develop** and which were welcome but not necessary, so that the CSO would achieve a substantial impact.

The integrated process the Programme developed helped:

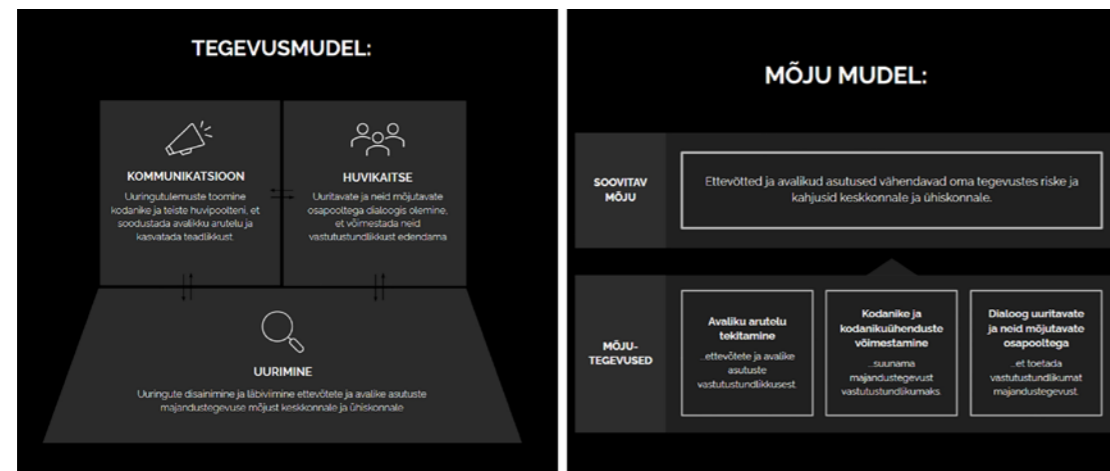
- make sure the CSOs knew what impact model they were aiming for
- make sure they had the capacity needed for it
- separate crucial and nice-to-have capacity-building sectors being used in all sorts of organisations

Case study

Estwatch, a small watchdog CSO that focuses on publishing reports. Estwatch was supported to develop a clear impact model logic. The strategic planning process helped them identify the capacity-building sector they needed to develop, which was important for delivering their work:

- communication and
- advocacy

Had they used other tools, they would have had a million development points, but those were not **crucial**:

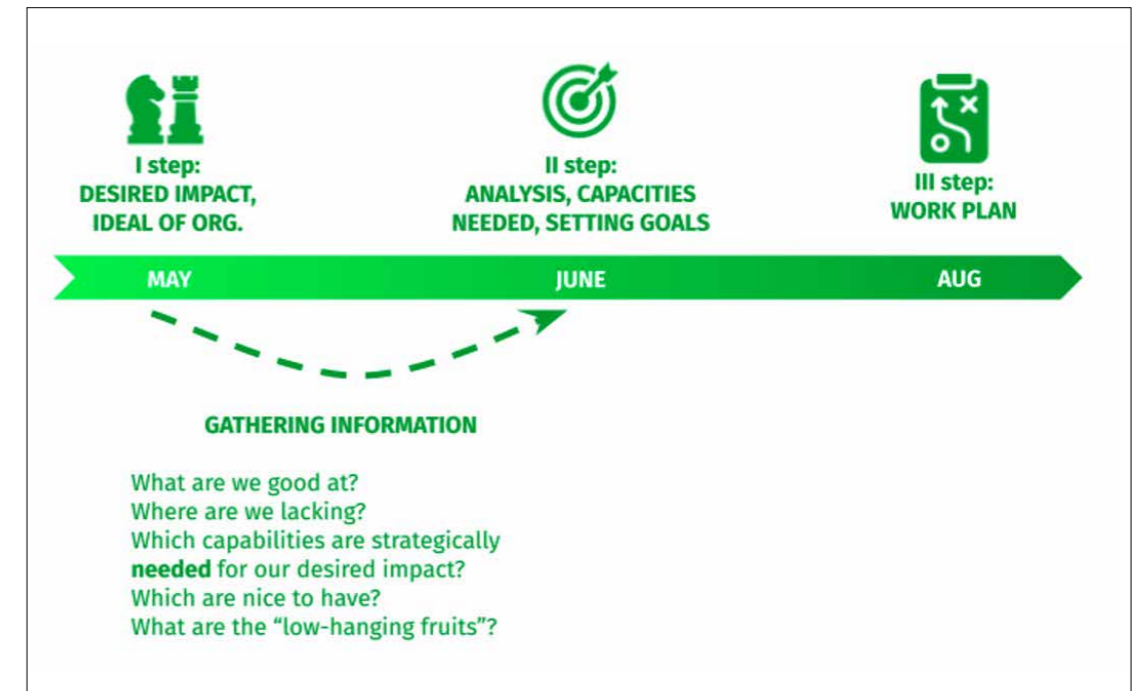


Their strategic planning process started with envisioning their impact model, vision, mission and long-term plans, while the development of their capacity building plan included:

- a mapping of what they were good at, what they were lacking, what was crucial to them (vs what was nice-to-have), and what were their “low-hanging fruits”
- a selection of specific tools to use, via mind mapping, brainstorming, “sticky-notes” and categorising, to ensure they set priorities and sort out crucial capacity-building sectors to achieve impact. A simplified version of the Mackenzie model was used in this sense.

Following this procedure, the Programme integrated key capacity-building sectors into the CSO’s strategic plan to make sure they focused on it and made priority lists for critical capacity-building sectors. The Programme also made sure there were concrete work plans for executing the capacity building plan, including searching for funding, setting a timeline, and exploring possible training opportunities.

Capability building integrated into the strategic planning process



ACF Greece

The role of self-assessment through a comprehensive Capacity Map

Stavroula Palaiologou

Head of Capacity-Building Programmes, Bodossaki Foundation

The Capacity Map for CSOs is the self-assessment tool the CB Programme in Greece developed, focusing on 8 areas of organisational development and unfolded through 29 questions in total regarding the following categories:

1. Vision, mission and strategy
2. Understanding the external environment
3. Leadership team / Board
4. Transparency, accountability and communications
5. General administration
6. Staff management
7. Volunteer management
8. Financial sustainability

The tool facilitates change, as it supports CSOs in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, allows progress monitoring, ensures confidentiality throughout the process and is available online for free. The mapping is carried out at the beginning and the end of each CB cycle by an employee from the higher management of the CSO or an individual having an overview of its organisational operation. It depicts 4 levels of organisational development:

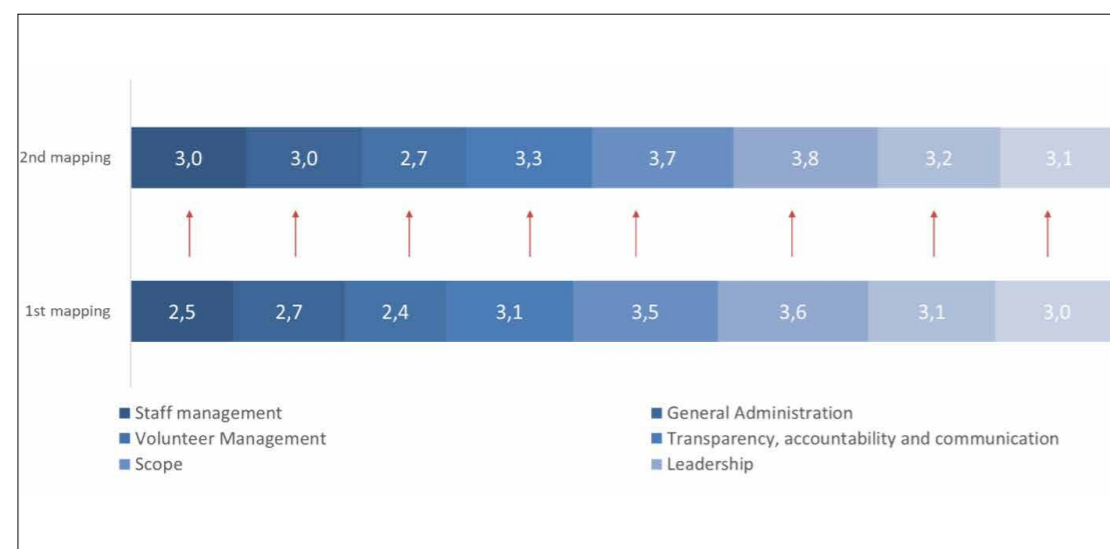
- LEVEL 4** The organisation has a high level of development in this area (expected level for an international organisation)
- LEVEL 3** The organisation has a medium level of development in this area (minimum expected level for a regional/national organisation)
- LEVEL 2** The organisation has a basic level of development in this area (may be suitable for new and small organisations)
- LEVEL 1** The organisation lacks knowledge/skills in this area.

The tool can also compare the results of two surveys to help organisations track their progress. Thus, CSOs are provided with a quick means to visualize their strong and weak areas, and see where exactly to start from/design the next steps per weak area. In this way, they have an automatically produced narrative of development.

They also discover how to learn, standardise tools and integrate them, as they can incorporate the self-assessment process into a regular organisational capacity-building plan (after the end of the project).

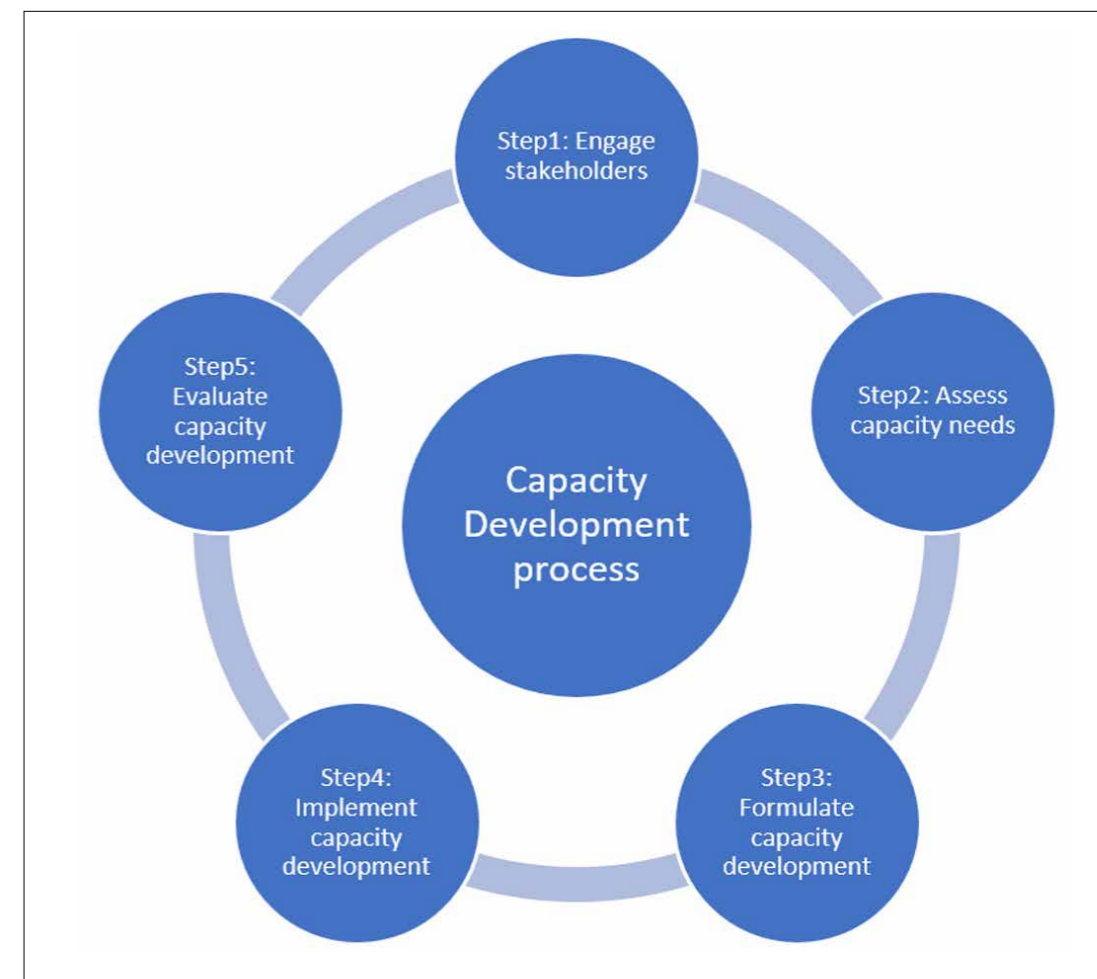
At the programme level, the tool allows the generation of empirical evidence of the change per organisational area as a result of the capacity-building support received. The following graph illustrates an example of this tool use, taking into account sample CB mapping data from 58 completed ACF projects. It demonstrates the progress made in each organisational area assessed, with the most significant one observed in the domain of staff and volunteer management. In contrast, the lowest increase is observed in leadership and transparency.

Graph: Average Change per Organisational Area



In that perspective, it provides FOs a vital learning component as:

- it updates the planning of CB activities (e.g. what needs to be further improved)
- it accompanies every step of the CSO development
- it provides a baseline for measuring a change in organisational capacity
- it helps CSOs understand and reflect on their needs



As with every tool, it has its limitations, given it cannot be objective in nature since it is a self-assessment tool. However, it remains a time-efficient tool to use in large programmes.

Find out more:

The full capacity map tool is available online both in English and in Greek
 Capacity map tool: <https://www.ngocapacitymap.gr/en/>
<https://www.ngocapacitymap.gr>

 **Lessons learned**

The following lessons learned regarding mapping needs for CSOs emerged from the presentations and the interactive brainstorming activity that followed:

- Regarding CSOs operating in the region, it is important to collect insights from professionals who can understand and assess the local context
- One type does not fit all: designing different CB calls for different types of organisations is often more suitable

- CSOs need to differentiate crucial from “nice-to-have” sectors for CB
- A capacity-building plan has to be translated into a concrete operational work plan
- It is important to:
 - band together similar organisations
 - use a guided strategic planning process
 - have CSOs map their needed capacity-building sectors, assess them and set priorities as to the type of training they need
 - have CSOs integrate capacity building into their strategic and operational work plans
 - set aside allocated time slots for each CSO and make sure their plan makes sense
 - track progress
- A self-assessment process can easily fit into a regular organisational capacity-building plan
- Accurate mapping of needs is a prerequisite for accurate planning of CB activities
- Every needs assessment tool has its strengths and limitations.

2. Engaging small and rural CSOs in CB

ACF Bulgaria

Overcoming challenges when dealing with special country specifics

Elitsa Markova

Programme Manager, Open Society Institute Sofia

Country specifics were a factor that needed to be considered by the CB Programme in Bulgaria. During the period 2018-2022, village areas represented 42 out of 1013 applications and 6 out of 212 funded projects.

In a country with a shrinking population, where a) most CSOs are small (counting 2 to 5 staff members and with annual budgets of less than 10 000€), b) very few CSOs are rural, and c) there is a high degree of spatial concentration (only 20 settlements have more than 100 NGOs operating in public benefit), one can understand the challenges in engaging smaller and rural NGOs:

- lack of civic engagement, especially in “civic deserts”
- underserved geographic areas

The CB programme offered a number of solutions in order to overcome these challenges:

- a CB Outcome included in all 6 calls
- a small grants scheme designed in parallel with two strategic calls
- CB activities offered to applicants (incl. training for small NGOs outside urban areas)
- CB activities offered to project promoters (incl. individual consultations).

Interestingly, most CSOs were interested in big grants despite their minor scaling, underspending the dedicated amount for CB. There was also a lack of clear understanding of CB needs, leading to underspending in the CB outcome. Other outcomes of the Programme regarded the locality of the CB activities (they were more accessible when organised in the capital or municipal centres) and their scale (an application procedure structured in two stages leads to a manageable number of applications but, on the other hand, reduces the number of applications received).

At any rate, capacity building is much more a complex process than a set of tools. Currently, various types and forms of training for NGOs can be found in the market, often offered by other NGOs and against a fee. Is the FO supposed to “compete” with such initiatives? The majority of project promoters perceive participation in the ACF program as a means of improving their capacity, including financial accountability and project management skills, in a context where they receive equal treatment, individual attention and consultation. Equal access to the Programme and its opportunities is offered to applicants, and a tailored approach towards small/rural NGOs is designed after the needs assessment stage, even if it does not lead to the development of concrete project ideas.

The Programme also offers small organisations free consultation on applications to any other funding programme besides ACF.

ACF Poland Regional

Strengths and weaknesses of small & rural CSOs in an increasingly competitive environment

Katarzyna Zakroczymska

Programme Director

Magdalena Krasowska-Igras

Capacity Building & Communication Manager, Foundation in Support of Local Democracy

The CB Programme in Poland (Regional), a country whose civil society is divided between urban-rural settings, has detected a number of issues affecting the engagement of small/rural CSOs:

- low level of competencies in terms of organisational capacity and project management
- outdated approaches when addressing their target groups
- lack of innovation
- the context in which human rights CSOs are called to deliver their work in rural areas (40% of the population think human rights is a way for criminals to avoid punishment...)

Organisations are also facing quite fundamental issues, such as lack of proper infrastructure and human resources, as well as financial instability, as most are entirely grant-dependent.

On the other hand, rural CSOs do have strengths a CB programme can build on:

- they are close to specific target groups, therefore, potentially an important voice for those excluded
- the authenticity of their representatives, who are driven by the local needs
- they have solid and efficient local partnerships

In order to maximise its outreach to small/rural CSOs, the Programme adopted the following:

- individual approach
- extra consultations
- explanatory materials
- workshops and training sessions
- work on practical issues
- training on demand
- pre-defined project devoted to CB (project planning, communications planning, marketing strategy)

Its experience highlighted that the market is getting intersectoral and more & more competitive (e.g. companies with developed CSR departments). On the other hand, organisations which lack funding and resources enter a vicious circle, as they usually lose resources, so they stop being competitive (or get funded but deliver low-quality work) - all these in an environment where recipients' expectations are rising. Making the sector more professional means that standards for NGOs operating in the field should be established and applied, and grant donors should use their due diligence to check thoroughly on the applicants in order to help preserve a positive image for the whole sector. In any case, institutional grants can have a significant impact on small/rural NGOs.

ACF Lithuania

The NGO Academy as a means of engaging small & rural CSOs

Živilė Kubilienė

Project Supervisor, NGO Academy coordinator, Open Lithuania Foundation

As part of the Capacity building formats in the Lithuanian Programme, the NGO Academy consists of a long-term (6 months) learning programme. Other formats concern:

- Practical workshops for applicants and project promoters
- CB component in the projects (10-15% of the sum granted)
- Info time for NGOs

The NGO Academy invites NGO teams of 2-3 staff members through a 2-phase selection procedure, first focusing on intensive training, and then detecting their motivation through questionnaires and interviews. It addresses two categories of beneficiaries, Social Leaders and Social Entrepreneurs, and is developed in 5 thematic modules (each with a theoretical and practical component):

- Strategic planning of the organisation or social entrepreneurship
- Financial literacy
- Project literacy and fundraising
- Communication
- Volunteering/community mobilisation or Sales and marketing.

An evaluation meeting and a follow-up event are organised upon completion of the Academy.

Challenges in engaging small and rural organisations in the Lithuanian context are related to maintaining their motivation to learn (4 meetings are scheduled during the first month of the Academy), time planning, their fear of change (though COVID-19 helped in that sense), and the fact that they are usually understaffed (one-person organisations).

Solutions the Programme came up with include:

- Communicating the added value of CB
- Relating the learning process to the current situation of the CSO
- Providing individual consultation to CSO's team
- Organising reflection meetings

ACF Portugal

Acknowledging internal and systemic challenges in engaging small & rural CSOs

Sofia Nunes

NGO Support Officer, Bissya Barreto Foundation

Having as a starting point that i) Portugal is a territorially unbalanced country, with 62% of its NGOs located outside the metropolitan areas, ii) under the previous Programme, 37% of the received applications and 24% of the supported projects came from rural

areas, iii) vulnerable groups organisations represented only 8% of received applications and 9% of the supported projects, iv) these applications were poorly prepared due to deficiencies in technical capacities, the Portuguese CB Programme set a specific support mechanism, in the context of which small NGOs (with a turnover ceiling below 150 000 € for the Portuguese context) and based outside the metropolitan areas would have access to a helpline (e-mail & phone), technical workshops and also revision of their applications. Their work is specially focused on rural and vulnerable groups organisations, so their target was to double the statistics.

These organisations' limited experience and reluctance to show weaknesses to an external evaluator, combined with the small scope of the eligibility criteria and the support mechanism's timeframe, represented considerable challenges for the Programme. However, the improvements it introduced - the new coaching service and the increase of the turnover ceiling - increased the demand.

The above was also reflected in the Programme's mid-term evaluation results: the participating organisations lacked conditions or resources and had difficulty managing deadlines but expressed high levels of satisfaction and perceived support as very important.

Summary of the mini Pro-Action Café activity

Participants were divided into groups similar to the world café and ran the activity in 3 rounds of reflection.

Round 1: *What issues/challenges have you encountered with regard to engaging small and rural organisations, and how have you solved them?*

The example of Poland shows that feminist/LGBT funds for small organisations led to an increase in applications alongside an easy-to-complete application form. Informal citizen groups cannot afford an accountant, so simplifying the procedure is very helpful. Some CSOs are not committed to attending workshops, while others get funding for CB even if their project is not approved.

Round 2: *What are the strengths of rural CSOs you can build on? What are the minimum conditions?*

They are close to vulnerable groups and enthusiastic. So, it is necessary not to kill their enthusiasm with too much structure and introduce more straightforward programmes for them, as well as minimal critical capacities so that they are not overwhelmed.

Round 3: *How to support and provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants? Any conclusions for future mechanisms?*

A good idea would be to provide consultation with an external evaluator on disapproved applications; also, to provide tutors and mentors of their choice (horizontal mentoring); to design small-scale grants for smaller organisations so they do not compete large ones. For the next period, simpler rules and lump sums should be introduced, especially for first-time applicants.

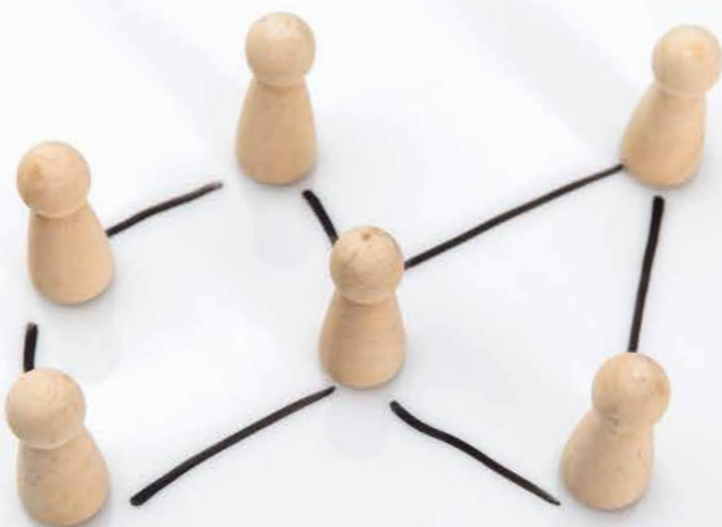


Lessons learned

- Limited understanding of CB on behalf of the CSOs can lead to underspending in the CB outcome
- Capacity building is much more a complex process than a set of tools
- A tailored approach towards small/rural NGOs should be designed not only after the needs assessment stage but also for the development of concrete project ideas
- The social-political-economic context in which small/rural CSOs are called to deliver their work should also be assessed
- Grant donors should bear in mind that the market is getting intersectoral and more and more competitive, so the use of due diligence to check thoroughly on the applicants is crucial
- Motivation to learn, time planning, fear of change and lack in human resources, are factors affecting the “absorption” of CB by small/rural CSOs greatly
- Reluctance to express weaknesses to an external evaluator may affect the results of needs assessment in small/rural CSOs
- The small scope of the eligibility criteria and the support mechanism's timeframe may affect the engagement of small/rural CSOs in the whole CB process.

PART II

CAPACITY BUILDING IN ACTION: ESTABLISHING HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS



3. Promoting effective management of CSOs

ACF Estonia

Promoting leadership as a key element to effective management

Kai Klandorf

Executive Director of Network of Estonian Non-profit Organizations

Effective management for CSOs is situated at the heart of the mission of NENO in Estonia, as its goals are to foster development trends and provide support services to Estonian non-profits, increase public awareness, advocate for the interests of its members and other public benefit CSOs, and improve working relationships with the public and business sectors.

Therefore, their implemented activities are meant to strengthen the role and identity of the non-profit sector as a whole. Their CB programme is aimed at establishing sustainable CSOs and skilled partners, their advocacy efforts at enabling a positive environment for civil society, whereas their civic education and public debates aim at raising civic awareness.

Lack of leadership is one of the major management challenges in the Estonian civil society sector. Curiosity about that phenomenon inevitably led to the question of the competencies a true leader should have. Organisations fail to find true leaders because there is a lack of trained professionals willing to take that role, and most people placed in this role are often mission-driven experts, lacking the vision of a true leader. Hard work combined with low salary conditions do not provide incentives either, and in general, there is a lack of support systems for professionals willing to take that role.

The Programme focused on developing key competencies for CSOs to facilitate the emergence of leaders:

- Self-management, including adaptability, time and stress management
- Strategic management, stressing the importance of vision, goals and priorities, and impact evaluation as vital elements to leadership
- Human resources management, highlighting the role of team building, inspiring motivation and supporting professional development as aspects of a general organisational culture
- Advocacy – in the sense of working with allies and networks, negotiating successfully and creating and maintaining partnerships
- Communication – both external and internal, as well as effective media communication
- Financial sustainability, starting from the basics of financial management and moving towards project writing and project management, respecting the principles of sustainable development.

ACF Estonia's Future Leaders programme consists of a year-long process, inviting 14 participants (out of 100 applicants) who start this learning journey with a pre-evaluation. During this year, 12 sessions of 2 days each are held. Participants are assigned mentors (civil society leaders themselves) and work with them on a specific project (e.g. donation dinners), creating their own portfolio at the end of the curriculum. Measurement of results is ensured by a post-evaluation at the end of the process.

The programme has led so far to 24 graduates who complete a self-evaluation form based on the competencies model and receive the evaluation on behalf of their mentors. The graduates achieve high scores in communications and advocacy, providing a very promising image for the sector in the country.

ACF Greece

Getting inspired from the private sector

Rania El Ampasy

Capacity Building Project Manager, Bodossaki Foundation

Inspiring CSOs to follow professional standards was for the Greek CB Programme fundamental for its design. Effective management is translated as a means of:

- Transparency of procedures within CSOs
- Delivery of high-quality work for the benefit of society
- Putting in practice the CSOs' vision
- Financial sustainability
- Building trust in the CSOs by all parties (public, media, donors).

In this context, good practices were drawn from the private sector. However, in order to follow the example of successful private entities, CSOs also needed access to resources traditionally reserved for companies. That is why the Programme offered its beneficiaries comprehensive team mentoring and individual executive coaching services: team mentoring would benefit team performance on the organisational level, whereas personal executive coaching would help high-ranking individuals deploy skills and talents necessary for their position.

Providing these services required building solid partnerships. Pro bono partnerships in the Greek context are built with companies running extensive CSR programmes/corporate volunteering, with the academia, large-scale international CSOs engaged in peer-to-peer learning, and Bodossaki Foundation's scholars-alumni.

Team mentoring focuses on achieving realistic & measurable goals for team development and is addressed to the core team (2-5 members) of each CSO, responsible for forming its strategy and implementing its vision. Indicative outcomes include:

- (re)defining the CSO's Vision-Mission-Goals-Values
- creating an organigram/job descriptions/dividing tasks
- establishing effective systems for volunteer management
- drafting a fundraising plan
- drafting a communications plan

Mentoring is implemented in 8 steps:

- Step 1:** needs mapping using the FO's CB map
- Step 2:** application to the programme
- Step 3:** selection of mentor (dual process among the CSO and the Programme)
- Step 4:** matchmaking
- Step 5:** mentors' training
- Step 6:** formulation of an action plan
- Step 7:** monitoring all along
- Step 8:** evaluation of progress (including through repetition of the CB mapping)

For mentoring to be truly effective, it also had to be regulated. This is why a Code of Conduct was drafted, deriving from a participative process engaging all mentors. The Code sets precise and clear expectations for all parties, ensures the confidentiality of data

shared, respects inclusion issues, establishes sincerity and transparency and ensures equal treatment and inclusion.

As for the individual executive coaching service, it is offered to CSOs thanks to Bodossaki Foundation's strategic partnership with the Hellenic Coaching Association. The Association is running its "Solidarity Coaching" programme (in the framework of its CSR initiatives) in exclusive collaboration with the Greek FO. This service delves into behavioural patterns at work, providing long-term solutions. It is being implemented via 6-8 meetings between the coach and the coachee exclusively, within a 4-months period.

Find out more

Bodossaki Foundation's Social Dynamo partners and supporters <https://www.socialdynamo.gr/en/partners/>
Capacity map tool <https://www.ngocapacitymap.gr/en/>



Lessons learned

- Leadership acts as a barometer of effective management
- Lack of support systems leads to the absence of leaders in the non-profit sector
- An integrated approach is necessary when working with partners, as it builds a robust network that is easy to expand (word of mouth) and can be addressed for providing different services, e.g. training
- Good practices can be drawn from the private sector if assessed in a critical manner
- A combination of services always works best in capacity building
- FOs can use their good reputation in the local context, in order to build strong pro bono partnerships
- Promoting effective management means, above all, running a CB programme that is well managed.

4. Adapting Capacity Building programmes to the pandemic

ACF Lithuania

Learning opportunities emerging from the pandemic

Jurgita Ribinskaitė-Glatzer

Director, Geri Norai

Similarly to all FOs, the Lithuanian FO recognised the importance of the immediate and human reaction from the FMO regarding mitigating actions related to the pandemic outbreak.

Transferring learning to the online environment certainly represented a challenge, especially concerning the experiential element of it. Alongside the Programme's NGO Academy, practical workshops were offered to applicants and project promoters, and CSOs got the opportunity to learn a new way of working. The Programme also introduced info-time of one hour for CSOs, during which they met with experts who shared good practices with them and answered their questions. Overall, online training proved to be more suitable for long-term learning, and it also led to IT capacity development through the extensive use of online platforms and other tools. Moreover, online capacity building switched travelling time to learning time instead and massively broadened the participation of rural CSOs.

ACF Czech Republic

Upscaling CSOs' IT skills

Khrystyna Verbytska

Programme Coordinator, Open Society Fund Prague

Outcome 5 of the Czech Programme corresponded to increased capacity and sustainability of civil society organisations. In this context, 15% of the granting was allocated to capacity development and sustainability of CSOs.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Czech Programme announced a call for strengthening the digital competencies of CSOs. The design of the call raised a few crucial questions, such as which COVID-19 mitigating measures would be the most suitable (e.g. establishing emergency funds?), how to proceed with the most appropriate selection of CSOs and how to evaluate benefits and outputs. The Programme ran an extensive survey on COVID-19 Impact on Czech CSOs in two phases in 2020 and 2021, resulting in a total of 829 participating CSOs. Another survey was conducted in cooperation with TechSoup CZ regarding the use of IT in Czech non-profit organisations.

According to the research, 43% of CSOs started to operate online, 37% of CSOs introduced work with their partners remotely, and 20% of CSOs broadened their services. As for their expressed needs, the majority of them (64%) declared financial support as their priority, followed by the need to work remotely with their target groups (40%), and IT

support combined with the use of digital tools (22%), in an overall context of managing organisations remotely.

Considering these results, the Programme aimed to improve CSOs' digital knowledge and skills by promoting wider use of digital technologies and tools, helping organisations streamline their work, and increasing their readiness to work in an online environment.

The Programme's Call on digital competencies concerned grants of € 1,000–3,000 for projects lasting 1–12 months focusing on:

- purchase/subscription/setup installation of digital tools and software;
- development/optimisation of websites, applications, e-shops;
- consultation with IT experts;
- educational activities and training to strengthen skills/knowledge and use of digital technologies;
- strategy implementation of the use of technologies for public welfare (civic tech), communication of citizens with the government or local councils, and aiming at bringing long-term impact to the supported CSOs.

The Programme also provided IT-related support for applicants:

- A webinar for applicants resuming the call
- Supporting questionnaire (prepared in collaboration with TechSoup) to help organisations clarify in which areas they needed to strengthen their digital competencies or develop the organisation's digital equipment and tools
- A continuously updated list of potential services and suppliers of IT technologies or training
- Free consultations (of up to 1 hour/organisation) with IT experts on digitalisation (also making use of corporate volunteering), aimed at focusing on specific tools, technologies and competencies
- FAQ & consultations on application submission via e-mail or phone.

Most CSOs sought consulting on optimising their websites, CRM and related systems, their e-mail services, designing e-shops and reservation systems. They reported that they gained substantial benefits regarding the orientation and targeting of their projects, and the identification of appropriate digital tools for their work.

In total, the call attracted 181 applications during the period 2021 – 2022, out of which 44 projects were supported with the amount of € 124 800. Among these projects, some concerned the CSOs' target groups (e.g. digitisation in the field of modern methods of teaching vulnerable groups, working against the digital exclusion of vulnerable groups), while others focused on the CSOs' infrastructure itself (e.g. digitisation of volunteering, designing user-friendly websites and modern e-shops).

Find out more

Survey of Nadace OSF in collaboration with TechSoup CZ on the use of IT in Czech non-profit organisations https://www.techsoup.cz/sites/default/files/file_attachments/it_in_czech_nonprofit_organizations_komprimovane.pdf

2021 survey on the impact of COVID-19 on non-profit organisations (in English): https://osf.cz/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/OSF_Impacts_of_the_pandemic.pptx.pdf

2020 survey on the impact of COVID-19 on non-profit organisations (in Czech): https://osf.cz/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Nadace-OSF_przukur_COVID-2020.pdf

Results from the appreciative enquiry activity as a transformative experience:

In this session, participants were called to reflect on the following questions in an effort to transform the challenging aspects of adaptation into empowering ways of moving forward:

- *What went well? How did CB flourish?*

In the context of the pandemic, more CSO representatives had access to CB. They started learning by doing, and certain FOs switched their Programme entirely to the online format. In general, it proved easy for organisations to switch to online learning, and that increased participation rates, making CB less expensive at the same time.

- *What did you value from your experience? What was the additional value?*

Less bureaucracy! Also, switching to a new work model helped FOs exit from their comfort zone and gain confidence. Organisations eventually had the time to retrospect and reflect on themselves.

- *How did the communication affect your work?*

A great deal of time was saved thanks to online meetings. Hybrid forms of work proved to be the most effective ones.



Lessons learned

- Online training proves to be more suitable for long-term learning
- By exploring new ways of work, CSOs also developed their IT capacity
- Financial support remains a top priority need for CSOs, in all sorts of crises
- Needs clarification that leads to a competitive project proposal, should not be taken for granted: CSOs may need support in that phase as well, through consultation offered by FOs

5. Innovative approaches to Capacity Building

Facilitated by the Romanian FO, the Chaos-café sought to answer fundamental questions regarding the meaning of innovation itself and how it is translated into our daily life (both professional and personal). Results of the café showed that innovation is not something absolute, and ended by determining an action or situation as innovative when it is happening for the first time in a given community, even if it is not innovative for other contexts.

ACF Greece

Innovative approaches to capacity building in the ACF and beyond

Jennifer Clarke

PhD, Programme Director ACF Greece & Director of Programmes & Grants, Bodossaki Foundation

In a review of current trends in capacity building within the ACF and beyond, four innovative trends were identified:

1. In strengthening wellbeing
2. In a shift towards promoting organisational resilience
3. In getting attention to power balance and
4. In exploring alternatives to project-based support.

Regarding strengthening wellbeing, important initiatives were taken: the regional Anti-Burnout Solution Camp was organised by ACF Poland National & Regional, whereas ACF Latvia and ACF Greece held workshops on tackling burnout and conflicts. Beyond the ACF, the Funders & Wellbeing Group developed 'a global learning community for foundations and grantmakers, to explore the link between inner wellbeing and sustainable social change, to experiment with ways to put it into practice, and contribute to a culture shift in the philanthropic ecosystem'. Last but not least, both FOs and CSOs can find important insights in the FRA Report on 'Challenges facing civil society organisations working on human rights in the EU'.

The importance of organisational resilience has been stressed during the last few years within the ACF programmes, as indicated by their greater flexibility regarding providing CSOs sufficient space to adapt to new circumstances. In a few cases, there were training sessions on adaptation (e.g. ACF Greece training on hybrid working models), while significant sources of resilience can also be found in the Pact Five ideas for supporting CSOs to be more relevant, resilient and sustainable. There, resilience is translated as strengthening the capacity for downward accountability and adaptive design, provision of space for adaptation, and enabling access to resilient sources of funding.

Attention to power balance in the innovation spectrum, involves avoiding 'paternalistic' approaches that impose fixed capacity building on grantees. Special attention is given to 'putting grantee in the driving seat' (Ford Foundation) and on building relationships of trust, as shown by the possibility given to ACF Project Promoters to design and implement their own CB activities within the Capacity Building Component and other initiatives in the market, such as the Black Equity Collective, a US concept, 'transforming the relationship between philanthropy & community'.

Alternatives to project-based support resulted from a general shift towards core funding/unrestricted funding/general operating support and/or institutional/organisational development support. Within the ACF Programme, they were translated into ACF Organisational Grants. At the same time, other stakeholders such as the Ford Foundation and Oak Foundation took similar initiatives (Ford Foundation's BUILD Programme, Oak Foundation's Organisational Development support). The common bottom line of all these initiatives, is that CSOs are perceived not as beneficiaries but as partners.

Find out more

Anti-burnout Solution Camp, <https://aktywniobywatele.org.pl/anti-burnout-solution-camp-w-chorwacji-uruchamiamy-nabor/>

ACF Latvia & Greece workshops on tackling burnout and conflicts, e.g.: <https://www.activecitizensfund.gr/ekdilosi/diacheirisi-sygkroyseon-amp-epaggelmatiki-exoythenosi-burn-out/>

Funders & Wellbeing Group, https://wellbeing-project.org/funders-wellbeing-community-group/?utm_medium=email&_hsmi=227742317&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8yzRKKfWUn82C4GEFNS3OK4Ky4iVNPzNA0n206Tt7xz-hrRD65eMljxWtROPWVUuUETb796q1iVfEgZ6xSSGGLOGt0J9kKVVKS5X8WLJAIFyAxugQ&utm_content=227742317&utm_source=hs_email

FRA Report on 'Challenges facing civil society organisations working on human rights in the EU', <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/challenges-facing-civil-society-organisations-working-human-rights-eu>

Pact Five ideas for supporting CSOs to be more relevant, resilient and sustainable <https://www.pactworld.org/blog/five-ideas-supporting-csos-be-more-relevant-resilient-and-sustainable>

ACF Greece training on hybrid working models <https://www.activecitizensfund.gr/ekdilosi/yvridiko-montelo-ergasias-gia-mko-tilergasia-amp-grafeio/>

Report 'Funding Organisational Development: a smart investment to multiply impact, Views from five foundations' (Oak Foundation et al 2020), <https://oakfnd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Funding-Organisational-Development-final.pdf>

Resources for following trends in capacity building:

Philea Organisational Development Community of Practice
<https://philea.eu/how-we-can-help/peer-learning/communities-of-practice/organisational-development/>

Geofunders
<https://www.geofunders.org/what-we-care-about/capacity-building>

Intrac
<https://www.intrac.org/what-we-do/organisational-capacity-development/>

Oak Foundation
<https://oakfnd.org/values-mission-history/cbod/>

Ford Foundation Build Programme
<https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/our-grants/building-institutions-and-networks/>

ACF Poland Regional

Being flexible when putting innovation into practice

Katarzyna Zakroczymska

Programme Director

Magdalena Krasowska-Igras

Capacity Building & Communication Manager, Foundation in Support of Local Democracy

The CB Programme in Poland (Regional) approached innovation in different ways. Firstly, the Programme's planning focused on size/localisation and level of organisational capacity of CSOs, while specific issues concerning their area of interest were also taken into account.

They started building a "self-agency" of organisations and realised the need to incubate all types of CSOs, including small organisations/organisations with limited capacity. That way, these types of organisations had the opportunity to get support not only while preparing their proposals but also while putting them into practice, having at the same time the feeling of working in an encouraging and friendly environment. They aimed to build a demand for the civil sector to develop competitiveness in the market for the young generation of CSOs.

In order to reach that point, they deployed a variety of tools:

- microgrants for small and beginning CSOs for some of the Programme's alumni
- pre-defined projects on capacity building (e.g. SAS - School of Active Sector)
- training on demand covering different educational themes
- individual consultations with experts, concerning thematic interventions in projects
- individual tutoring for each CSO, aimed at building small-scale strategy within a supervised process

The Programme stressed the importance of assessing innovation based not on specific universal criteria but on what makes sense locally.



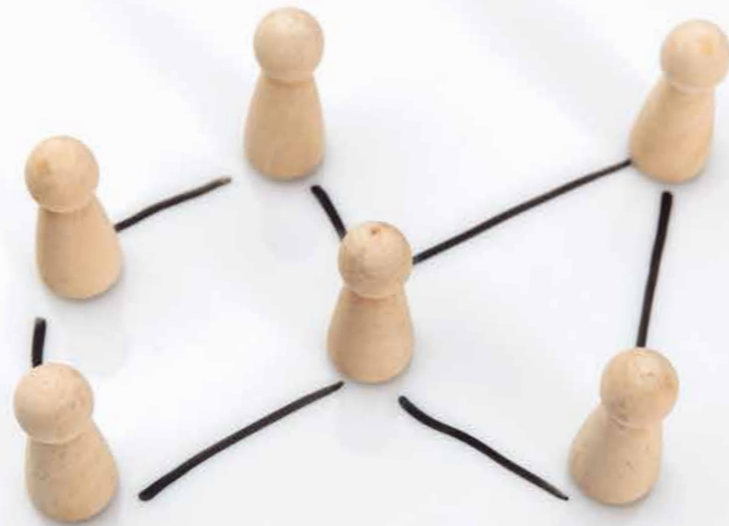
Lessons learned from the presentations and the world-café activity:

Some participants were committed to specific tables, whereas others pollinated around them to do some note-keeping. The tables subsequently presented a summary of their discussions based on the questions "What is important for you/your organisation when you think of innovation? Who needs it? Why?"

Apart from improving digital knowledge and providing modern services such as a co-working space, innovation for participants was perceived as a condition that encourages creativity, efficiency and involvement, making CSOs' work easier and optimising results and impact. Innovation has to be relevant within the scope of CSOs' work and compatible with their capacity. Social innovation can flourish through the development of a social economy in CSOs, and this implies that cross-sectoral alliances are built, within which funding options for networks, alliances and inter-disciplinary projects are available.

Innovation assumes a certain state of mind, the willingness to be brave and dare to imagine, as fear of not succeeding at what we aim at might act as a discouraging factor. Knowledge combined with evidence of results and openness to questioning assumptions and change can only lead to effectiveness and creativity. It is about interrupting what we have been doing till the present, "getting out of the bubble" and intrigued by risk and curiosity at the same time, providing the space needed for analysis and adaptation.

PART III: TAKING CAPACITY BUILDING A STEP FORWARD: ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY AND MEASURING IMPACT



6. Promoting networking and collaborations

ACF Poland National

Translating networking in terms of recognition by the sector

Ingeborga Janikowska-Lipszyc

Grantmaking Programme Coordinator, Stefan Batory Foundation

Under the Reserve Fund and Norway Grants, the Polish Programme (National) launched an additional call for proposals on organisational grants. Organisational grants were addressed to i) infrastructural organisations active on a national level, ii) national sectoral and cross-sectoral unions of associations, and iii) national organisations active in the area of protection of human and civil rights and the rule of law. Their aim was to facilitate the development of an organisation in line with its long-term strategy or action plan. The call amounted to a budget of 2.226.000 €, awarded 22 proposals in total, and set the basis for results-based reporting.

Addressing a proposal under this call involved networking oneself, as each applicant was called to gather 7 letters of recommendation from other organisations and/or informal groups, were factors describing the cooperation with the recommended organisation, the benefits and support they gained from the knowledge and experience of this organisation and their assessment on the role of this organisation in the field/theme/area it operated. Large organisations in the country are far more reluctant to collaborate than small ones. Surprisingly, during this process, the Programme received similar letters, showcasing that it is essential for large organisations to be recognised by others.

Following the same philosophy, each applicant had to answer specific questions regarding their view on collaborations. Cooperating with other organisations or informal groups, belonging to a federation or coalition, and initiating or co-creating activities with other organisations, civic communities or informal groups were factors taken into account during the evaluation process, especially in a complex context, where, for example, the government is not favourably disposed towards human rights NGOs. Beyond that, applicants were asked to prove their extroverted culture, as indicated by sharing knowledge and experience with their peers, their ability to set new trends in their field of expertise, and their capacity and willingness to offer guidance to less experienced organisations.

Three independent experts assessed applications, and applicants had online meetings with them, during which they were asked to prove the importance of their current role in the ecosystem of the 3rd sector.

ACF Greece

Targeted funding for the development of CSO networks

Sophocles Danassis

Senior Programme Officer, Bodossaki Foundation

A lack of strong networks and synergies in Greece motivated the Greek Programme to design an open call to support the development of CSO networks to enhance civil society organisations' capacity and sustainability.

The total amount available for funding under this call is € 580,000. A total of 74 applications were received under this call, out of which 12 projects are being funded across Greece (7 medium projects – with a funded budget of up to 80,000€, and 5 small projects – with a funded budget of up to 5,000€). The projects involve activities in Athens and outside of Athens in several areas across Greece. 1 project has a donor partner (The Icelandic Human Rights Centre).

Good Practice 1

Several civil society organisations are active in Greece in the field of autism. However, the collaboration between them or with service providers is often occasional and deprived of any systematic or organised aspect, resulting in a lack of sharing similar capacities for identifying resources. The Child and Adolescent Center’s project (in partnership with the Greek Society for the Protection of Autistic Persons (GSPAP) refers to the development of an informal Network with 15 members, such as Associations of autistic individuals, parents’ and professional associations, and non-profit mental health and social service providers, that constitute the target groups of the project.

The project includes activities for networking, training activities for the development of services and volunteer management, activities for creating a Digital Practical guide for parents, the use of a digital platform for connecting and updating the members of the Network, and finally, the implementation of a satisfaction survey.

Good Practice 2

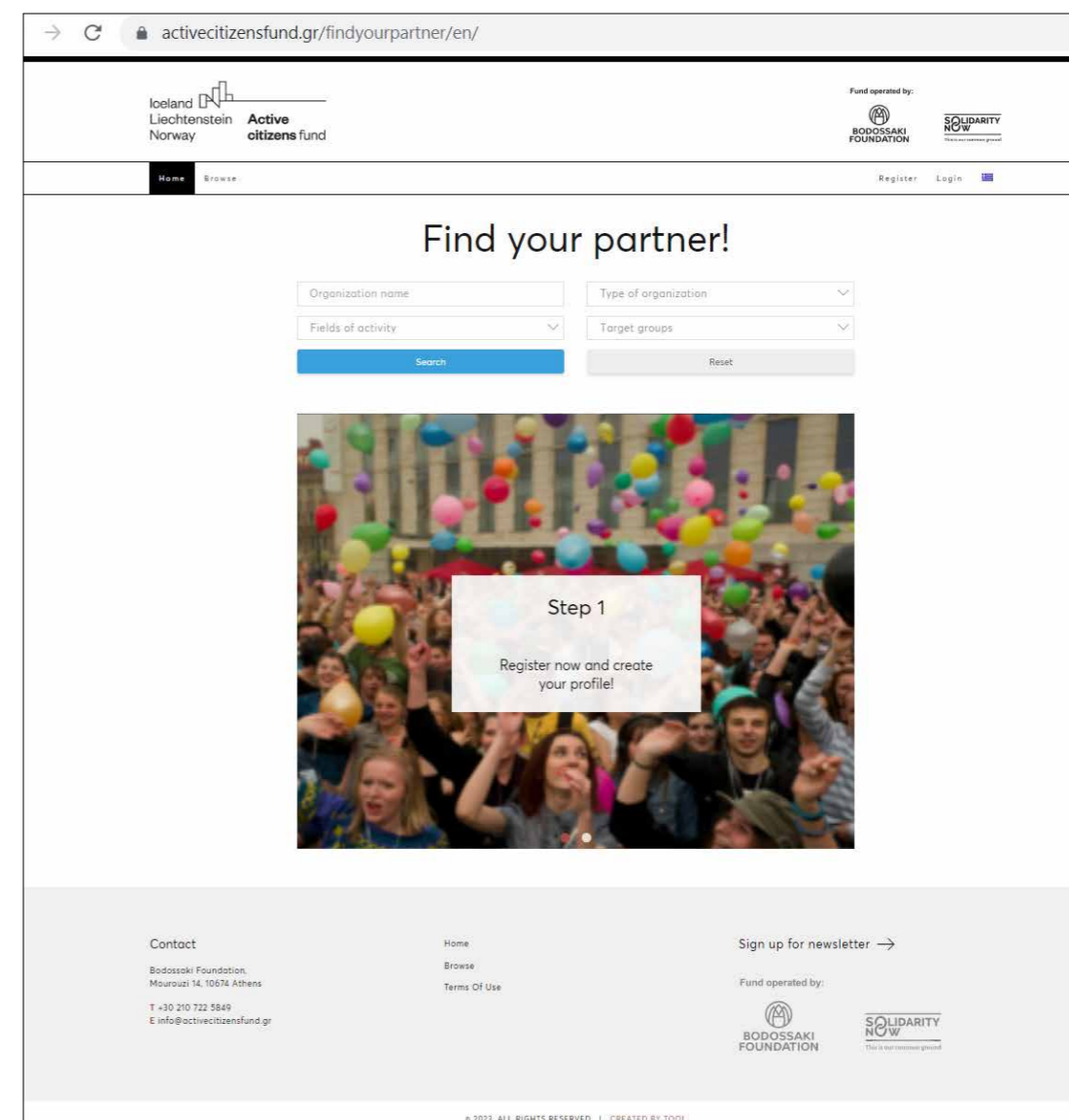
ELIAMEP – Hellenic Foundation for Greek and Foreign Policy (project promoter), in cooperation with the Icelandic Human Rights Center, use their long experience to build a new Greek civil society community in the context of SDGs.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations member states in 2015 are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership. It was only by 2018 that Greece adopted a strategic approach to achieve the SDGs, ensuring political ownership. Greek civil society ecosystem includes few federations or second-tier organisations and networks. Most of them focus on specific areas of involvement and include NGOs and groups with similar objectives.

The project creates a new civil society network to promote SDGs in Greece. The project aims to mobilise both formal and informal groups in urban and rural areas, create cross-subject and cross-organisational synergies, promote cooperation and partnerships and strengthen advocacy and consultation with public bodies.

In addition to the above, the Foundation created the portal “Find your Partner” (within the ACF Greece website) that aims to bring together NGOs from Greece and abroad in order to get to know and interact with each other, identify areas of common interest and discuss initial ideas to enhance their capacity, share good practices, address common social issues and eventually shape concrete bonds and common projects.

The search is done by selecting fields of activity, the type of organisation and the target group. Registration to the portal is free; so far, 130 CSOs from Greece and foreign countries have registered.



Find out more

ACF Greece “Find your partner” platform: www.activecitizensfund.gr/findyourpartner/en/

ACF Lithuania

Using the power of events for promoting networking

Živilė Kubilienė

Project Supervisor, NGO Academy Coordinator, Open Lithuania Foundation

As for the Lithuanian Programme, a series of matchmaking events were organised during the past few years, gathering 25 national organisations and 10 organisations from the donor countries. A thematic speed-dating event where participants could express expectations led to a considerable number of partnerships as well.

Find out more

Captures from the NGO networking event <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GV1T8HhMaoQ>

Results from the “20 ways to use a spoon activity,” facilitated by FO Romania:

Participants were asked to brainstorm on a practice to promote networking, and during a second round, to focus more specifically on innovative practices. The list of brainstormed group ideas is rich enough!

NGOs camps and retreats

Hot topic networking-matchmaking events

Coffee meetings

Platforms for collaboration – e.g. “Find your partner”

2-day event to find your partner Hackathon

Intersectoral meetings

Meetings of CSOs-project promoters

Thematic fora

Online cafés for bilateral exchanges

30” – 1’ pitches for collaboration ideas

Sharing failure stories

T4D: technology for developing cooperation (an increase of visibility of services & accessibility of these by beneficiaries)

Social media groups

Short videos promotion

Art installations about collaboration

Study trips/thematic trips/meetings for project promoters

Soft open formats in study trips

NGO festivals/symposiums

Summer Universities

“Thank you” events, galas

Thematic fora during phase of application

Volunteering (e.g. clean-ups)

Wine nights after training sessions

NGO sports teams

NGO bands/choirs

Journalist breakfasts/cocktails

Pooling of resources -) stimulating and matching endeavours

Personal relations, profiling and awarding sectoral brokers/liaison figures

“Bribing” big NGOs to collaborate with smaller ones

Providing extra financial resources for partnerships

CSR and CSOs networking events

Complex meetings for different stakeholders once a year



Lessons learned

- The starting point of promoting networking is the call itself. The way it is addressed can encourage collaborations across the sector.
- Asking for recommendations from other CSOs may promote networking and collaborations, however attention should be paid on the objectivity of such recommendations when funding is at stake
- When seeking advanced networking and collaboration, potentially complex circumstances should be taken into consideration (e.g. hostile government towards specific type of NGOs)
- CSOs’ ability to set new trends in their field of expertise is itself an indicator of networking
- The lack of a culture of cooperation, leading to fragmented and scattered activities even among CSOs within the same sectors, is a cross-national phenomenon
- Delays in the creation and formation of new networks and platforms lead to the conclusion that probably a decent percentage of the funds should have been distributed in established networks
- Technology has an important role to play in promoting networking and collaborations, while the role of socialising should not be neglected either
- Enticing big CSOs to collaborate with small ones might work, but close monitoring is crucial

7. Promoting funding diversification and financial sustainability

ACF Latvia

Initiatives aimed at transforming a certain mindset

Ansis Bērziņš

ACF Programme Director, Civic Alliance Latvia

The Latvian CB Programme launched two separate open calls for grants of 20.000€ for capacity building. During the calls, workshops, training, networking events and a considerable number of individual consultations with regional coverage were organised in order to encourage CSOs to think about diversification of their income sources. Since most CSOs in the country are project-dependent, diversification of funding is a challenge, translated into moving away from grants and exploring other means of fundraising such as donations (corporate, private, anonymous), social entrepreneurship and membership fees.

Within the results framework, the outcome level indicator was set as the number of CSOs with at least a 10% increase in their non-grant funding activity, and the output indicator as the facilitation of CSOs financial sustainability through implemented fundraising campaigns, among others.

With respect to the importance of funding diversification aimed at changing the local mindset regarding funding, the Programme focused on highlighting the long-term benefit of funding diversification for CSOs, and on inspiring them to this end through thematic seminars and sharing of best practices and success stories. Also, proposals indicating diverse funding sources benefited from extra scoring during the project selection process.

Although recognising that changing the mindset requires much effort, progress was still made following these steps, as half of the capacity-building projects included a fundraising component, showcasing that CSOs started elaborating related plans and strategies, designing fundraising campaigns and developing donor relations. At the same time, matching grants is still an option and a challenge for innovation within the EEA Grants. According to this scheme, CSOs who manage to rise 10/25/50/100k from alternative non-grant sources receive a lump sum of 50k from the EEA.

What is at stake now is promoting funding diversification through the lens of financial sustainability, making the best use of local giving/philanthropy and developing the business mind of CSOs.

ACF Poland Regional

Supporting CSOs' funding diversification step by step

Katarzyna Zakroczyńska

Programme Director

Magdalena Krasowska-Igras

Capacity Building & Communication Manager, Foundation in Support of Local Democracy

In the Polish third sector, CSOs do not diversify their sources of funding, often resulting in organisations disappearing from the market – especially those dealing with human rights

and LGBT issues. Methodologies and tools employed by the Polish CB Programme (Regional) include educational events and manuals to promote the approach and need for funding diversification among CSOs, as well as Capacity Building plans as part of the thematic grants. Besides, the organisational grants very often anticipate a fundraising strategy, including creating a staff position within the CSO structure for a fundraiser and developing a portfolio of business partners and crowdfunding campaigns.

Within the Pre-defined project (PDP3), in the “Active Sector School,” organisations work on a project, develop it in detail and capitalise on learnings from the offered training. As a step forward, the Programme designs a financing model/strategy, which includes various funding formats, such as individual donors, private companies, grants and entrepreneurship.

ACF Slovakia

Measures to shift the local mentality

Melinda Astrabova

Programme Manager, Ekopolis Foundation

Managed by the Ekopolis Foundation in cooperation with the Open Society Foundation and the Carpathian Foundation, during 2018-2023, ACF Slovakia has allocated 7.7 million EUR through 17 grant calls, which supported more than 191 projects developed in 5 thematic axes, and 3 pre-defined projects, out of which one focuses on CSOs Capacity Building. Funding diversification is promoted within the CB Programme through 3 components:

- Workshops and webinars on social economy, using campaigns as a fundraising tool and financial sustainability
- A mentoring service reserved for a specific number of beneficiaries of the “Be the change” programme, where tailor-made assistance is provided
- A seminar dedicated to the topic of CSOs financial sustainability, planned for the spring of 2023

The Programme's indicator of diversification of funding is reflected in the number of CSOs with at least two funding sources, each comprising at least 30% of their total annual budget. Transforming mentality is a challenge in this Programme as well, which associates diversification of funding with the expansion of networking and collaborations. To this end, the Programme encourages Project Promoters to offer support to smaller CSOs.



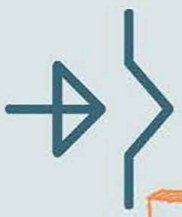
Find out more:

Centre for Philanthropy – DARUJME.sk



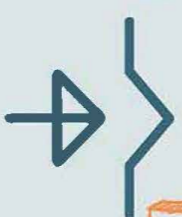
Results and lessons learnt from the gallery walk-style activity:

Participants were asked to take a “gallery walk,” identify themselves with one of the 6 case studies of “offering help to CSOs to diversify their funding” shown on the board, keep notes and discuss.



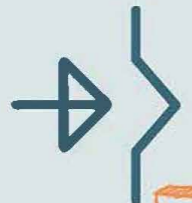
Case Study 1

How YOU helped a CSO diversify its funding		Case Study
HOW was the CSO(s) supported? 	The support provided through CBC to ZWY to widen and solidify its financial base. Specifically, a fundraising officer and a trainer were added to the team.	
WHAT additional diversified funding did the CSO(s) attract/achieve? 	10 additional fundraising applications filled on behalf of the organization in 2021 alone. Five of them were met with success and granted, while an overall basis of relevant material has been archived, providing the organization with a powerful tool in its resources diversification efforts.	
WHAT impact did the diversified funding have on the CSO(s)? 	The increased fundraising activity has led and can be linked directly or indirectly to a 15% increase in the yearly business cycle of the organization from 2021 to 2022.	
NOTE TAKING		
Natasa Chanta-Martin X Canva		



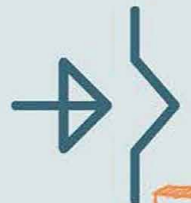
Case Study 2

How YOU helped a CSO diversify its funding		Case Study TWO
HOW was the CSO(s) supported? 	Through the CBC component, the CSO initiated the development of its international strategy through which they were requested by the Charity Center for Refugees in Moldova to transfer their expertise and knowledge. As a result, the CSO trained the CCR staff on issues regarding child protection, gender-based violence, etc., which are particular priorities for the Moldovan partner due to the vast number of Ukrainian refugees they are receiving. The CSO will be able to add capacity-building training to their funding portfolio and proceed with a specific strategic plan. The CBC component covered the travel costs for the week-long training in Moldova and the training material.	
WHAT additional diversified funding did the CSO(s) attract/achieve? 	So far, no additional funding has been achieved by the CSO since the particular activity was the starting point of its capacity building training strategy.	
WHAT impact did the diversified funding have on the CSO(s)? 	The CSO can now initiate its international strategy and establish itself as an important focal point in issues regarding migration. They also acquired their first international training in their portfolio the starting point in becoming a capacity-building training organization.	
NOTE TAKING		
Natasa Chanta-Martin X Canva		




Case Study 3

How YOU helped a CSO diversify its funding		Case Study THREE
HOW was the CSO(s) supported?		In thematic and institutional calls, part of the grant can be used for fundraising and communication with donors. We also provide training for grantees on how to diversify funding sources.
WHAT additional diversified funding did the CSO(s) attract/achieve?		Most organisations focus on crowdfunding and individual donors; some also build relationships with businesses.
WHAT impact did the diversified funding have on the CSO(s)?		Diversified funding is essential for the survival of watchdog and human rights organisations in Poland, as they do not have access to public subsidies. Thanks to the increase in the number of individual donors and contributions from 1% PIT, they can maintain the continuity of their activities and independence.
NOTE TAKING		
Natasa Chanta-Martin X Canva		



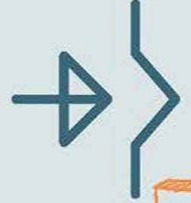
Case Study 4

How YOU helped a CSO diversify its funding		Case Study FOUR
HOW was the CSO(s) supported?		Capacity-building projects.
WHAT additional diversified funding did the CSO(s) attract/achieve?		NGOs increased their notoriety, diversified their public, increased their membership, developed fundraising campaigns, launched social businesses and improved their fundraising software and processes.
WHAT impact did the diversified funding have on the CSO(s)?		NGOs improved their sustainability and reduced their dependency on public funding.
NOTE TAKING		
Natasa Chanta-Martin X Canva		

Case Study 5

How YOU helped a CSO diversify its funding		Case Study FIVE
HOW was the CSO(s) supported?		FO hosted seminars to talk about opportunities for non-grant funding. We had an open call for capacity projects with specific output: fundraising campaigns. Many CSOs use ACF grants to build strategies or plans to think about fund diversification, develop their economic activities (as separate income sources), to develop IT tools for raising donations or organising online auctions etc.
WHAT additional diversified funding did the CSO(s) attract/achieve?		We have not measured this yet. Some examples could be found, but mentioning one best case would not be illustrative or honest.
WHAT impact did the diversified funding have on the CSO(s)?		This should be assessed more carefully, but it feels controversial so far: few grantees had a good experience with individual donors before but they wanted to grow their project/grant experience after working with ACF. But several grantees have discovered the joy of having 'independent' income sources and the freedom of having resources from economic activities.
NOTE TAKING		
Natasa Chanta-Martin X Canva		

Case Study 6

How YOU helped a CSO diversify its funding		Case Study SIX
HOW was the CSO(s) supported?		Thanks to a project in the ACF programme, the YZX strengthened and developed the XYZ donation site, which currently helps other organisations in Slovakia diversify their financial resources. XXY Slovakia gained a new funding method through cooperation with companies. Thanks to the ACF programme project, ABC is changing their status to social business. The grantees also participated in the webinar Campaigns as a Fundraising Tool, in February 2022, as well as Sustainable Financing of NGO Activities in June, which helped them understand different directions and financing methods. Organised by ACF - Slovakia.
WHAT additional diversified funding did the CSO(s) attract/achieve?		The XYZ achieved donation-based financing, which is popular now in Slovakia. Still, only the YZX created a system within which the organisation and the donor establish a so-called relationship through "real" virtual communication. XXY Slovakia achieved financing through company partners. The ABC created a social workshop, representing a new form of financing.
WHAT impact did the diversified funding have on the CSO(s)?		This different way of financing brings organisations new projects, financial support and increased brand recognition. Thanks to this, they will be able to expand the team with experts and will be able to help other smaller or less developed organisations in their journey to better financing and sustainability.
NOTE TAKING		
Natasa Chanta-Martin X Canva		

8. Measuring and communicating impact

ACF Czech Republic

The valuable experience of the “Stronger Roots” Programme

Pavλίna Hořáková

Coordinator of Stronger Roots Programme, Open Society Fund Prague

Evaluation of the „Stronger Roots“ Programme implemented during 2019-2022 by the Czech programme offered many lessons learned regarding the importance of measuring and communicating impact. The Stronger Roots Programme has been implemented within the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary consortium by Open Society Fund Prague, the NIOK Foundation, Open Society Foundation Bratislava and Glopolis, with the support of Porticus and the Open Society Initiative for Europe since 2019.

During the Programme, 35 CSOs were able to strengthen their social base, consisting of their community of supporters, donors, volunteers and other stakeholders. 9 CSO networks managed to start new or enhance their existing partnerships across divergent ideological or geographical lines.

The evaluation was for the Czech FO a notion inspired by CSOs even during the stage of budget drafting within the projects' proposal writing. In this way, the measurement of valid results was possible right from the start of the project implementation. Language barriers were also considered for evaluating international projects, as not all grantees are proficient in English.

It is vital to involve evaluators in the third sector's reality, by inviting them to related events, meetings and debriefings, as building open and friendly relationships with CSOs helps them see the people working in the field (behind the numbers), acquire a human – rather than exclusively technical – approach to evaluation, and even recommend tailored evaluation methods. The Stronger Roots programme focused on measuring awareness raising, capacity development and performance. At any rate, it is of great significance to determine which areas of impact will be measured, before the launch of projects.

Useful elements for evaluation may also include data from the project's ecosystem, such as evaluations from the CSO's mentors, supporters, and control group - organisations that applied to the programme but did not receive a grant. However, an extensive evaluation process may find limitations:

- The response rate on evaluation questionnaires may be low
- The results cannot be considered absolutely representative, as organisations who did respond to the questionnaire were mainly advanced organisations that would have done well even without the programme's support and thus wanted to share their success.

Therefore, during the final analysis of the results, the programme's impact was not as visible as it might have been if compared with possible effects on less advanced organisations.

Find out more

The Stronger Roots Programme <https://osf.cz/en/programmes/living-democracy/the-discreet-charm-of-democracy/stronger-roots/>

ACF Lithuania

Impact measurement as a meticulous procedure that needs to be well designed

Jurgita Ribinskaitė-Glatzer

Director, Geri Norai

The Lithuanian FO, as a social entrepreneurship organisation (member of a consortium) working with NGOs who wish to combine entrepreneurship and capacity building, puts the topic of impact measurement very highly on their agenda. In order to measure the capacity building, first, it is important to define it: any capacity building activity is making a change, and during evaluating and measuring results, the same approach and methods should be applied since effective measurement is not possible without accurate planning.

The Lithuanian Programme used the Problem Tree method to evaluate and measure progress of the supported CSOs. The tool pointed out some ordinary issues faced by CSOs, such as the lack of a proper impact model or fundraising strategies (especially for medium organisations). Important to consider when using the tool, is the environment in which the issue is expressed (e.g. nepotism in a municipality or burnout of CSOs dealing with a specific topic), as well as the identity of other stakeholders interested in dealing with the same issue. Within their NGO academy – the 6 months capacity building programme for regional NGOs – ACF Lithuania distributed to the supported CSOs questionnaires before and after implementing their project, and conducted related interviews during the same stages. A satisfaction survey was also run, in order to spot – in case of not reaching the desired indicators – the areas of responsibility ownership of all parts involved (CSOs, trainers, etc.). All these approaches combined, monitored results and depicted the overall Impact of the Programme to project promoters.

However, challenges during this process should not be neglected: first and foremost, time, as this procedure must be carried out at least once per year. Then, the proof of concept should not be underestimated either, as well as the validation of results which can be costly if assigned to an external evaluator.

ACF Portugal

The major strength of research in measuring impact

José Eleutério

Programme Coordinator – Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

Pedro Ferreira

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The Portuguese Programme focused on two areas: Education for Citizenship and Capacity Building. In order to perform an intermediate evaluation of the CB programme, the Portuguese FO designed a strategy that combined different data collection tools and analytic procedures. Concerning the tools, these included:

- a) a self-assessment sheet addressed to the Programme
- b) a questionnaire addressed to the CSOs
- c) an interview protocol for the project's manager or high-ranking staff involved

Both statistical (based on quantitative data) and content (based on verbal material) analysis of the collected data was carried out.

The self-assessment sheet addressed to the Programme collected data from the beginning and the end of the project and included 45 questions divided into 3 main categories:

- organisational capacity within the Programme, as translated into organisational governance, financial management, planning and sustainability, monitoring and evaluation, leadership and management, human rights and gender equality
- organizational capacity in relation to the external environment, as translated in the capacity to mobilise the public and influence public policy, the involvement of beneficiaries, its involvement in civil society, its experience in partnerships, visibility, its capacity to lead, and its partnerships with donor countries
- organisational competencies in recruiting, training and engaging staff and volunteers, mentoring and supervising them, etc.

The screenshot shows a questionnaire titled 'Active citizens fund' with logos for 'FUNDAÇÃO CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN' and 'FUNDAÇÃO BISSAYA BARRETO'. It includes a bar chart for 'Iceland', 'Liechtenstein', and 'Norway'. The main section is 'PARTE I: Capacitação organizacional (interna)' with question 1: 'Governança (Conjunto de processos, ações, políticas e regulamentos que regulam a forma como a organização é dirigida)'. Five sub-questions (1.1-1.5) are listed, each with a score of 4 in a box.

Regarding the questionnaire addressed to all CSOs involved in the Programme, it included four sections, out of which one was devoted to the organisation's capacity in terms of strategic planning, budget, needs assessment and stakeholders analysis, and one to organisational

empowerment. The latter, focused on internal processes, dealing with information and objectives sharing among the team, promoting engagement and opportunities, setting professional responsibilities, installing an evaluation process, inspiring the vision, meaning and purpose of what the team is working on, etc.

The list is titled '“Na minha organização...”' and contains 13 items (a-m) for evaluation:

- “Pensar fora da caixa” é apreciado
- há partilha informações sobre o que se pretende realizar no futuro
- há partilha informações sobre como os objetivos vão ser alcançados
- os empregados têm uma palavra a dizer na mudança das políticas da organização
- não é encorajado que se tomem riscos no que diz respeito aos modos de trabalho
- os empregados não são encorajados, no exercício das suas funções, a serem autónomos na resolução de problemas
- estabeleceu diretrizes específicas para o trabalho a realizar
- os empregados têm uma palavra a dizer na definição das suas responsabilidades profissionais
- os trabalhadores têm uma palavra a dizer na definição das suas formas de trabalho
- os empregados podem escolher os seus períodos de férias
- os empregados têm uma palavra a dizer relativamente às equipas em que são inseridos
- não existe uma forma eficiente de divulgar internamente informação a todos os níveis
- os empregados têm acesso à informação nos seus ficheiros pessoais de trabalho

Results from the collaborative note-taking activity, based on participants' questions:

- *Would “obliging” a Project Promoter to hire an external in order to carry out the CB assessment be meaningful?*
Yes, an external evaluator would give an external perspective to the whole process, as long as CSOs have sufficient time to present results from the CB “journey” - 9 months would be a suggested timeframe.
- *In the framework of organisational grants, what would be considered as effective ways of communicating the topic of capacity building and its measurement to the general public?*
We are not addressing issues that can be fixed within the time length of a project, as capacity issues are not project-related issues but policy-related issues. With this in mind, effective communication needs to be short for media and directed to storytelling (e.g. TEDx talk-style presentations) but long for internal use (analysis of case studies).
- *How can we ensure actual results?*
We should always ask CSOs to provide concrete results. Also, we should not insist on results with grass-roots organisations that are not yet interested or ready to enter a capacity-building process.
- *How can we motivate CSOs to build their capacity?*
We should first ask ourselves if the data sets in the evaluation form are as useful for the donors and the FOs as they are for the grantees: Does the evaluation design match their needs?

- *How can we address structural issues related to CB?*

The impact has to be communicated internally and to the general public, making sense in terms of the impact model/theory of change. In order to check to what extent the evaluation design has been valid enough, we need to verify to what extent the external factors have been incorporated into the design. In any case, the evaluation design has to fit the organisations and support it through implementation, as too much structure may reduce their enthusiasm. Also, it is essential to examine the roots of the problem in each case, which may vary (time/money/corruption/personal skills etc.).

- *How can we follow up/keep the communication going regarding CB?*

Storytelling and publicity always keep CSOs motivated. Occasionally, project contracts could make provisions for external support to be sought on behalf of the project promoter. In this case, they would select the support of their own choice and have a specific timeframe (e.g. 9 months) to complete the process.

- *Is sustainability always ensured through CB?*

There are always structural issues related to short-term funding, project-based funding, advocacy fatigue and staff turnover, which threaten sustainability. It is also important to use qualitative methods in order to have a clear view of the factors that played a significant role.

and the media. However, its benefits depend on the quality of the supervision provided and the level of the CSO's engagement. It is important, to this end, to support CSOs in identifying skilled capacity-building partners and promote CSOs meetings so that they can share, reflect and debate on the possibilities and common issues they encounter in the capacity-building process.

- Capacity improvement of the beneficiary organisations can be attributed to the Programme, as long as it concerns gains in the optimisation of procedures and organisational dynamics, the reorganisation of internal structures, the definition of training plans and management of volunteers, the strategic planning, the efficient use of available resources, and increase in their sustainability as represented by their relationship with partners. On the other hand, factors such as the level of engagement, the precariousness of working conditions or the funding model CSOs select, generate significant risks and challenges in sustainability and, therefore, should not be related to the capacity-building process. These factors can be addressed, challenged and transformed via alternative ways of support (e.g. fora), where solutions can emerge.



Lessons learned

- Working with diverse grantees means that they differ not only in their starting point but also in their goals. It is crucial to divide organisations into sub-groups according to their similarity, and then compare them to extract valid results.
- Quantitative methods are useful for donors, but qualitative methods (e.g. case studies, focus groups, interviews with grantees) are most useful for CSOs. These can help us better understand which factors played a role in the grantee's success or perhaps failure, even if it is time-consuming.
- In-depth interviews at the beginning, middle, and end of the programme are highly recommended. Not only can they be highly informative, but they also help strengthen relationships and understanding.
- Comparing organisations can be tricky because different sizes determine different CB goals: some CSOs may not have done very well because they did not need it.
- Prior to the implementation of the capacity-building plan, a diagnosis and action plan is pertinent and effective, allowing organisations to benefit from an external perspective. It also motivates them to take a look "outside," to the interested parts of their ecosystem, giving space to greater clarity of objectives and mission (consolidating a strategic view) and supporting the transformation of organisations. Furthermore, it expands their network of partnerships. However, it is a time-consuming process that needs much support and close monitoring from the Programme and/or any consultants involved during the implementation of CB actions.
- Including a mandatory capacity-building component in every project would be beneficial, as it provides relevant and often transformational learning in internal operation (planning, recruitment, financial management), and the CSO's relationship with its target audience

