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REPORT

on

CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN KOSOVO



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Workshop summary

As part of the project "Supporting Sustainable Organizational Development for CSOs in Kosovo", a project funded by the European Union and managed by the EU Office in Kosovo, Forum for Civic Initiative - FIQ and Institute for Development Policy - INDEP organized the consultative workshop with over 50 Civil Society Organizations in Kosovo.

The purpose of this workshop was to identify the main problems that CSOs face in the respective areas that their work focuses on, relevant stakeholders, the potential contribution of individual organizations in addressing pressing issues, and the opportunities for creation of coalitions between CSOs to address those issues jointly. Moreover, the CSOs, working together in seven different working groups, were expected to generate long-term ideas and solutions for the main problems that characterize a particular sector.

The participants have identified the main issues in seven priority areas out of the 10 initially selected ones, which were prioritized based on the finding of the online survey distributed by the organizers before the workshop.

Findings from online survey

An online questionnaire designed with the purpose to identify the priority areas in which CSOs in Kosovo drive most interest and to which they work relates mostly, preceded the workshop. The findings of this questionnaire served as the main foundation for discussion in the consultative workshop.

The online questionnaire, except for helping us understand the profile and nature of work of the participating organizations, focused primarily on identifying the thematic areas that the organizations consider relevant for their mission and current activities. The respondents were allowed to list up to 5 priority areas, out of 15 listed ones. Based on the received responses, the prioritization of listed areas is as presented below:

Priority area	Percentage
Youth	58%
Education	41.9%
Voluntarism	36%
Social inclusion	34.9%
Environment Protection	32.6%
Reconciliation and inter-ethnicity	27.9%
Gender equality followed	27.9%
Social entrepreneurship	26.7%
Child protection	20.9%
Fighting gender based violence	16.3%
Rule of Law / Fights against corruption	16.3%
Sustainable energy	15.1 %
Open governance and administrative reforms	9.3%
Health and security at work	8.1%
Consumer protection	5.8%
Empowering election process	4.7%

Group 1:

YOUTH AND VOLUNTARISM

Findings from working groups

Organizers, in joint consultations with EU Office and the participants, merged the listed priority areas in 7 topics. Each of these topics was thoroughly discussed in 7 working groups. The discussions in the working groups were led by 7 facilitators and each of them had to follow the same structure of discussions based on a pre-defined template. The findings from the discussions within the working groups are summarized below:

§ Problems:

The main problems identified by this working group were: passive youth, low sense of solidarity, general apathy, low employment opportunities, stagnating development, lack of awareness and limited opportunities for volunteering development, lack of projects for volunteers and incentive policies, as well as, poor infrastructure and legal deficiencies.

On the other hand, as far as volunteering is concerned, it was recognized and is taught as a concept but not sufficiently encouraged and appreciated as a value nor is it part of the social culture. Some of the main impediments in this regard are: lack of funds and lack of knowledge on the importance of voluntarism by institutions.

§ Actors:

The main actors identified were: Civil society organizations, media, youth; public sector (central and municipal institutions); private sector (businesses); external actors (international organizations, donors).

§ Actions that could be undertaken by organizations:

Regarding the actions that could be undertaken jointly by the organizations, the following actions were identified: Volunteering research (legal infrastructure, funds; volunteering as a concept, value and part of the social culture; mechanisms); establishment of a network of NGOs and development of cooperation patterns and partnerships; drafting of a national strategic plan; campaigns and activities of various forms to raise awareness on the topics: discussions, roundtables, use of social networks, media collaboration, and publishing of awareness-raising videos.

Group 2:

EDUCATION AND CHILD RIGHTS

§ Problems:

The main problems identified by this working group were: school infrastructure, lack of education, quality of education, financial constraints especially in rural areas (there are students who stop learning because of financial shortages), lack of cooperation between private and public education institutions. On top of this, the participants consider that traditional values very often bring conflict between parents and students that hinder the functioning of the school-student-parent triangle.

§ Actors:

The main actors identified were: Government, Municipality, Student and Teachers' Council, Private Sector, Associations, Psychologists and Social Workers.

§ Actions that could be undertaken by organizations:

Regarding the actions that could be undertaken jointly by the organizations, the following actions were identified: Advocacy to improve conditions, transportation, hygiene and drinking water in all schools; Identifying (statistics) children who are at risk leaving school, so there is a need to extract statistics that children are at risk of interrupting education for various reasons, especially financial; the work of the inspectorate should be strengthened in order to monitor the teachers; continuing the training of teachers to be more innovative in teaching, this can directly affect the quality of education.

Group 3:

SOCIAL SERVICES

§ Problems:

The main problems identified by this working group were: lack of information on the financial support of social activities, lack of mechanism between public sector, private NGO and donor; and the political influence on the formalization of informal institutions. It was highlighted that there is a need for municipalities to outsource specialized NGO-s for social services. Other problems identified were: sustainability of social services, non-functioning of the board for licensing of persons providing social services, call openings for projects with limited timespan targeting certain groups, and the sustainability of social services. Also, the group considered that the municipal level does not have special lines for social services for vulnerable groups, while the NGO-s lack will for cooperation and coordination of activities.

§ Actors:

The main actors identified were: Central Government (Ministry of Welfare and Social Work, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Finance, MBPZHR, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice) - Municipal level (Department of Health and Social Welfare, Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the Directorate of Development economic, QAP).

§ Actions that could be undertaken by organizations:

Regarding the actions that could be undertaken jointly by the organizations, the following actions were identified: Working on offering information (awareness campaigns for fundraising in social services), capacity building for persons providing social services (trainings, training in professional), extensive advocacy and lobbying, mentoring of persons providing social services, and networking. It was further considered that it is necessary to establish coordinating and collaborative mechanisms for social services in Kosovo, to raise awareness about social service payments and create funds for sustainable social services.

Group 4:

SOCIAL ECONOMY

§ Problems:

The main problems identified by this working group were: the small number of social enterprises; relatively low interest on the issue, high unemployment in vulnerable groups, lack of social economy development, and in particular insufficient legal regulation. On top of this, the participants considered that not enough has been done on conceptualization and promotion of the sector in general. While other identified problems were: lack of awareness, rapid economic transformation; limited funds; and limited human resources.

§ Actors:

The main actors identified were: CSO-s, Government, Donors, Foreign Missions, Local Communities, Neighborhood Councils, and Corporations.

§ Actions that could be undertaken by organizations:

Regarding the actions that could be undertaken jointly by the organizations, the following actions were identified: improvement of the relevant legislation, investing in capacity building of CSOs which are either working or are interested to work in this area. Moreover, the participants considered that they could work jointly on increasing awareness on this issue and designing a strategic campaign. While, also, the creation of a National Center for Social Enterprises to serve as a hub, was seen as a measure that could bring tangible results.

Group 5:

PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT / PROTECTION OF CONSUMER AND HEALTH

§ Problems:

The main problems identified by this working group were: Mismanagement of waste, lack of education and general awareness, non-compliance with legislation on waste management, civic and political accountability, and illegal landfills, lack of service and lack of infrastructure for waste management; lack of waste separation - 3R application; lack of plans for waste management and implementation of existing waste management plans. Moreover, the participants also considered that other problems in this are: lack of financial sustainability of NGOs and lack of capacity by any of the organizations that can enter into partnership.

§ Actors:

The main actors identified were: political parties, relevant institutions, (MMPH, AVUK) NGO, Business, Donors, Households, citizens, waste management companies (public and private).

§ Actions that could be undertaken by organizations:

Regarding the actions that could be undertaken jointly by the organizations, the following actions were identified: raising consumer awareness (rights, obligations and interests and dignity), drafting of waste management regulations, monitoring of waste management plans, separation of waste at source, energy production by gasification method. The participants considered that there is a need to engage in the extension of services and the potential composting of organic waste. Also, joint work is seen as possible in terms of contributing to the harmonization of development programs and strategies in the public-private and civil sector as well as the creation of partnerships based on the experience of any partner organization.

Group 6:

RECONCILIATION AND CULTURAL DIALOGUE

§ Problems:

The main problems identified by this working group were: media – in terms of often being a negative promoter and not always presenting when something is discussed properly. Moreover, they are rather present in cases where there are incidents or episodes. On the other side, the groups considered that stereotypes are very present, not only among the Serbian and Albanian communities. Then the language issues as there are a lot of young people are of interest to co-operate, but teenagers do not know each other's language. However, fortunately, most young people speak English, especially the Albanian community. Moreover, CSOs often do not think long-term, hence it is good to follow-up or monitor them and to continue to improve on the identified stagnations. Lack of sincerity is the key factor for a successful project or activity. As far as the topic is concerned, all ideas are exhausted, creativity is needed on this topic so that young people can stimulate them and be part of the discussion of this nature. There is also lack of trust and fear as well as the issue of identity, because communities are sensitive in terms of identity, which also leads to lack of communication. Institutions do not give support to other stakeholders on this subject. While, CSOs are not well coordinated and their voice is not heard much.

§ Actors:

The main actors identified were: Media, citizens, civil society, local and central institutions.

§ Actions that could be undertaken by organizations: Regarding the actions that could be undertaken jointly by the organizations, the following actions were identified: Encouraging citizens through formal and informal groups. It is also important to work on creating favorable ground to facilitate the communication between different groups. Ultimately, the groups considered that there is a need to create an infrastructure for practical work for young people from communities, through designing more attractive and creative projects.

Group 7:

DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

§ Problems:

The main problems identified by this working group were: lack of transparency and accountability and non-exclusion of CSOs in local decision-making and accountability process as well as civil society organizations with limited capacity to be active at the local level. In some municipalities there is lack of adequate legislation (lack of unified legislation for citizen involvement for all municipalities) or non-implementation of legislation even where it exists. Other identified problems are: lack of political will to include CSOs and citizens, as there are many municipalities that conduct public consultations with citizens just to tick the box. Moreover, there is no structured cooperation between local government and civil society. However, there are individual-oriented organizations that strive to achieve co-operation with the municipal level. Even in those cases, there is lack of capacity and lack of awareness on public consultations and their importance. Furthermore, most of organizations lack the capacity to provide substantial and professional comments.

§ Actors:

The main actors identified were: Municipalities, Ministry of Administration and Local Government, line ministries working directly with municipalities, legislature and executive, civil society organizations, local councils, consultative committees, informal groups, KVRL, businesses and associations of municipalities.

§ Actions that could be undertaken by organizations:

Regarding the actions that could be undertaken jointly by the organizations, the following actions were identified: public consultation and allocation of grants for CSOs, training; monitoring of legislation, monitoring the Mayor's decisions, public procurement monitoring, facilitating budget debates for the municipality, advocacy for gender budgeting, advocating for meeting the auditor's recommendations, promotion of the code of ethics for the elected representatives. Also, boost awareness of citizens about their rights in terms of public participation and establish a network of local councils to share their advocacy experiences with the municipality. Ultimately, work on unification of legislation and exchange of good experiences through the municipalities, while also invest in capacity building of village councils.

Participants in the workshop

No.	Name and Surname	Organization
1	Aferdita Mehaj	EUOK
2	Aferdita Pustina	OSCE
3	Afrim Maliqi	Handikos
4	Alban Maliqi	NOPM
5	Albesa Aliu	FIQ
6	Ana Larderet	Play International Kosovo
7	Ardiana Cela Baraku	SHE-ERA
8	Arieta Dragusha	FIQ
9	Bedri Berisha	Agjencia per Zhvillim dhe Inovacion
10	Berzat Berzati	Gora Region
11	Besnik Rustemi	SWOK Kosovo
12	Betime Hoxha	IKS
13	Bujar Kadriu	KDF
14	Chester Eng	Peace Corps Kosovo
15	Damir Bajrami	ICEC
16	Dardan Abazi	INDEP
17	Dardan Kryeziu	CIVIKOS
18	Dario Di Benedetto	EUOK
19	Dea Isufi	Kosovo CSR Network
20	Destan Berisha	IQTD
21	Driton Bajraktari	KFSE
22	Egzon Mustafa	CEDE
23	Erik Mackinley	Rotary Prishtina
24	Fatir Berzati	Durchhalten
25	Helena Poucki	GAIA
26	Ivo Gjokiq	MDNZ
27	Kenan Beqiri	CMB
28	Lavdim Istrefaj	OJQ Rinia
29	Linda Shuku	BGF
30	Lorika Tahiri	KAMA
31	Merisa Abdullahu	FIQ
32	Mevlude Murtezi	CIPOF
33	Mumin Ahmeti	EKOS - SANI
34	Musa Vezgishi	PHRC
35	Name and Surname	Organization
36	Ngadhnjesa Bresa	Ozoni
37	Nita Rudi	KDF
38	Nurten Demiri	EUOK
39	Qendrim Hoxha	LDA

40	Refik Kasi	ICEC
41	Rezarta Tahiraj Islami	NGO STAY
42	Ricardo Celeghini	RTM
43	Salih Shehu	NGO Shqiponja
44	Selatin Kaçaniku	KONSUMATORI
45	Shemsije Seferi	NGO Alma
46	Shpend Sopa	EKOVIZIONI
47	Shukrieje Lecaj	Caritas Switzerland
48	Slobodan Vujicic	Udruzenje Crnogoraca Kosovo
49	Tahire Gashi	NGO Zana
50	Urim Veselaj	TBF
51	Urim Xharavina	LDIP
52	Valentina Zefi	RTM
53	Vehbi Guxholi	OJQ Gjeomjedisi
55	Vjosa Morina	IE
56	Zana Hoxha	INDEP

Photos from the workshop



Report prepared by: FIQ and INDEP