



DEVELOPING CIVIL SOCIETY

Building a Network of Regional Civil Society Leaders

Supporting the Knowledge-Sharing Drive:
CSO Development Forum in Ukraine

Institutionalizing CSO Cooperation with the State:
Oblast Programmes for Civil Society Development

“How To Make Tiny Happy”: Making the Desired Change
Happen through Namesake Theory

Summary of Core Publications:
Civil Society Development

1.1

BUILDING A NETWORK OF REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY LEADERS

Stimulating internal growth is always a daunting challenge, even if your peer / partner genuinely wishes to achieve the end result. Much like training for a major sports event, ultimate success takes more than the determination to enter the contest, a trainer, and the will to make it to the finish line. Basic fitness is important, psychological readiness to confront disappointments and seeming failures is key to continued perfection, and support from your peers mixed with a healthy dose of competition catalyses the continued race to the top, to your own personal peak.



The story of the regional CSO Hubs – leader organisations in their wider communities that emerged in the period from 2014 to 2016 – would be incomplete without the lessons learned from previous interventions supported by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2009-2012. Two key takeaways from that original experience were: 1) the need to nurture CSOs that have already gone beyond the grassroots scale and are able to work at the macro-regional level, and become the “bigger



kids on the block”, and 2) investment in organisational development of these select organisations in such areas as financial sustainability, developing a larger constituency, and creating better and more transparent governance policies and processes.



8
CSO Hubs
enrolled into
the Programme

Responding to the considerations outlined, and knowing the peculiarities of the civic sector in Ukraine (including its strengths and inherent weaknesses), the Programme ventured to select and nurture a projected network of CSO Hubs that would be diverse geographically, thematically and “experientially” to enrich each other and make the whole greater than just the sum of its parts. Selected from 79 applicants to the regional CSO leader initiative, the eight CSO Hubs entered what proved to be an experimental deep-immersion experience that had to adapt to the changing country environment, adjust its pace to the needs and absorptive capacities of the Hubs, and be flexible enough to ensure sustainable growth instead of quick-and-ready results.



But what is the nature of this “Hub” phenomenon after all? And, more importantly, what are the lessons learned from this initiative? A regional CSO Hub / regional leader is a non-profit organisation that works in the wider area of democratization and/or human rights, has undergone a comprehensive assessment of its institutional capacities, has worked on improving its performance in terms of membership, financial sustainability, operational procedures and policies, and has become an example to be followed by its peer CSOs in the region

in terms of conducting professional activities, organising work with volunteers, and other aspects of everyday operations. Roughly speaking, a well-functioning Hub is a regional centre for other civic partners to learn and request advice from, to partner with and look to for standards of good operation. In addition to knowing their regional specifics and being well-versed in local politics, a Hub is a conduit of national-level initiatives and reforms, being the partner of choice for the nationwide transformation agendas.



260
participants benefited from knowledge about tools to foster citizens' role in the decision-making, access to public information, civic control of local public funds

Throughout the Revolution of Dignity, the Programme-supported Hubs actively engaged in defending the right to engage in peaceful protest, demanding transparency and accountability of the authorities.


As the revolutionary events came to a close at the end of February 2014 and normal operations were restored in most regions of the country, the Hubs actively took on the role of conveners and link-builders to channel the protest potential of citizens into constructive civic action. In particular, the Hub network ran the School of Civic Activism initiative for its partners in the regions.

The 260 participants were given the opportunity to learn of instruments to foster citizens' role in the decision-making process, access to public information, and their impact on the process of local budget development and civic control of local public funds.


Importantly, the participant pool included newly emerged activists and unregistered initiative groups.

To further serve as a link between the capital and the regions, the Hub network helped the Kyiv-based Reanimation Package of Reforms initiative to go into the regions effectively and link to the sub-national institutions and activists. These field presentations involved over 300 local and regional government representatives, civil society activists, media outlets, and community leaders. The total number of regional officials, CSO activists and experts, as well as journalists that took part in Hub-organised events over the years of the Programme amounts to 2,650 persons and counting.

8
CSOs operating
as regional Hubs




INTRAC-developed and
localized methodology for
capacity assessment




**CSO Hub Capacity
Strengthening Initiative
at a Glance**

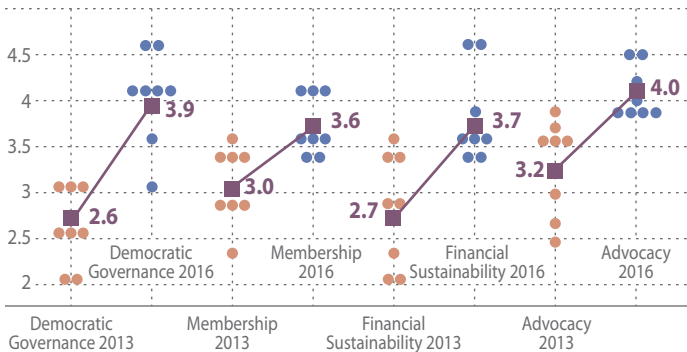
initiatives aimed at both
supporting organisational
development and shaping the
Hubs into local standard-setters in
programmatic activities



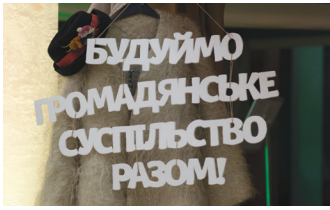
18
months in-depth
training and
mentoring



Aggregated progress on the 4 capacity indicators from 2013 to 2016



As further proof of both the trust in and effectiveness of the mentoring role played by the Hubs in their communities, the European Union Delegation to Ukraine awarded a grant of almost EUR 1 million for



the Hubs to continue their work on empowering local CSOs in rural and remote areas, ensuring their active participation in democratic changes in Ukraine. The regional Hubs working on issues of democratization are considered to be important players in the 3-year EU/Danida Anti-Corruption Initiative, which sees them as potential core points in the initiative's regional component.

CSO Hubs:
What is in it
for the Community

How do the Hubs impact the lives of their communities - who are they in the eyes of the local citizens, initiative groups and peer CSOs?

- ▶ Centres that embody the best standards in volunteering and community action. People who empower citizens to contribute to their locality or a good cause;
- ▶ Documenters of human rights violations in the east of Ukraine;
- ▶ Providers of legal assistance, including to families of deceased soldiers and IDPs;
- ▶ Regional partners of choice for reform: patrol police, justice bodies, local elections in amalgamated communities;
- ▶ Successful advocators of local decision-making;
- ▶ Drafters of policy documents (for instance, Programmes for Fostering CSO development);
- ▶ Debunkers of propaganda and defenders of the right of access to information;
- ▶ Proactive developers of social enterprises that contribute to the community;
- ▶ Go-to organisations for new CSOs or initiative groups that would like to register, draft their internal procedures, and learn the basics of NGO accounting.

While much remains to be done within the regional Hubs themselves (including more efforts to practice the adopted policies, continue strengthening programme-based approaches rather than project-based activities, and strengthening the membership base and financial sustainability), the first steps of the regional CSO leader initiative have undoubtedly been successful. What remains now is to take determined action on each of the progress indicators for the organisations: to make sure that further consolidation of operations may be achieved and newly gained capacities may be strengthened.



“We do not see organisational development as an end in itself, but rather as something helping us become stronger – for ourselves and for our community. For instance, with additional advocacy skills, we managed to secure a separate budget line (9 million USD) for renovation of the water supply system in Perechyn city in the budget of Zakarpattia region for 2016. This was done through a number of meetings with members of the Regional and Supreme Councils, holding a round table with representatives of the district and regional administrations, and organising a written submission from the community of Perechyn city”.

Andriy Vyshniak, Enter for Center Initiatives, Zakarpattia Hub

1.2 SUPPORTING THE KNOWLEDGE-SHARING DRIVE: CSO DEVELOPMENT FORUM IN UKRAINE

Knowledge is something that grows when shared, and gains value when put into practice. This has been the principle behind the DHRP's consistent support to the annual Capacity Development Forum, which was provided for 4 years in a row. Entering the multi-donor organising committee in 2013, and working with ISAR Ednannia, the main driver of the Forum from within Ukrainian civil society,



the Programme was able to reach out on a large scale to a wide spectrum of civil society organisations and encourage knowledge sharing and dissemination of ideas that matter.

“For me, the Forum is not only a place where I get to communicate with those who think alike. You get to present your ideas. And oftentimes you get challenged. You can hear alternative opinions, but you then sit together and arrive at new ideas, and see what may be improved in your concept. It is a gathering of people who do things. And this invigorates you, makes you peek out of your comfort zone”.

Ruslana Burova, MART, Chernihiv Hub

As the popularity of the Forum increased, it has become an important meeting point for organisations supported through the Programme,



as well as a sounding board for discussing the approaches and tools developed within the DHRP core and in collaboration with its Hub network.

The multiplier effect achieved by the presentations to Forum participants was further strengthened, as they in turn were encouraged to try out the new practices after learning about them at the Forum and then come to report on the results next year.

Bringing together organisations from various regions and “walks of life” in terms of their subject areas, the Forum has always been a venue to seek common ground and shape shared agendas for action. The 2016 Forum resulted, among other things, in production of a common To-do List for the Civil Society that revolves around the following core items:

- ▶ Live the principles of rule of law, freedom, democracy, fundamental human rights, social solidarity and human dignity;
- ▶ Invest in sustainable institutions built on accountability and transparency;
- ▶ Ensure sustainability of the group's own initiatives – including though nurturing social capital, involving a wide spectrum of supporters and volunteers, and working on financial sustainability;
- ▶ Build networks and coalitions to unite knowledge and create synergy of action;
- ▶ Continue shaping the reform agenda of the country and tirelessly advocate for wider social involvement in the decision-making processes of the state;
- ▶ Counter corruption, remaining one of the decisive players in this area. Make use of new IT developments and encourage independent media operations;
- ▶ Work to overcome the causes and consequences of the conflict in the east. Support and collaborate with civic initiatives in occupied Crimea;
- ▶ Increase professionalism, including through cross-sectoral cooperation;

Involve the community – working with it and for it without populism, paternalism and corruption. Invest in civic education.



The year 2013 saw presentation of the DHRP-adapted *Methodology of Organisational Capacity Assessment*, delivered as one of the 26 master classes throughout the Forum. The Programme-run master class was voted as the best experience-sharing event of the Forum that year.



In 2014, the Programme presented its *Guidebook for Endowments in Ukraine*, which remains the only, and certainly the most comprehensive, manual on creating, managing and sustaining a CSO-run endowment in the Ukrainian legal field.

Committed to sharing experiences of both regional Hubs and smaller grassroots organisations, DHRP organised a dedicated side event in 2015 to discuss lessons learned and practices of organisations that graduated from the Programme's *First Anti-Corruption School* earlier that year and went on to implement their practical ideas in the field.

Participants in the latest Forum held with DHRP support in 2016 were able to benefit from lessons learned in organisational development of the Regional Hubs and learn about experiences in operationalization of the newly adopted *National Strategy for Civil Society Development* in four pilot regions of Ukraine.



1.3

INSTITUTIONALIZING CSO COOPERATION WITH THE STATE: OBLAST PROGRAMMES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Addressing the same issues at different times and in varying circumstances creates a very different feel, as well as outcome. Such was the experience of facilitating the development of oblast-level programmes for supporting civil society: at the beginning of the Programme and closer to its completion date, prior to the Revolution of 2014 and then in its aftermath, without and then with the strengthened regional CSO Hubs as robust partners.



27-strong CSO coalition spearheaded by two organisations

In the summer of 2013, the Programme called for a civil society action to change the situation current at the time, when 22 Oblast Programmes for Civil Society Development (cushioned in the 2012 Strategy to Foster the Development of Civil Society) were in place for 27 administrative units of Ukraine. As DHRP rolled out its full-scale operations in 2013, one of its aims was to stimulate the regional authorities to work in collaboration with civil society and adopt the relevant programmes with adequate funding through year's end. The method was simple: a 27-strong CSO coalition spearheaded by

two organisations (one based in Kyiv, the other in Odesa) emerged to both raise awareness on the part of the oblast-level authorities regarding the practices for shaping and adopting the targeted programmes and to stimulate peer exchange with those oblasts where the policies had already been adopted.

The coalition rallied the support of the local civil society and lobbied for a participatory process to design and adopt the CSO “stimulus packages” at the oblast level. Workshops with representatives of the oblast authorities and civil society activists were held in Cherkasy, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk and Donetsk oblasts – each of them serving both as a discussion platform for the authorities and non-governmental organisations on the needs of the region and as a space for considering best practices from other oblasts. In October–November 2013, these workshops and public lobbying activities brought about the development and revision of drafts and adoption of oblast-level programmes in Donetsk and Ivano-Frankivsk oblasts.



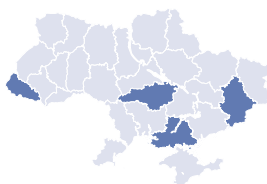
At the same time, as events of winter 2013 unfolded, both the adopted programmes and planned discussions on pending ones were effectively put on hold.

The developments after the Revolution of 2014 included, among others, significant maturation of the civil society, emergence of new initiatives, galvanization of sectors that had been largely dormant (such as volunteering and crisis self-organisation) and diversification of existing ones (for instance, charitable contributions to support

the military). This new reality called for revision of the previously existing arrangements (such as the obsolete 2012 Strategy and the unresponsive Oblast-level programmes), and demand began meeting supply after adoption of the 2016-2020 Presidential Strategy for Fostering Civil Society Development on 26 February 2016. While the overall architecture of the policy intervention was similar to the previous one (the national-level Presidential strategy underpinned by a Coordination Council under the President, and the need for the oblasts to adopt their own dedicated targeted programmes), the content and the spirit of the initiative are in line with the new developments in the country.



4 oblasts targeted by the Hub interventions (Kherson, Dnipro, Zakarpattia, and Donetsk);



46 information sessions to raise awareness and gather ideas for the draft oblast programmes



1,336 activists, representatives of local and grassroots organisations directly involved in the sessions



3 coordination Councils to co-develop and oversee programme implementation established

Kherson – **25**

Zakarpattia – **36**

Donetsk – **62**

Pilots for co-creation of Oblast Programmes for Fostering Civil Society Development – 2016

Following its mission to foster civil society growth and evolution at the sub-national level, DHRP used the window of opportunity opened by the new Strategy to help decentralize support for civil society in a truly participatory manner, this time through cooperation with the nurtured regional Hub network. In the second half of 2016, DHRP, in cooperation with Hubs in Kherson, Dnipro, Zakarpattia, and Donetsk oblasts operated four pilot projects for co-creation of Oblast Programmes for Civil Society Development.



Awareness-raising sessions included more than **1,000** representatives

The process was rooted in awareness-raising campaigns about the national-level Strategy and establishing inclusive coordination bodies for design and implementation of the oblast policies.

Throughout the four initiatives, the Hubs conducted meetings dedicated to exploring the implications of the Strategy for oblast-level action. The consultative and awareness-raising sessions included more than 1,000 representatives of regional and grassroots CSOs, local government officials and members of the Oblast Councils. Three of the pilot oblasts, with initiative from the Hubs, established Coordination Councils to draft the oblast programmes and oversee their implementation.

The oblast policies were finally developed in four regions. The Dnipropetrovsk and Kherson oblast programmes were adopted in December 2016, and the Donetsk and Zakarpattia oblast programmes in February 2017.

1.4

“HOW TO MAKE TINY HAPPY”: MAKING THE DESIRED CHANGE HAPPEN THROUGH NAMESAKE THEORY

As our societies grow more complicated, and social change is impacted by many assumptions and considerations working together (*or not!*) to assist transformations, there is a growing need to design elaborate plans for achieving the change that one wants to see transpire. As thinking behind social transformations evolves to include more sophisticated tools, there is a departure from the so-called “linear logic” behind government policies, international development actor interventions and, ultimately, action by civil society organisations. One of the tools to consider social change as a non-linear process that involves interconnected assumptions, potentially conflicting scenarios and subtle risks, is the *theory of change*.

Under the Regional Programme on Democratisation, Human Rights and Civil Society Development for Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, DHRP took up an initiative to expose CSO partners from all three countries to the opportunities offered by the theory of change for exploring and duly planning the change processes that civil society would like to invest in. Realizing full well that a one-off workshop would probably not be sufficient to immerse the civic partners into the intricacies of the approach, DHRP took a three-step approach to building awareness of theory of change and, importantly, its differences from the more conventional log-frames and other planning tools.

The first opportunity to peek into the world of the theory of change was provided to CSOs from Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine in mid-summer 2016 through two dedicated webinars in English and Russian, respectively.

Using engaging and fun techniques to present the basics of the approach, the experts from *InFocus*, a UK-based social impact consultancy, took the listeners through the constituent parts of



the theory of change. Using the example of an unhappy cat named Tiny, the groups tried to build an elaborate plan of what could lead to making the feline feel better, including improvements to its diet. Through this light, playful approach and fun examples, the webinar participants were able to learn the fundamental constituent parts of the theory of change and prepare for the main two-day event that would follow in the autumn.

35

civil society
practitioners
nominated

At the beginning of September 2016, a two-day workshop was held in Chisinau, welcoming 35 civil society practitioners nominated by implementing partners in the three countries. Throughout two days of an intensive agenda that alternately presented concepts and applied them to real-world developmental situations, the



participants enhanced their knowledge obtained through the webinars and took advantage of in-person discussions with the experts to obtain additional advice could on the topics that they were addressing in their everyday operations. As a direct outcome of the workshop, five theories of change were developed by the participant teams and “crash-tested” at the event.

To solidify the knowledge obtained through these events, DHRP ensured that the *InFocus* experts would also be available until the end of 2016 for short-term consultations on application of the theory of change principles to the practical projects of the CSOs.

As a result of this collaboration, three CSOs (two from Ukraine and one from Belarus) ventured to underpin their planned projects with the newly developed theories of change, and received advice on how to make them more practical and closer to life.

One of the Ukrainian partners from the CEDOS think tank, for instance, ventured to design a theory of change for their action to change the obsolete system for residence registration that has persisted since Soviet times. Made even more topical by the intensive internal migration within the country as well as significant numbers of IDPs, the issue would need to be addressed systematically and from different sides in order to allow Ukrainians enjoy their constitutional rights to the fullest.



Allow Ukrainians
enjoy their
constitutional rights
to the fullest

The developed theory of change that was reviewed by international experts walks through problem identification, defines core beneficiaries, stakeholders and assets that the organization has at its disposal to stimulate change. In addition, CEDOS has identified core assumptions and external influencing factors, as well as outcomes that would result from change. Finally, the organization defined key activities that could bring about the first steps in addressing the situation. Amongst the first ones to be undertaken was an in-depth review of the issue and establishment of the policy baseline. This step was already taken in March 2017, launching the designed theory of change into practice.

1.5

SUMMARY OF CORE PUBLICATIONS: CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT



Methodology for Organisational Capacity Assessment

<https://goo.gl/oj8li2>

The publication contains a detailed description of a methodology used to assess internal organisational capacities of CSOs prior to launching cooperation or intervening with an organisational development plan. The guide contains a detailed description of the so-called “three-circle” model of organisational development that allows for a comprehensive assessment of the current status as well as all the necessary working tables and sheets used under the appreciative inquiry approach. The methodology was successfully applied to development of eight regional Hubs under DHRP and is currently applied with other UNDP Ukraine partners in the CSO realm.

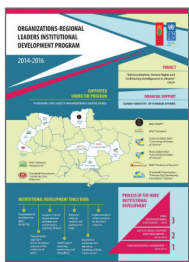


Creating and Managing Endowments in Ukraine

<https://goo.gl/BdxrLy>

This guide to establishing and managing endowments is a unique instructional document adapted to the Ukrainian context and rooted in the relevant legislation. The handbook enables its readers from the non-governmental and charitable sectors to plan for a successful launch of an endowment and contains templates of the agreements necessary to run an endowment in full compliance with national regulations.

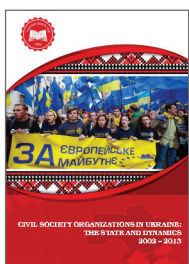
***Institutional Development Programme
for Leading Regional Organisations (2014-2016) /
Report on Capacity Building Programme for Regional CSO Leaders***
<https://goo.gl/OPSD9p> and <https://goo.gl/WMiWY8>



These two publications provide a well-rounded overview of the DHRP initiative for the regional Hubs. The analytical report dwells on the details of the two-year capacity-building process for each

of the Hubs, summarizes the issues that were successfully addressed, highlights areas for improvement, and proposes overall lessons learned for the organisational development exercise. The infographic condenses the main facts about the capacity-building programme into a list of important facts and figures and presents the development process at a glance.

***Civil Society Organisations in Ukraine:
State and Dynamics 2002-2013 / Defining Civil Society for Ukraine***
<https://goo.gl/le5KuS> and <https://goo.gl/t8x5Bj>



These two analytical reports may be considered a continued, longitudinal review of the civil society dynamics in Ukraine in the 21st century leading up to the adoption of the National Strategy for

Fostering Civil Society Development in Ukraine in 2016-2020. The wealth of data and statistical information contained in these two publications means that they may be used as a single entry point for researchers and analysts wishing to delve deeper into the dynamics and current status of the Ukrainian non-governmental sector.



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