**Report**

**on the Workshop for CSOs on how to establish local hublets**

***Date*** *16-17 May, 2018*

***Venue*** *EMIGRAND Art Hotel, Mytna-str. 31, Uzhgorod, Ukraine, 88000.*

***Participants***

1. *West-Ukrainian Resource Center, Lviv*
2. *CF – UA*
3. *Charitable Foundation “Center of Civic Initiatives”, Perechyn, Transcarpathia*
4. *Civic Organization “Zakarpattya – Donbas”, Uzhgorod*
5. *Civic Organization “Women’s Prospective”, Lviv*
6. *Civic Organization “People’s Aid”, Chernivtsi*
7. *Civic Organization “Kolping Society”, Chernivtsi – Uzhgorod*
8. *Civic Organization “Ukrainian Donbas”, Ivano-Frankivsk*
9. *Caritas Ivano-Frankivsk (Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church)*
10. *Women’s Civic Organization “Vesta”, Uzhgorod.*

*Participating organizations presented all four oblasts (provinces) which comprise Ukrainian part of Carpathian Euroregion (Zakarpatska, Lvivska, Ivano-Frankivska, and Chernivetska).*

***Experts*** *Andrii Vyshniak, Nataliya Beley.*

According to the project implementation plan Carpathian Foundation Ukraine has hosted two days long Workshop for CSOs on how to establish local hublets on May 16-17, 2018 in Uzhgorod.

***Session 1***

Participants:

During the Session 1 the participants have introduced their organizations in the context of their missions, target groups and main achievements. It is worth to mention that almost all participants, except of two organizations working with IDPs (Internally displaced people – refugees from the East of Ukraine and Crimea) have been founded more than 15 years ago. Kolping Society is a branch of more than 100 years-old organization. The main fields of activities of the participants are as follows:

1. West-Ukrainian Resource Center, Lviv – rural community development, community economic development.
2. CF – UA – development of social services for vulnerable groups, community development.
3. Charitable Foundation “Center of Civic Initiatives”, Perechyn, Transcarpathia – community development, organizational development of the third sector.
4. Civic Organization “Zakarpattya – Donbas”, Uzhgorod – IDPs.
5. Civic Organization “Women’s Prospective”, Lviv – women’s rights, gender issues, family violence.
6. Civic Organization “People’s Aid”, Chernivtsi – homeless, poor.
7. Civic Organization “Kolping Society”, Chernivtsi – Uzhgorod – vulnerable groups, families, children.
8. Civic Organization “Ukrainian Donbas”, Ivano-Frankivsk - IDPs.
9. Caritas Ivano-Frankivsk (Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church) – vulnerable groups, elderly, poor, children.
10. Women’s Civic Organization “Vesta”, Uzhgorod – women, IDPs, veterans of the war on the east.

In respect to the target groups, all participating organizations are flexible and besides their primary focus provide support to the groups which are in an urgent need. For example, currently most of them provide support to IDPs and the veterans of war.

Motivation:

Mainly three main sources of motivation to take part in the Hub have been named by the participants: new partnerships, new funding opportunities, and new experience.

New partnerships. Participants hope that the Hub will help them to establish new partnership relations with the foreign counterparts. Most of them stressed that unfortunately the cross-border cooperation is mainly done by the organizations specializing in cross-border cooperation but not by the organizations working with particular vulnerable groups. They rely on the Hub as on the opportunity to found partnerships with their direct colleagues “doing the same job for the same people”.

New fundraising opportunities. The organizations hope that possible new partnerships established within the Hub will open for them a possibility to develop new joint projects and apply for the grants within the EU funded and other programs of cross-border cooperation.

New experience and visibility. The participants believe that the Hub is a good opportunity for them to share and exchange experience with their foreign colleagues “doing the same job for the same people”. They stressed that Ukrainian organizations working with particular vulnerable group know almost nothing about similar organizations in the neighboring countries. The same is true about the level of knowledge of foreign counterparts about Ukrainian organizations.

Networks. Most of the participants have experience of being members of different networks, platforms, and partnerships. For example, Charitable Foundation “Center of Civic Initiatives” and Civic Organization “Women’s Prospective”, Lviv are the members of Ukrainian Network of the Hubs of the Organizations of Civil Society. Nevertheless, most of the participants have expressed their concern about the sustainability of the future Hub. They noted that many informal networks were created within formal projects and then have stopped their existence soon after the project finished.

***Session 2***

During this session the participants, based on their own experience, have mapped the most common challenges for the civil society organizations in the region. The following challenges and problems have been identifies:

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| № | Challenges |
| 1. | * Donor driven programs. Requirements of some donors confront the values of NGOs and their members (They promote topics which are artificial and not important for the society); * Donors’ priorities do not match the priorities of the NGOs; * The donors pay much more attention to the NGOs working on the East of Ukraine (war zone and neighboring regions). |
| 2. | Lack of partnerships with the foreign NGOs working in the same fields (most of cross-border projects are implemented by the organizations specializing on cross-border cooperation but not on vulnerable groups). |
| 3. | Insufficient presence of NGOs and their activities in media. Low PR capacity of the organizations. |
| 4. | Weak capacity of NGOs in some fields of organizational development. |
| 5. | * Involvement and organized work with volunteers; * Problems with involvement and work with personnel (high turn-over); * Lack of stable income (salaries) reduces effectiveness of personnel work. |
| 6. | * Instable financing of NGOs (it’s not about financial sustainability but about irregular financing); * Limited resources (sources of financial support); * Poor citizens are not able to support NGOs financially; * Limited funds affect ‘normal’ development of organizations. |
| 7. | Gender imbalance in the organizations |
| 8. | Significant number of quasi-NGOs (established or controlled by the authorities) which affects the image of the whole sector. |
| 9. | * Low cooperation level between NGOs; * High competitiveness over resources in the sector. |
| 10. | * Low level of civic activism at the local level; * Overall citizens’ passiveness. |
| 11. | * Gaps in the existing legislation on the paid services provided by NGOs; * Low influence of NGOs on the decision-making process at the local level (decisions taken by the local authorities). |
| 12. | * The authorities are not interested in NGOs’ activities; * Low support of NGOs activities from the authorities and local communities; * The attempts of the local authorities to intervene or influence the activities of NGOs. * The local authorities are not willing to support local NGOs. |
| 13 | Significant gap between urban and rural areas in understanding and willingness of the local communities to support NGOs activities. |

Also the participants analyzed the experience of their organizations in dealing with the mentioned above challenges. Based on it they made a list of offers they can propose to other, especially smaller, organizations.

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| № | **Name of organization** | **The services which can be provided** |
| 1 | West-Ukrainian Resource Center, Lviv | * HR consultations; * Establishment of own business by non-for-profits; * PR of NGO. |
| 2 | CF - UA | * Organization of study-tours (experience and best practices) exchange, including international; * Support in establishment and development of international partnerships; * Setting up of endowment provision of organizational sustainability. |
| 3 | Charitable Foundation “Center of Civic Initiatives”, Perechyn, Transcarpathia | * Informational database on active (really operating) NGOs of Zakarpatska, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Chernivtsi oblasts (provinces); * Trainings and consultations on organizational development (strategic planning, internal communications, procedures and policies development); * Involvement of volunteers and work with them. |
| 4 | Civic Organization “Zakarpattya – Donbas”, Uzhgorod | * Development and implementation of joint projects NGOs – authorities; * The work with the representatives of local authorities; * Resolution of internal conflicts in the organization. |
| 5 | Civic Organization “Women’s Prospective”, Lviv | * Establishment of partnerships between NGOs; * Setting up partnerships with the local authorities; * Support of NGOs’ organizational development. |
| 6 | Civic Organization “People’s Aid”, Chernivtsi | * Setting up the practice of social order (provision of social services ordered and paid by local authorities and provided by NGOs; * Establishment of partnerships between NGOs. |
| 7 | Civic Organization “Kolping Society”, Chernivtsi - Uzhgorod | * Coopetition with authorities; * Partnerships with NGOs; * Project management. |
| 8 | Civic Organization “Ukrainian Donbas”, Ivano-Frankivsk | * Coopetition with authorities; * Partnerships with NGOs. |
| 9 | Caritas Ivano-Frankivsk (Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church) | * Cooperation with religious organizations; * Partnership with the local business. |
| 10 | Women’s Civic Organization “Vesta”, Uzhgorod. | * Organization and provision of the services for the violence victims and vulnerable people; Cooperation with the authorities. |

Finally, the matrix of challenges and offers for collaboration has been developed by the participants (See **Appendix 1**).

The participants paid attention to the fact that many challenges are not covered by the offers because they are of “external” nature and can hardly be met by the organizations from province. These are, for example, gaps in legislation, donors’ policy etc. On the other hand, most of “internal” challenges are matched with the offers from other organizations and can be used as a basis for cooperation within the Hub and Hublets.

***Session 3***

During this session the participants have agreed on the further steps to be done within the Hub. The following steps have been agreed:

* Exchange of contacts between the participating organizations (***DONE***);
* Establishment of a closed group in Facebook to exchange information (***DONE.*** For example, all materials developped during the workshop have shared in the group.);
* Organization of at least one more meeting within next 3-4 months (***In the process***);
* Invitation of each other on the events organized by the participating organization (***In the process***. For example, 3 paticipating organizations took part in the conference organized by CF-UA; Womens’ Perspective invited all participants to take part in the „Open Governence” even in Lviv);
* Development of a preliminary list of active local NGOs to be involved in the Hublet (***in the process.*** “Center of Civic Initiatives”, Perechyn is making a database of active NGOs of the region).

***Conclusions***

In our view the following main conclusions can be drawn:

* The idea of Interregional Hub and local Hublets is timely and needed. Meanwhile, special attention should be paid to sustainability of the Hub. Most of participating organizations have negative experience of taking part in the informal networks which stopped their existence after the finish of respective projects;
* Participants consider certain formalization of the Hub as a tool to secure its sustainability;
* Participants have the motivation to take part in the Hub;
* Participants suggested distinguishing of “external” and “internal” challenges for civil society in the future activity of the Hub. They would prefer to concentrate mainly on the “internal” challenges in order to make the Hub’s activity more effective and result-oriented;
* Participants connect the future activities of the Hublets with identification of the local NGOs which are really active (There is an evident gap between number of registered NGOs and those which really work).

**Andrii Vyshniak**

**Nataliya Beley**