



Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Czech Republic

SUMMARY OF THE COMPLEX EVALUATION

OF THE CZECH DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION IN GEORGIA

Evaluated projects:

- I. Supporting development of cooperation at the local level in Georgia
- II. Development of civil society and its participation in public life of Georgia
- III. Fostering Transparency and Communication in Georgia
- IV. Support of active citizenship and involvement of youth in public life in Georgia
- V. Support of active involvement of the youth to community life - natural development of civil society in Georgia

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The „**Complex evaluation of the Czech Official Development Assistance (ODA) supporting human rights, democracy and societal transformation in Georgia**“ was commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Czech Republic (CR) and undertaken by Inka Pibilova, Monika Přibyllová and Elene Margvelashvili from August to November 2014.

The evaluation covered following projects with a total budget of 770 800 EUR:

- I. Supporting development of cooperation at the local level in Georgia
- II. Development of civil society and its participation in public life of Georgia
- III. Fostering Transparency and Communication in Georgia
- IV. Support of active citizenship and involvement of youth in public life in Georgia
- V. Support of active involvement of the youth to community life - natural development of civil society in Georgia

The main evaluation purpose was to provide objective and well-grounded conclusions and recommendations to the MFA CR and the implementers of the Czech ODA in Georgia. A special focus was given to societal transformation, potential synergies among projects and relevant policies and strategies of Georgia. Different modalities, good practices, future synergies, coordination and trilateral cooperation were brought together to provide a sectorial view. For practical reasons, the 2-week evaluation mission focused on the regions of Imreti and Guria, where most activities were implemented. Additionally, key actors in Tbilisi and the CR were interviewed and surveys among target groups held.

Key findings and conclusions and as follows:

Relevance: Relevant to the local needs, but coordination with others needed improvement

Georgia has experienced major changes in the political setting, especially following democratic elections in 2012. Evaluated projects and their methodology were generally in line with the needs of the target groups. The relevant ministries were engaged. Areas for improvements include cooperation with regional educational centres and faith-based civil society organisations (CSOs), coordination with other donors and implementers as well as between the Human Rights and Transformation department (TRANS) and the Czech Development Agency (CZDA). The current most burning issues related to the evaluated sector are self-governance, strengthening the role of CSOs, conflict resolution, tackling diverse minority rights, guidance for civic education (using innovative methods and addressing critical thinking), implementation of youth policy and balanced media reporting. Several opportunities exist for multilateral cooperation, from joint programming, to pool funding, implementation, evaluation and advocacy. Transition experience and support of decentralisation / self-governance have likely the highest potential in this regard. Overall relevance was rather high.

Efficiency: High cost-efficiency, synergies of project consortium could have been utilised more

Despite incomplete documentation, it can be concluded that the project was cost-efficient. One third of total expenses was used to support beneficiaries, the rest was also reasonably spent taking into account costs per person reached. Local office of People in Need (PIN) in Kutaisi further helped to increase beneficiaries' direct support and can be considered as a good practice. Study visits have relatively high costs per head and their efficiency is a question as tangible outputs are missing. Each partner managed their sub-project independently and collaborated only on study visits, some trainings and a conference. The consortium remained artificial and did not result in any major added value. Partners did not utilise potential main synergies, e.g. between capacity building of local authorities and school or public engagement at the same location. The overall efficiency was assessed as rather high.

Effectiveness: Projects did not contribute to an increased public influence on decision making

The process of trainings – miniprojects – mentoring by experienced staff – celebrating projects' successes has proven successful in short-term engagement of **CSOs** in local issues and in addressing civil, political, social, economic and environmental rights. Subsequent engagement was strong mainly among well-established CSOs with diversified funding. Contributions to changes in local decision making were rather exceptional. No ex-post evaluation took place except of the external project V evaluation and internal impact assessments of ToL. Sharing or coordination among CSOs was limited. Instead, donor / grant dependency was identified.

The long-term involvement of **local authorities' (LAs)** representatives in miniprojects had a positive effect on their cooperation with youth and CSOs and can be considered a good practice. On the other

hand, trainings of LAs and study visits, as applied by the evaluated projects, had negligible effects. They were one-off events. Moreover, in 2014, the majority of staff in LAs was replacement after local elections.

Media trainings and summer schools for journalism students were also mostly one-off events without a structured follow-up with the majority of participants. Participants mostly remained in the media sector and in at least two cases shared their know-how. Still, concrete changes in media quality and plurality, to which trainings would have contributed, are not clear.

Students / youth engaged in public affairs on multiple levels during their miniprojects. Their on-going involvement was often a challenge. More advocacy within miniprojects could have addressed changes on LA level. There is no evidence that summer schools would boost youth engagement. Sharing role models and facilitating a more long-term, structured engagement in burning local issues are key.

Regarding **schools**, debate competitions were proven popular among students and teachers. They contributed to new pieces of knowledge and skills among students and generated interest among other students. Study visit of teachers to the CR contributed to reaching out to more schools. Developed brochures were also utilised. The conference did not bring any major effects.

In overall, the above mentioned activities benefited directly approximately 4.000 citizens. Still they did not contribute to a major increase of public influence on decision making, thus the effectiveness remains rather low. Main reasons are too many focus areas and short-term involvement of target groups.

Sustainability: Individual benefits likely sustained, sustainability mechanisms could be improved

Individual benefits likely sustained. While sustainability was among priorities for People In Need (PIN) and Transitions Online (ToL), other implementers did not particularly focus on introducing mechanisms to sustain the activities and extend their benefits to a bigger number of beneficiaries. Some schools did continue with debates independently and so did some CSOs and youth initiatives. The case of 23 schools in Terjola, which still continue debates with the help of the Youth Palace and funding from the LA, is a good example of a multiplication effect of a miniproject. A sustained benefit related to LAs is the long term cooperation between a few municipalities and PIN and continuous trainings of Civitas Georgica (CG). A public debate in Rustavi in 2014 held by a trained journalist is an example of sustained benefits. Most of the blogs were not sustained. The overall sustainability was assessed as rather low due to insufficient sustainability mechanisms.

Impact: New skills and even replication of the multi-stakeholder approach in other regions

Taking into account the relatively high outreach of each miniproject (hundreds of citizens) in 11 regions, the CSOs and youth initiatives had a big multiplication effect. Benefits were identified mainly on individual level in terms of enhanced knowledge and skills of beneficiaries. One LA trainer currently works in the Georgian Parliament, which is a good example of potential wider impact. A donor-dependency mind-set was created – a lot of CSOs believe they need to raise funds before engaging. Finally, initiatives did not lead to any major changes in local decision making. Nevertheless, the multi-stakeholder approach of PIN in Guria and Imereti is currently being replicated in other regions with the support of international donors, which is a success. Thus the impact was assessed as rather high.

Respect for human rights was reflected, gender was not in focus

Human rights belong to the main focus of the projects, whereby compliance was assessed as rather high. Different types of human rights were tackled. The human rights-based approach to development, recently endorsed even by the EC and the Georgian government, has not been intentionally incorporated in any of the evaluated projects. In practice, the principles of empowerment and non-discrimination were applied quite consistently, but citizen participation in decision making, holding LAs/ state accountable and referencing international human rights frameworks could have been stronger. No special attention was given to gender, but it is likely that girls and women benefited to a similar extent if not more than boys and men.

Good governance: participation in decision making differed, project transparency could be better

Good governance was also among the main goals of the projects. Level of participation in decision making differed per project stakeholder and project partner. The public participation and accountability were covered to a certain extent in trainings for LA and in miniprojects. The key issue was insufficient project documentation for monitoring and evaluation. Project partners and beneficiaries were not aware of the projects' successes and challenges (including the external evaluation), in line with the transparency principle. Project partners could have also employed more advocacy to ensure access to information and participation of stakeholders in local decision making. Good governance was assessed as rather low.

Environmental protection and climate change tackled in field

Environmental protection was a direct focus of several miniprojects and among themes of debating competition, whereby climate was also taken into account. In overall, neither of the evaluated projects had a negative impact on environment and climate change, thus the overall rating is rather high.

Visibility: Use of media and dissemination among other donors / implementers could be improved

Projects visibility and dissemination was done rather informally. Visibility rules of the Czech MFA / TRANS were applied in key documents. Participants were often confused about evaluated projects and their objectives, likely because the project names were long, complicated and similar to each other. Potential of local media (TV and radio shows) could have been utilized more. The same applies to dissemination among other donors and implementers. Thus visibility was assessed as rather low.

Recommendation	Addressee	Priority
Related to TRANS / CZ ODA system		
1. Implement min. 3-year projects, whereby focus in a selected region (or a few regions) on a selected local priority topic, ensure in-depth needs analysis, multi-stakeholder cooperation, sustainable mechanisms, ongoing local support and enough flexibility as per external factors.	MFA (CZDA) and potential implementers	1 Top
2. Aside of long-term projects, allocate budget for burning human rights issues and for enhancing planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning capacities of CSOs.	MFA	2 Medium
3. Coordinate activities with other implementers and donors in the target area and if possible (taking into account the political situation) also with local state institutions	MFA and potential implementers	1 Top
4. Engage in joint programming, co-funding, monitoring and evaluation especially with the EC Delegation, IVF and potentially also with other donors as per the focus area.	MFA	1 Top
5. Create systems for close collaboration of TRANS and CZDA from programming, to needs assessment and to planning, monitoring, evaluation and auditing.	MFA	1 Top
Related to future TRANS projects in Georgia		
6. Link the CZDA decentralisation project "Support of public administration reform in Georgia" with TRANS projects – enable piloting of established curriculum and tools in selected LAs	CZDA and TRANS	1 Top
7. Implement multi-stakeholder initiatives in a specific area (health, environment, social inclusion, minorities) with an advocacy component, sharing of results / lessons learnt and a media component	TRANS and implementers	2 Medium
Related to other support of the CR in Georgia		
8. Focus on transition experience in strategic planning and in selected issues in coordination with other actors.	MZV	2 Medium