
Il progetto Joint forces for common interests è stato implementato in Macedonia durante un periodo di 36 mesi (Gennaio 2016 - Dicembre 2018) con l'obiettivo di rafforzare l'impatto della società civile nella promozione di relazioni intercomunitarie utilizzando un approccio partecipativo.

La presente valutazione è stata svolta come previsto dall'Attività 4.3, e ha l'obiettivo di vagliare efficacia, efficienza, sostenibilità e rilevanza del progetto al fine di identificare punti di forza e debolezza dello stesso, oltre che di misurare l'eventuale potenziale di replicabilità della metodologia applicata. È stata inoltre condivisa con le municipalità e le organizzazioni della società civile beneficiarie del progetto, oltre che con il Donatore (Unione Europea).

La valutazione, effettuata dal team COSV M&E, mira dunque ad offrire un'analisi dettagliata dei risultati del progetto, sottolineando le connessioni tra le sue componenti e mostrando l'effettivo contributo all'obiettivo generale perseguito.

RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAMME

DECEMBER 2018

JOINT FORCES FOR COMMON INTERESTS
ACTIVITY 4.3

Evaluator : Tommaso Cassiani



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Context and Background

Context

The present document is based on the Activity 4.3 of the Project “Joint Forces for Common Interests” implemented by COSV, CCI Prilep and Antiko and funded by the European Union within the framework of the programme “Support to Civil Society Organizations under the Civil Society Facility and Media Freedom Action 2013”.

Main purpose of the document, as per project proposal, was originally to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation process in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and to analyze the eventual replicability of the applied methodology. The resulting evaluation was aimed to be shared with the targeted municipal bodies, as well as with the Donor.

In agreement with the European Union, COSV proposed an enhancement of the activity output, opting for a wider and more extensive evaluation of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of the programme. The resulting document is going to provide the reader with a comprehensive overview on the project outcomes, highlighting the chains of causality among its component and better analyzing the contributions to the general objective.

Moreover, while the evaluation criteria correspond to the ones recommended by the DAC OECD guidelines on Evaluation, this final paper aims to be a resource for CSOs and local institutions interested in develop a stronger and more impactful co-operation on participatory democracy and intercommunity relations.

Hence, the present document tried to harmonize the needs of the requested in-depth evaluation with the dissemination purpose of the activity output.

As per Project Proposal:

10-Steps-to-Results M&E Methodology

Research on Effectiveness

Suggestion on M&E System for future projects as main output

Additional assets of the current format:

Participatory analyses of the project’s effects based on a wider sample of stakeholders

Possibility for the beneficiaries to provide a feedback, guaranteeing downward accountability

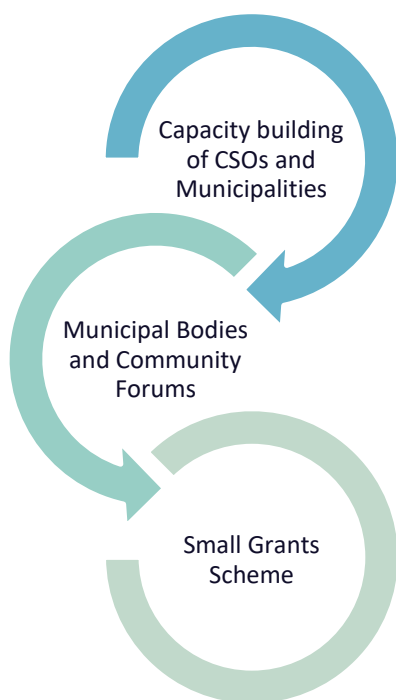
Additional focus on Efficiency, Sustainability and Relevance

Cross-referencing of both qualitative and quantitative data

Background

The project *Joint forces for common interests* was implemented in a period of 36 months starting from January 2016 ending in December 2018 with the aim of strengthening the civil society impact in promoting intercommunity relation through a participatory democracy.

Within this framework, 12 multiethnic municipalities – Dolneni, Kichevo, Krushevo, Veles, Chair, Saraj, Chashka, Resen, Kochani, Delcevo, Karposh and Tearce - were selected in partnerships with 12 civil society organizations acting as mentors for smaller local CSOs.



The first project component included the creation of local municipal bodies composed by members of the targeted municipalities and of the mentoring organizations, which have been trained together in advocacy, interest-based negotiation, fact-finding, data analysis and conflict resolution.

The second project component, organized by the mentoring organizations with the support of the municipal bodies, has been the implementation of 4 community forums in each of the targeted municipalities (for a total of 48 community forums). The main goal of the forum was the identification of common interests among the communities cohabitating in each municipality.

This process served as baseline for the third project component: local calls for proposals prioritizing the identified common interests, ending up in 14 small grants awarded. The small projects have been implemented under direct control of the mentoring organizations and the representatives from the municipalities.

A relevant part of the project has been the knowledge sharing phase: to enhance the outreach of the activities, 6 regional meetings have been organized and the results of the granted projects have been presented and discusses.

Throughout the project and the small grants were targeted more than 12000 beneficiaries, both direct and indirect.

Project Fiche

Reference: Europe Aid/136-992/DD/ACT/MK

Contracting Authority: Delegation of the European Union to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Consortium Partners: Coordinamento delle Organizzazioni per il Servizio Volontario (COSV) CCI-Prilep and ANTICO Skopje.

Duration of the project: 32 months

Total budget: 329.584.79 Euro

Final beneficiaries: Multi-ethnic communities from the selected municipalities

Overall objective: Strengthening the civil society impact in promoting intercommunity relation through a participatory democracy.

Specific objectives:

- a) To support the intercommunity trust building process through acknowledgement of the common community interests
- b) To stimulate local community actions for participation in interest based local decision making processes
- c) To strengthen the capacities of the local civil society in analysis and evidence based advocacy through multi-stakeholder networking

Planned Activities:

Capacity building

- Coordination of activities
- Initial phase – process of selection of interested multi-ethnic municipalities for participation in the common interest programme
- Trainings for civil society and municipal workers in advocacy through interests based negotiation, fact-finding, data analysis and researching, conflict resolution through circle processes

Establishment of the consultation mechanism for identification of common community interests

- Establishment of municipal body for identification of the common community interests Supporting of process for preparation of annual program
- Process of common needs identification (through organization of community forums for wide audience inclusion)

Intercommunity trust building process

- Preparation and launching of call for small grants for intercommunity trust building
- Mentoring process for implementation of joint projects for interest based local decision making

Visibility and promotion

- Web portal
 - Cross-country coordination meetings
 - Research of the effectiveness of the program
-

Methodology

As previously mentioned, the present evaluation has been performed using the 10-Steps-to-Results M&E Methodology¹, elaborated by the World Bank in 2004 and aimed to provide a standardized system of result-based project accountability. The presented 10 steps are primarily designed to assess the effectiveness of the programmes/projects they are applied to, but when properly implemented they also provide essential information feedback for project managers on the project outputs and outcomes.

The 10 Steps to Results M&E Methodology

- Step 1.** Conducting a readiness assessment on the targeted Country/Region
 - Step 2.** Agreeing on outcomes to monitor and evaluate
 - Step 3.** Selecting key indicators to monitor outcomes
 - Step 4.** Defining baseline data on indicators
 - Step 5.** Selecting results target
 - Step 6.** Monitors for results
 - Step 7.** Performing an Evaluation
 - Step 8.** Reporting findings
 - Step 9.** Using findings
 - Step 10.** Sustaining the M&E System within the organization
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The COSV M&E Team, in accordance with both the Donor and the COSV Team in Macedonia (COSV Team MK), decided to integrate the above described methodology within the COSV M&E Framework standards, which foresees the following procedure:

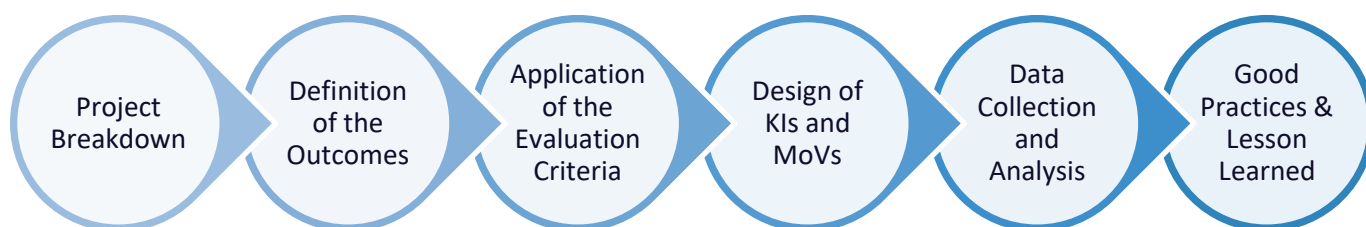
The Project Breakdown: the project structure is analyzed and divided in its main components. This process helps identifying the project rationale, and how different parts of the project planning and implementation responded to its goals. At the same time, segmenting the evaluation in its main activity clusters enables it to focus on tailored indicators for each component, and consequently to better scan the strengths and weaknesses of the different phases.

Definition of the Outcomes: specific Outcomes are established for each project component.

¹ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/iesf/document/10-steps-results-based-monitoring-and-evaluation-system-world-bank-2004>

Following the rationale behind each activity cluster, specific Outcomes are defined. The definition of the Outcomes is generally based on the project narrative and Logframe, but includes one or more participatory sessions with the team of the implementing organization(s) (in this case, COSV Team MK). This process is justified by a need of harmonization between the often too general Outcomes reported in the official documents and their subsequent application to the targeted scenarios. The established Outcomes should respond to the question: *what change(s) in the current scenario this specific component should bring once implemented?*

Application of the Evaluation Criteria: As previously stated, the Development Assistance Evaluation Criteria most widely adopted are the ones defined by DAC OECD: Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, Relevance and Impact². COSV M&E standard procedure is instead designed to evaluate Impact by analyzing the role of the assessed interventions (COSV projects) within the framework of the Theory of Change applied to the targeted area (therefore guaranteeing causal attribution). Under this precondition, Impact can only be measured as the long-term effect of the abovementioned interventions, covering a period of 3 to 5 years. Given that the present project did not foresee the collection of Impact-specific data since its start, COSV M&E Team opted in the present case for an Evaluation focusing on Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Relevance.



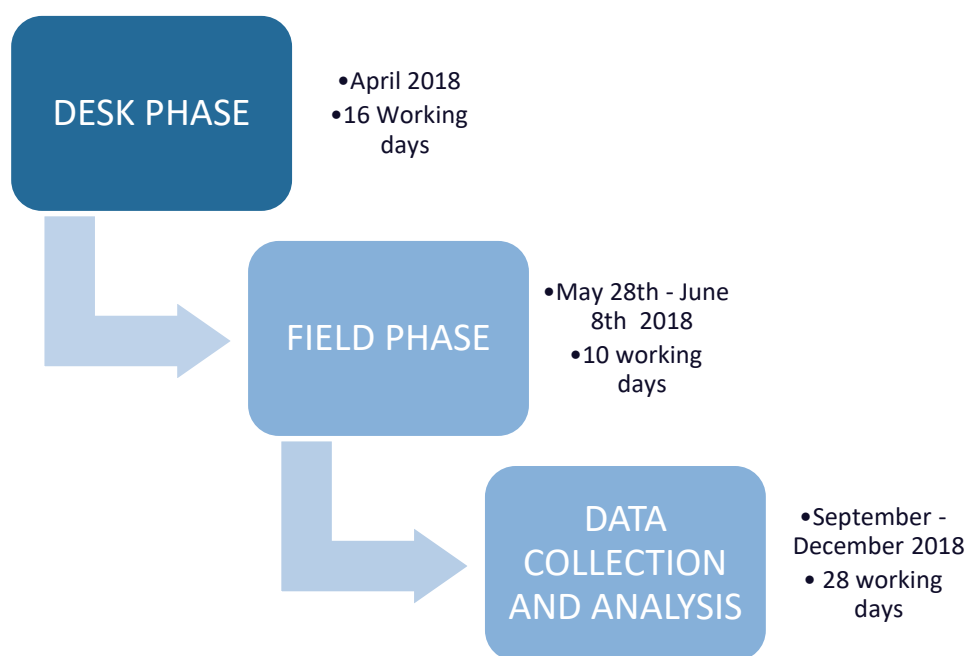
Design of Key Indicators and Means of Verification: outline of Criteria-specific KIs and MoVs aimed to assess the advancement towards the component's Outcomes. This phase is of utmost importance in order to assess the degree to which intended or promised outcomes are being achieved, and ultimately to obtain a relevant and reliable project Evaluation. COSV M&E Team puts a special focus on the choice of clear and adequate indicators, balancing quantitative and qualitative ones and guaranteeing a horizontal logic between the intended objectives and the chosen measurements. For this purpose, in this Evaluation the Indicators have been established based on a participatory process involving the Consortium partners.

² <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

Data Collection and Analysis: The data collection and analysis phase is the most demanding and time-consuming part of the M&E Framework. It implies a direct involvement of stakeholders and beneficiaries, often introducing new MoVs to the ones already forecasted by LogFrame. An efficient and properly planned data collection can be successfully performed if supported by specific tools, both strategic and operational: COSV M&E Team generally operate with Internal Monitoring Systems, External Reporting Systems and Deadline Agendas. In the present case, a MoVs Collection Agenda has been designed so to track the data collection implementation. The Analysis, taken into account the essential comments and inputs from the COSV Team MK, has been performed by the Evaluator in order to minimize bias and/or require further clarifications on the obtained data.

Good Practices and Lesson Learned: The goal of each Evaluation process is to provide the implementing organization(s) with both a tool for downward (to the beneficiary) and upward (to the Donor) accountability, and a set of proven guidelines on how to improve future projects or to strengthen existing ones. Therefore, the present Evaluation fits for purpose by developing a set of component-based recommendations and suggestions, mostly targeting CSOs and local institutions willing to implement participatory paths of multi-community public planning.

Present Evaluation Phases



Readiness Assessment – May 2018



The situation in the country regarding inter-community³ relations is still challenging. As stated in the EU Progress Report⁴, the Ohrid Framework Agreement brought to an end the conflict of 2001 and currently provides the framework for preserving the multi-ethnic character of the society.

However, several sources reported⁵ that there is still a relevant lack of trust among the communities, and further initiatives to proactively promote an inclusive multi-ethnic society are needed. In recent years, an increasingly divisive political culture has resulted in two political crises and a breakdown in political dialogue.

In response to this, local civil society organizations (CSOs) set up action plans addressing the most fragile inter-ethnic environments within the Country - which became an increasingly

³ According to the latest census, held in 2002, 64.18 per cent of the population declared themselves as ethnic Macedonians, 25.17 per cent as ethnic Albanians, 3.85 per cent as ethnic Turks, 2.66 per cent as ethnic Roma, 1.78 per cent as ethnic Serbs, 0.84 per cent as ethnic Bosniaks, 0.48 as ethnic Vlachs and 1.04 per cent as others.

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia-progress-report_en.pdf

⁵ [file:///C:/Users/test/Downloads/MEMO-18-3405 EN%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/test/Downloads/MEMO-18-3405_EN%20(1).pdf) ;

<https://content.sciendo.com/abstract/journals/seeur/12/2/article-p8.xml> ; <https://rm.coe.int/16806db759>

higher priority especially after the clashes⁶ reported on May 9th 2015 in Kumanovo, an event that heavily influenced the trust building process by increasing the mistrust in all the communities involved.

Since then, local CSOs enhanced their support to inter-community relations and had often stressed in their projects the importance of stimulating the communities to find common interests and to use them as basis for trust-building processes.

What is still missing is a proven and widespread system for monitoring the effectiveness of such projects, able to provide both the local authorities and the CSOs with strategies and methodologies for common interests' identification and direct participation of the citizens to the decision-making process, regardless their community of origin.

A promising starting point, which is also a pillar of the present COSV project, is the collection and sharing of the information gathered through community forums, highlighting the common needs and interests of the community and which could provide to local governments with the possibility to make needs-based planning for the year ahead.

A systematized version of this system would regularly support the process of data collection, needs assessment and development of local programs that will address the priorities of the communities. It would additionally provide grassroots information with a potential importance at national level, enabling the institutions to gain up-to-date knowledge of the needs to address in a conflict-prevention perspective.

Such a system should be supported by local institutions and developed in strict co-operation with CSOs and the local business sector, widening the stakeholders map beyond the traditional borders of inter-community policies.

The main mid-term result would be to enable needs-based local budget planning with the potential to strengthen the currently weak link between the institutional local programs and the national goals.

[Readiness assessment by Mr.Goce Bogoevski, COSV Project Manager and Mrs.Kristina Pavloski, COSV Project Manager Assistant]

⁶ <https://www.ibtimes.com/macedonia-terror-operation-police-fighting-street-street-foreign-group-1915510>

Analysis – Component One

Capacity Building of CSOs and Municipalities

OUTCOME(S)

A) Increased policy-making and self-government capacity for targeted municipalities and NGOs

EFFICIENCY (Measuring the outputs - - qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs)	KI A1 - Number of evidence-based initiatives proposed to the Municipalities by the Targeted CSOs MoV A1 - Official Request, Background Material to prepare the Official Request, Proposals Received by the Municipalities, Questionnaire to the CSOs
EFFECTIVENESS (Measuring the extent to which an activity attains its objectives)	KI A2 - Rate of appliance of provided formats and templates in the post-training initiative proposals draft by the CSOs MoV A2 - Original formats provided at the trainings, Templates used in the initiative proposals - either submitted on preparation material
RELEVANCE (Measuring the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor)	KI A3 - Improved skills of the trainees from the baseline value in fact findings, advocacy and conflict resolution MoV A3 - Tailored analysis of trainers' reports focusing on the following criteria: participation of the trainees, result of the practical exercises, proactivity of the trainees - 3 tailored analysis, one for each training category
SUSTAINABILITY (Measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after the project is over)	KI A4.1 - Number of trained civil servants still in place KI A4.2 - Number of info sharing sessions (internal trainings) implemented to extend the acquired knowledge to the local CSOs staff MoV A4.1 - Questionnaire to the municipalities MoV A4.2 - Questionnaire to the Mentoring Organizations

Efficiency

According to the data collected via Questionnaire to Mentoring Organizations regarding this criteria of the Component One Evaluation (see Figures 1 and 2), the trainings efficiently provided a spendable skills set which enabled 60% of the mentored CSOs to prepare and submit one to three initiative proposals to their Municipalities, and 60% of the total initiatives proposal submitted have been approved and implemented within the project lifespan.

This data has a notable level of reliability, given that 10 Mentoring CSOs on 12 responded to the Questionnaire (with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 13%) - but it remains a second-hand data channeled through the Mentoring organizations.

The cross-check as planned by the Evaluation Framework did not produced tangible results, due to the fact that both the targeted Municipalities (requested to provide the received initiative proposals) and the local mentored CSOs (requested to provide the initiative proposal forms, or background documents used in support – see Effectiveness for more details) have not been able to provide the required MoVs.

With regards to the Municipalities, the total absence of feedback on this specific MoVs has been explained by the high turnover among public servants assigned to this project implementation (where assigned – in many cases several public servants were turning on that task). In addition to that, the local elections held in October 2017 and leading to change of coalitions in power in many of the targeted Municipalities, have strongly affected the responsiveness of the local authorities during the Evaluation Phase.

Effectiveness

The present Evaluation, thanks to the valuable co-operation of both COSV Team MK and the project trainers, has quickly revealed that the project suffered of lack of monitoring tools and

Figure 1. Number of evidence-based initiatives proposed to the related Municipality from your Mentored Organization after the completion of the training sessions

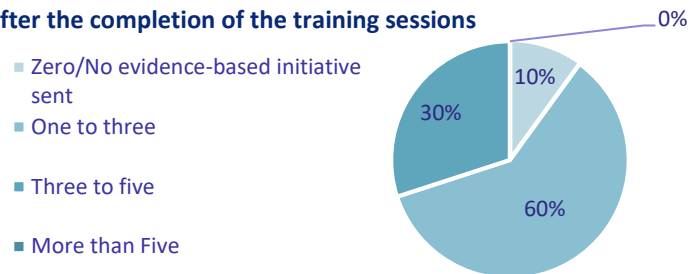
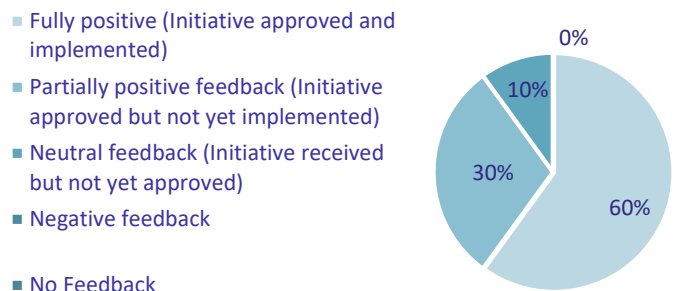


Figure 2. Feedback received from the Municipality



procedures in order to assess the causal connection between the know-how provided in the trainings and its effective application in the following phases. What in the KIs and MoVs designing phase appeared to be reliable monitoring tools (the evidence of the use of formats and templates for well-grounded data analysis provided during the trainings) have then resulted of poor attainability and measurability during the data collection phase.

The Training Structure

The project planned three trainings to be implemented targeting the Mentoring Organizations: one module focusing on *Advocacy through interests based negotiation*, a second module focusing on *Fact – finding, data analysis and researching* and a last module focusing on *Conflict resolution through circle processes*.

The trainers provided the training materials based on theoretical inputs from different topics. The training materials consisted in guidebooks listing general and specific guidelines on the topic, but without providing practical tools ready-to-use for the applying organizations.

Main goals of the Advocacy Training were:

- To identify the main community problems for undertaking advocacy incentives
- To understand and define the common community interests
- To shape strategies and advocacy plans aimed to influence to public opinion on community issues
- To introduce on possible decision making models

Main goals of the Fact Finding training were:

- To increase the participants' awareness about different tools of data based analysis
- To increase the participants' knowledge about decision making processes and strategies

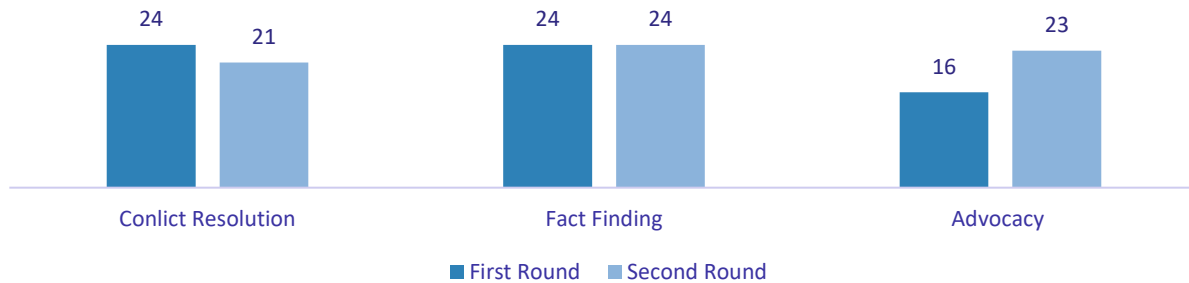
Finally, during training in conflict resolution the participants were introduced to the method of circle processes, in particular of discussion circles as need assessment methodology and joint interests' identification.

Given this gap, the training materials provided to the Mentoring CSOs resulted of certain usefulness for the Mentoring Organizations, but without a direct applicability within the project activity clusters.

As a consequence, the Effectiveness of this project component cannot be measured from unbiased means of verifications.

Relevance

Figure 3. Participants to the capacity building trainings



The main goal of the trainings was to enhance the beneficiaries' capabilities⁷ to support multi-community projects with the widest possible involvement of local stakeholders.

Specifically, the trainings aimed to improve civil servants and Mentoring CSOs members' crucial skills in Advocacy, Fact Finding and Conflict Resolution. A final questionnaire aimed to evaluate the quality of the training has been collected, but no ex-ante or ex-post test targeting the beneficiaries has been either planned nor performed during the implementation of the action. Hence, the project has no means to directly evaluate the trainings' direct out-turn in terms of improvement of the beneficiaries' capabilities. To address this, the present evaluation performed a tailored analysis of the trainers' report, isolating the following criteria:

Participation of the trainees: The general perception of the trainers was that the beneficiaries were equally engaged both in the theoretical and practical phases of the trainings, sharing experiences and understanding of the proposed topics. Participation was more than satisfactory to group discussions and discussion in pairs.

Results of practical exercises: The practical exercises proposed during the trainings have been particularly useful for the beneficiaries, according to the trainers' reports. Nevertheless, given the strong value of the practical phase in applying the gained knowledge, the reports stress that the trainings timeframe did not allow enough time⁸ for a more structured and efficient testing.

Proactivity of the trainees: The perception reported by the trainers is that while the participants frequently and proactively interacted during the trainings, no follow-up mechanisms were put in place. It's worth mentioning that the Conflict Resolution trainees

⁷ Two rounds of training, each targeting 6 Mentoring CSOs and 6 Municipalities. Each round, two representatives of every CSOs and Municipality have been invited to the training.

⁸ The trainings lasted 3 days (a total of about 12 hours) each round.

expressed their will to use a proposed tool (discussion circles) also beyond the bounds of the project activities, as a fruitful methodology for community problem mapping.

Sustainability

The sustainability of this component of the project has been assumed as directly deriving from the acquired knowledge sharing a) from the Mentoring to the Mentored organizations, and b) within the targeted Municipalities. One reported issue is that while Mentoring Organizations have sent the same persons to participate to the entire trainings set (in 95% of the cases, the same 2 CSOs members attended the 3 different modules), Municipalities have often sent different civil servants to attend different modules, spreading the acquired skills among different members – but losing the chance to provide two civil servants with the complete skills set, and therefore to share it coherently.

Figure 4. Number of trained civil servants still in place Participant civil servants from local Municipalities Participant civil servants still in charge at the time of the evaluation

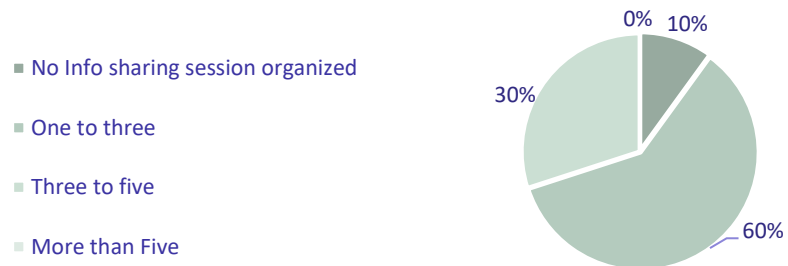
	Participant civil servants from local Municipalities	Participant civil servants still in charge at the time of the evaluation
Zero	0%	12.5%
One	0%	0%
Two	50%	37.5%
Three	0%	0%
More than three	50%	50%

Moreover, as could be noted in Figure 4 (representing a sample of 8 Municipalities on a total of 12 responding to the submitted Survey, therefore with a quite relevant 21% margin of error given a confidence level of 95%), 12.5% of the training participants from the Municipalities are not anymore in place – not a particularly high percentage, but considering that 4 Municipalities did not fulfill the Survey the final number might potentially be higher.

Concerning the Mentoring Organizations, an essential phase of the project was the knowledge transfer to the Mentored local CSO(s) in order to facilitate the project planning in view of the forecasted small grants. In order to enhance the sustainability of the training component, a number of info sharing sessions have been organized between the aforementioned beneficiaries.

According to the received feedback (Figure 5, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 13%), 60% of the Mentoring CSOs organized one to three info sharing sessions with the mentored local CSOs.

Figure 5. Number of info sharing sessions - trainings delivered from Mentor to Mentored Organization(s) - implemented to extend the acquired knowledge after the completion of the trainings:



In 30% of the cases three to five sessions have been organized, while in 10% of the cases no info sharing session took place, reportedly because a constant daily interaction between the two actors has been ensured.

In quantitative terms, the reported data suggest that this project component has a stronger potential of sustainability among the CSOs than among the local Municipalities.

Analysis – Component Two

Municipal Bodies and Community Forums

OUTCOME(S)

B) Local community actions have been fostered

C) Local community interactions with the institutions have been stimulated

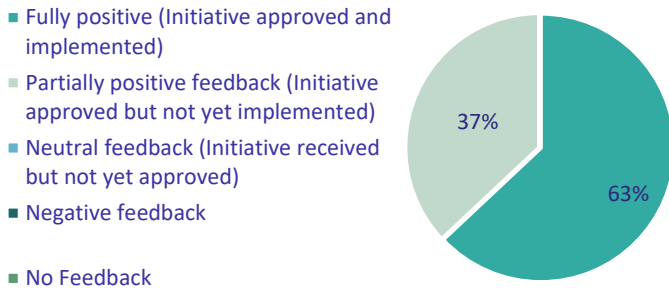
D) Shared assessment and identification of common problems have been implemented

<p>EFFICIENCY (Measuring the outputs - - qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs)</p>	<p>KI C1 - Number of proposed actions during the 1st round having municipal budget allocated for</p> <p>KI C2 - Amount of budget (%) allocated to the above-mentioned actions</p> <hr/> <p>MoV C1 - Published municipal budget, Municipality Budget Analysis</p> <p>MoV C2 - Published municipal budget, Municipality Budget Analysis</p>
<p>EFFECTIVENESS (Measuring the extent to which an activity attains its objectives)</p>	<p>KI C3 - Number and typology of official documents (agreements, MoU) signed by the targeted CSOs and municipalities</p> <p>KI B1 - Number and Profile (Sex- and Community- disaggregated data) of the participants to the Forum</p> <p>KI D1 - Number and categories of the assessed shared needs</p> <hr/> <p>MoV C3 - MoU, Letters of Support and other documentation</p> <p>MoV B1 - List of Participants, Disaggregated Data Report</p> <p>Mov D1 - List of Identified categories for each municipality</p>
<p>RELEVANCE</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>SUSTAINABILITY (Measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after the project is over)</p>	<p>KI C4 - # of meetings of the municipal bodies after being established</p> <hr/> <p>MoV C4 - Questionnaire to Mentoring CSOs</p>

Efficiency

To evaluate to what extent the interaction between local CSOs and related Municipalities has

Figure 6. Feedback given to the CSOs' proposed Initiatives from the Municipalities



been stimulated by the present Component (the creation of Municipal bodies aimed to follow up on the inputs generated by regular Community Forums), the evaluation requested to the Municipalities to respond to a specific question on the feedbacks given to the project beneficiaries' proposed initiatives (local CSOs).

According to the collected data (Figure 6), generally matching with the cross-checked info registered asking the same question to the Mentoring Organizations (Figure 2, where the only difference is that one respondent reported Neutral feedback from the Municipality), the Municipalities have been very responsive and equally supportive to the inputs collected during this phase of the project.

Nevertheless, this data has to be read within the wider framework of the actual amount of budget allocated to social activities in the selected municipalities.

Figure 7. Municipal Budget Analysis

Name of the Municipality	Annual Budget – As per Published Budget In EUR	Annual Budget Allocated to Social Activities (if specified) In EUR	Percentage of the total budget allocated to Social Activities	Amount of budget allocated to the approved local community actions (project-related)
Dolneni	4.854.227	2.276	0.04%	N/A
Kichevo	N/A	N/A		N/A
Krushevo	3.449.024	11.544	0.33%	N/A
Veles	14.639.055	213.333	1.45%	N/A
Chair	21.881.918	248.780	1.13%	N/A
Saraj	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Resen	4.755.381	24.752	0.52%	N/A
Kocani	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Delcevo	4.209.571	30.894	0.73%	N/A
Caska	1.853.829	5.365	0.28%	N/A
Karpos	35.253.853	24.390	N/A	N/A
Tearce	N/A	N/A	0.06%	N/A

Freely available data reported on the Municipalities' websites in accordance to the Macedonian *Law on Budgets*⁹ show that the percentage of budget allocated to *Social Activities* is rarely reaching 1% of the total municipal budget (Figure 7), strongly limiting the capability of the local institutions to implement efficient responses to the problems mapped in the community forums.

Effectiveness

This project component resulted extremely valuable in fostering community participation to the local problem mapping, as well as in linking the communities with local institutions by discussing the inputs raised during the community forums. Each municipality has been targeted by a set of 4 community forums, and the whole component has been implemented during 2 rounds.

Community Forums – Rounds

Municipalities Targeted under Round One: Krushevo, Veles, Kichevo, Dolneni, Saraj, Cair

Municipalities Targeted under Round Two: Kocani, Karpos, Resen, Tearce, Delcevo, Caska

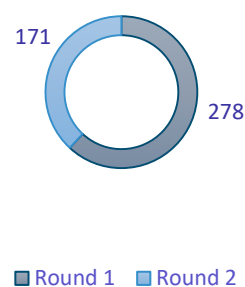
In order to avoid overlapping, the calculation of the participants has been done summing the average number of participants per municipality during the 4 sessions of the community forums.

As a result, the forums targeted a total of 449 participants, 278 during the first round and 171 during the second one (Figure 8).

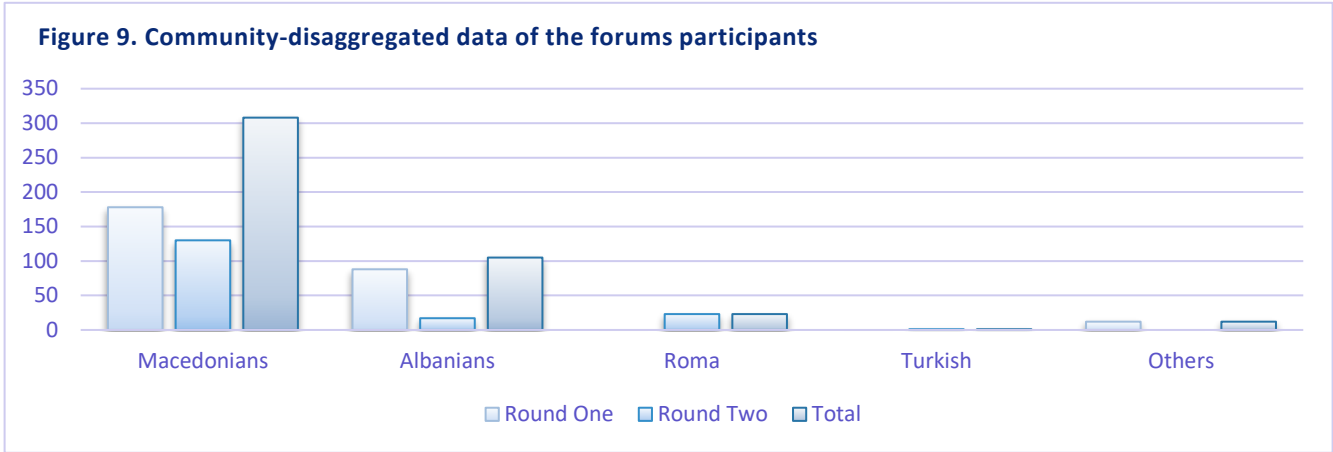
A paramount objective of the project was to stimulate interaction and dialogue between the communities of the different municipalities targeted by the activities. Even if some of them were not particularly mixed, the present component recorded a relevant participation (on proportion) of members of the Macedonian, Albanian and Roma communities.

The Bosniak community also played a consistent role in this phase, which recorded the participation of few members of the Turkish and Vlach communities, too (Figure 9).

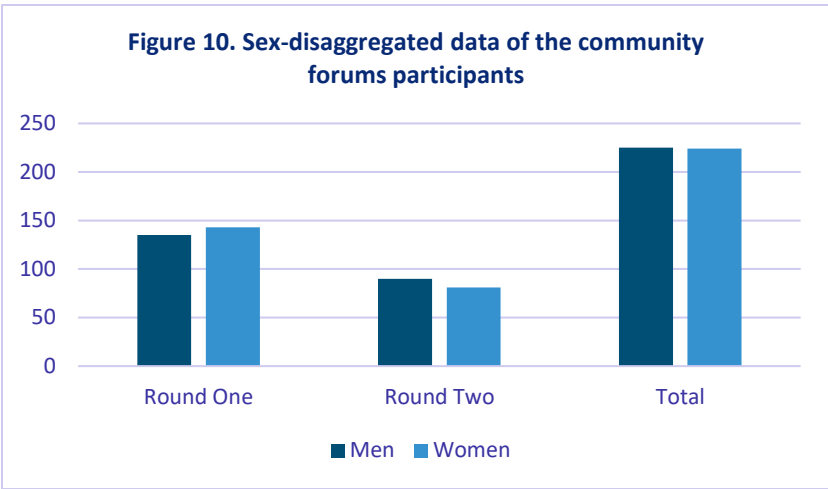
Figure 8. Total number of participants to the community forums



⁹ Службен весник на Република Македонија бр.64/05, 0 (Службен весник на Република Македонија бр.64/05, 04/08, 103/08, 4/08, 103/08, 156/09, 95/10 156/09, 95/10, 180/11и 171/12 и 171/12)



Concerning the sex-disaggregated data (Figure 10), the community forums have seen a substantially equal participation of men (225) and women (224), reflecting once again the widespread and crosscutting response of the local population in presence of mechanisms encouraging the involvement in the decision making process.



The forums aimed to map the municipality issues shared by the various resident communities, and to consequently define a number of priority areas to be targeted during the third and last project component, the Small Grants Scheme (as shown by Figure 11).

While the effectiveness of the participatory exercise itself is undoubted, some concerns are raised by the fact that, in spite of the quantity and width of input provided, the only post-forums reported agreements between municipalities and local CSOs have been the MoUs signed as precondition to implement the Small Grants Schemes – meaning within the present project’s framework.

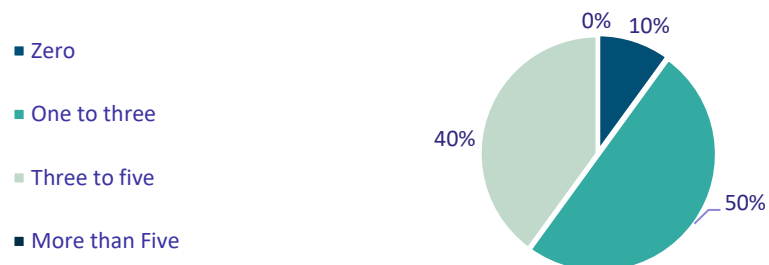
Given the significant potential of this specific component in terms of participatory problem solving and conflict prevention, the last mentioned data casts a shadow on the off-grid effectiveness of the community forums once not covered by project monitoring.

Figure 11. List of identified priorities divided per municipality

	Priority One	Priority Two	Priority Three	Priority Four	Priority Five	Priority Six
Dolneni	Education	Social Protection	Environment			
Kichevo	Education	Tourism	Sport and Culture			
Krushevo	Education	Sport and Culture	Health	Tourism		
Veles	Education	Sport and Culture	Employment			
Chair	Infrastructures	Tourism	Environment	Sport and Culture	Participation of the civil society to the decision making process at local level	Housing
Saraj	Infrastructures	Health	Education	Sport and Culture	Tourism	Environment
Resen	Agriculture	Tourism	Environment	Youth Activism	Employment	
Kochani	Education	Environment	Infrastructure			
Delcevo	Education	Health	Tourism	Sport and Culture	Infrastructure	
Chaska	Tourism	Sport and Culture	Education			
Karposh	Environment	Health	Road Safety	Infrastructure	Urban Planning	
Tearce	Youth Involvement	Education	Tourism	Fire Protection	Culture	

Sustainability

Figure 12. Number of meetings of the Municipal Bodies which took place after the initial meeting – identified as “the meeting when the Body has been established”.



The second component of the project triggers a wide array of dynamics in the targeted beneficiaries, and it appears of utmost importance to adequately support a follow up phase in order to capitalize them.

In order to pursue this goal, the project planned the creation of

Municipal Bodies in the selected municipalities, composed by members of the municipal council, civil servants, members of the commission for interethnic relations and members of the Mentoring Organization. The Bodies had an average number of 5 participants and an average male-female ratio of 2/1. The main role of the Bodies was *to increase awareness of the institutional responsibilities of the municipalities towards the process of identification of common interests of the communities*¹⁰, but their establishment also represented the most durable tool to guarantee sustainability to the project component.

However, while the project support and coordination activities have been strongly benefitting of the preparation work implemented by the Municipal Bodies, their existence ceased with the end of the project – as proven by the limited number of meetings that took place after the kick-starting one (Figure 12, confidence level of 95% and margin of error 21%).

As a consequence, the component did not manage to set up the pre-conditions for its full and solid sustainability.

¹⁰ Project Interim Narrative Report 2016

Analysis – Component Three

Small Grants Scheme

OUTCOME(S)

E) Small project-specific effects on the selected communities (sample on 6 small grants: Saraj, Karpos, Delchevo 1, Delchevo 2, Krusevo, Dolnenj)

F) Increased inter-community co-operation

G) Increased capacities for grantees in Project Admin and Implementation

EFFICIENCY (Measuring the outputs - - qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs)	KI E1 - Small project-specific indicators MoV E1 - Evaluator's report (Interviews, Field Visits)
EFFECTIVENESS (Measuring the extent to which an activity attains its objectives)	KI G1 - Degree of appliance of the provided PCM tools by the Grantees during the project implementation KI E2 - Small project-specific indicators MoV G1 - PM Feedback Sheet, Project Docs MoV E2 - Evaluator's report (Interviews, Field Visits)
RELEVANCE (Measuring the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor)	KI F1 - Increased perception of pro-activeness towards inter- community project opportunities among the direct beneficiaries MoV F1 - Small grant final survey (sample of 73 members of funded local CSOs)
SUSTAINABILITY (Measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after the project is over)	KI G2 - Frequency of use of the provided PCM tools by the grantees in the post-training project applications MoV G2 - Small Grantees Questionnaire, Project Documents

Figure 13. List of projects funded by the Small Grants Scheme

Applicant	Co-applicant(s)	Name of the project	Budget (EUR)	Municipalities	Target groups
Association of Citizens Coexistence	High school "Koco Racin" - Veles	Common team	5,948.53	Veles	High school students from Veles
Association for education - Academic	Primary school "Nikola Karev"	QR treasure hunt	5,973.94	Krusevo	Teachers and students from settlements Bucin, Vrboec I Svetomitrani
Association Multiethnikum	Association of Citizens Humanity to youth	Youth are able and know how to build coexistence	5,646.58	Dolneni	Primary school students from municipality of Dolneni
Association Center for youth initiative and dialogue Kicevo	Association for youth development FACTOR Kicevo	Cultural values of multiethnic Kicevo	5,863.19	Kicevo	Cultural workers, touristic agency, local population, tourists, public sector, tourist economy
Association of Citizens for education and culture Uniteti Progresiv Skopje	Association of citizens Center for education and culture AKABE Skopje	Environmentally conscientious citizens of Cair	5,993.49	Cair	Citizens of Cair, public administration, teachers, students, urban and rural communities, business sector
Environmental association Youth of Dolno Svilare	Association for affirmation of bosniak woman DIVANHANA Skopje	3 problems, one solution	5,967.43	Saraj	Population from Dolno Svilare, Lubin, Matka
Youth association "LOCAL YOUTH COUNCIL Delcevo"	SRK "POP" Delcevo; Citizen Association "Action for youth" Delcevo	Establishing and arrangement of hiking track Delcevo - touristic location Golak for improving of local economic development in Municipality Delcevo	5,690.00	Delcevo	Youth, local and regional population, tourists and tourism workers.
Association against discrimination "Women's solidarity" Resen	Association of fruit producers "Blagoj A. Kotlarovski" Resen; Municipality of Resen as cooperant	Tourist fair in Prespa	5,960.00	Resen	Touristic workers and tourists, women who produced traditional food and hadcrafts, local and regional population.
Center for education and development - CED	As cooperant Municipality of Tearce	We BlogIN for Involvement!	5,796.00	Tearce	Pupils and teachers from primary

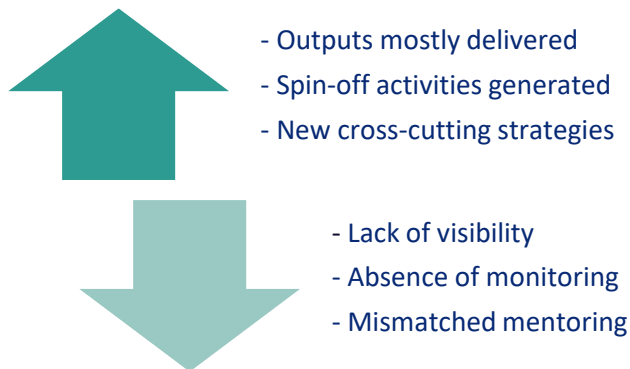
						schools in Tearce
Association of Roma "AVENA" Kocani	Association "Romano Vilo" Kocani	My life environment - my challenge	5,200.00	Kocani		At least 100 families living around the targeted location
Association of citizens "Center for climate changes" - Gevgelija, branch Skopje	As cooperant Municipality of Karpos	Common, for a better environment in Municipality Karpos	5,945.00	Karpos		Citizens of Municipality Karpos
Association for education and development - EDUKADO v. Bogomila, Caska	As cooperant Primary School Petar Pop Arsov from Bogomila	Conquer Caska	5,863.00	Caska		Local population, Hiking associations and tourist workers, visitors, tourists, public sector that initiate tourism development
Humanitarian association for help and support of persons with special needs "Bravura kooperativa" - Delcevo	Center for support of persons with intellectual disorders "Poraka" - Delcevo; As cooperants: Municipality of Delcevo and Primary school Kliment Ohridski - Delcevo	Responsible for responsibilities	5,912.00	Delcevo		CSO's, Local self government and city council, persons with special needs.
Association of citizens Ecology society AMBIENTALIST v. Gorno Jabolciste, Caska	Scout unit "Dimitar Vlahov" - Veles; Youth forum Caska.	Youth eco - ethno rural tourism	5,977.00	Caska		Multiethnic youth

Efficiency

The evaluation of the third component (the Small Grants Scheme, Figure 13) has been performed supporting the data collection and analysis with an extensive and thorough field mission which took place from May 28th to June 8th 2018 (10 working days).

With the essential technical and logistic assistance of the COSV Team MK, the Evaluator has been able to sample the contribution to the outcomes of 6 small projects in the following locations: Karpos (Skopje), Delchevo (2 projects), Krushevo, Saraj (Skopje), Dolneni. The locations have been visited and tailored

interviews took place with a wide range of actors targeted by the project activities (as per figure above). Moreover, an analytic feedback has been requested to the project co-applicants (CCI Prilep and ANTIKO).



Regarding the component efficiency, the project-specific indicators (as per project proposals) have been mostly met, and the forecasted outputs have been delivered in the vast majority of the cases (both personally visited by the evaluator and monitored by the COSV Team MK during the project component's lifespan).

The considerable efficiency of the Small Grants Scheme is proven also by an unexpected variety of deliverables generated by the small projects' activities, such as the Manual of Cooperation Guidelines developed in Delchevo or the establishment and growth of organizations set up by the funded small project – as happened in Saraj, where the local cultural association built a partnership with the Ministry of Culture and won two additional grants supporting its activities beyond the project funding.

On the other hand, some factors seemed to have negatively affected the component efficiency in most of the evaluated cases. Specifically, an almost total absence of small project monitoring tools and procedures did explicitly hinder a reliable measurement of the project outcomes, and

consequently of the accountability of the reported achievements (a remarkable exception being the case of the Association for Education Academic, the local CSO in Krushevo). Additionally, the lack of a clear and shared set of internal visibility guidelines impeded a proper coordination between the Co-applicants, the Mentoring Organizations and some of the funded local CSOs, decreasing in some cases the outreach potential of the implemented activities. Finally, few cases have highlighted a considerable mismatching (either thematic or geographic) between the Mentoring Organizations and its related local CSOs - leading to a less efficient planning of the small project proposals, and therefore to a less efficient implementation.

Effectiveness

The present project component recorded a balanced ratio of effectiveness boosters and obstacles.

Undeniably, the implemented small projects directly triggered or generated virtuous dynamics in the contexts of appliance, but it's equally undeniable that several component's objectives suffered an observable lack of effectiveness.

Among the positive effects generated by the Small Grants Scheme there is the opportunity seized by the local CSOs to use the proposed projects to enhance or create new synergies with the local stakeholders. For instance, the funded CSO Bravura (Delchevo) tied up a promising co-operation with the Municipal Library, revitalizing its space with the establishment of a Center for Multicultural Development.



- New synergies with local stakeholders
- Inter-community exchanges
- Opportunities for youth
- Insufficient training in admin
- No cooperation framework established
- Lack of institutional references

COSV Trainings in Project Management and Administration

As part of the project implementation, COSV Team MK delivered two trainings on project management and administration to the local CSOs targeted by the Small Grants Scheme. The trainings aimed to equip the trainees with a comprehensive know-how package, including tools for project implementation (lists of participants, formats for agendas of meetings, communication and visibility formats) administration and finance instruments (formats for procurement procedures according to PRAG, contracts samples, etc) and reporting templates.

The trained CSOs tried to use most of the provided tools during the project implementation, but a vast majority of them faced several challenges in properly apply them to the funded project. The most common reported problems were the following: reporting deadlines missed, unframed communication standards, issues in preparing the required procurement documents, unclear understanding of PRAG procedures.

Another major achievement of the project has been recorded in Dolneni, where a multi-layered approach to multiculturalism used sport activities in order to lay down the preconditions for a shared path of identity building, providing seven mixed elementary school the chance of guided tours of different religious landmarks of the Region.

A third example of effectiveness of the present component has been found in the consideration given to local issues often marginally addressed if not fully ignored, such as the human capital flight – often leading the youth to migrate from the peripheral areas of the Country to the main cities (or abroad). Focusing on this trend, the “Local Youth Council” of Delchevo has been funded to set up and mark a mountain trail (Mt.Golak Mountain Trail) aimed to promote the participation and future employment - as mountain guides - of young members of the ethnic communities of the village.

As previously mentioned, there are still various important aspects of this project component’s implementation which have robustly reduced the effectiveness of the funded actions.

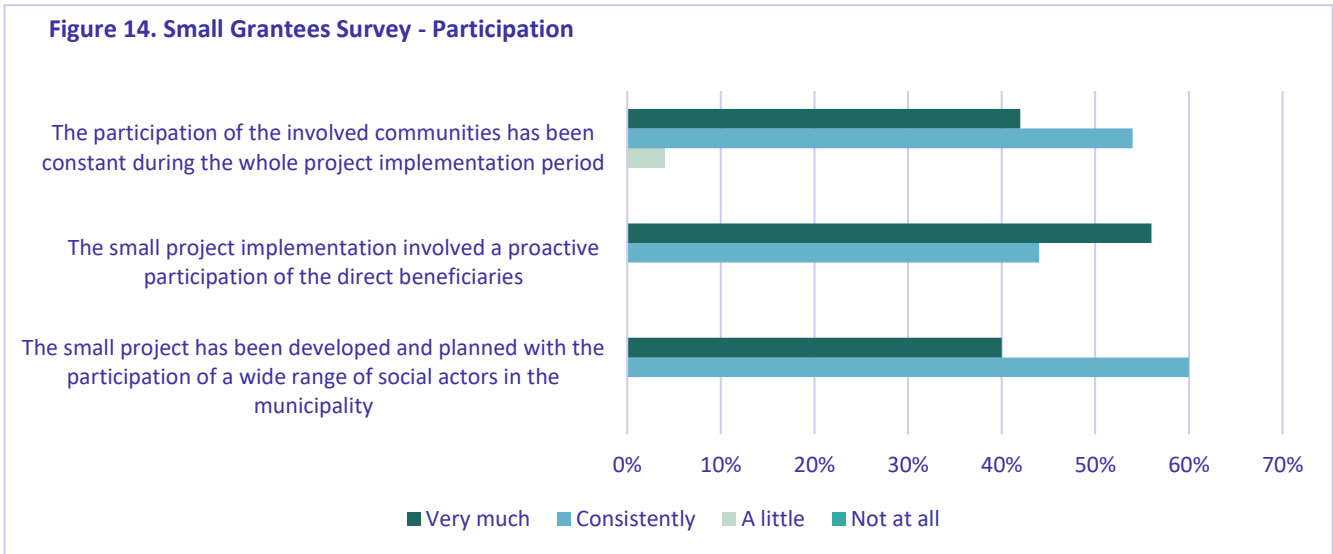
The most decisive has been the insufficient training on project management and financial administration delivered to the local CSOs. As specified in the box above, the time dedicated to the training has proven not to be enough for the local CSOs to absorb the amount of information provided, concretely risking to undermine the financial accountability of the grantees. Finally, the funded projects have proven to be more effective when the Municipalities designed an appointed member acting as institutional reference for the local CSOs – in its absence, turnover and post-electoral transition of powers have severely affected the project goal’s achievement.

Relevance

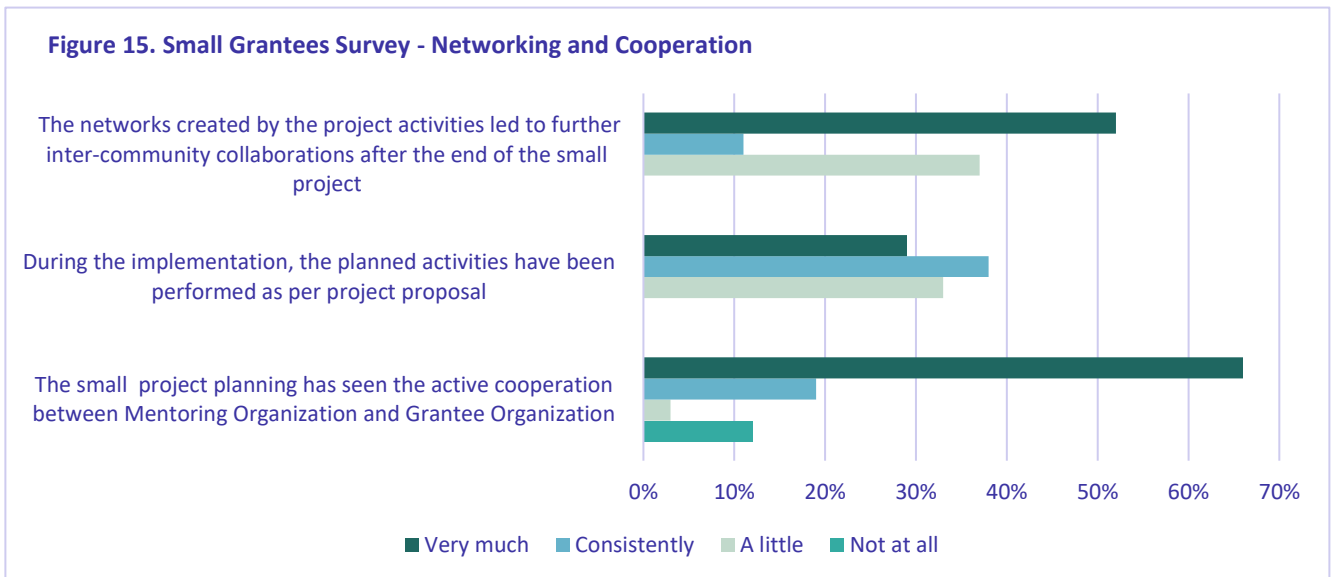
In order to measure the extent to which the present component suited the priorities of the target group, the Evaluator opted to submit a short Questionnaire to the 14 participating local CSOs. The Questionnaire has been completed by 73 members of the organizations, providing a quite reliable indicator of the perception of the beneficiaries about the project objectives – in spite of the predictable acquiescence bias registered.

The questions were divided in three main clusters, and distributed in a mixed order within the Questionnaire. The three clusters aimed to collect feedbacks on the participation of the stakeholders to the funded project (Figure 14), on the degree and quality of cooperation among them during the project implementation (Figure 15) and on the inter-community bonds eventually created or strengthened thanks to the project itself (Figure 16).

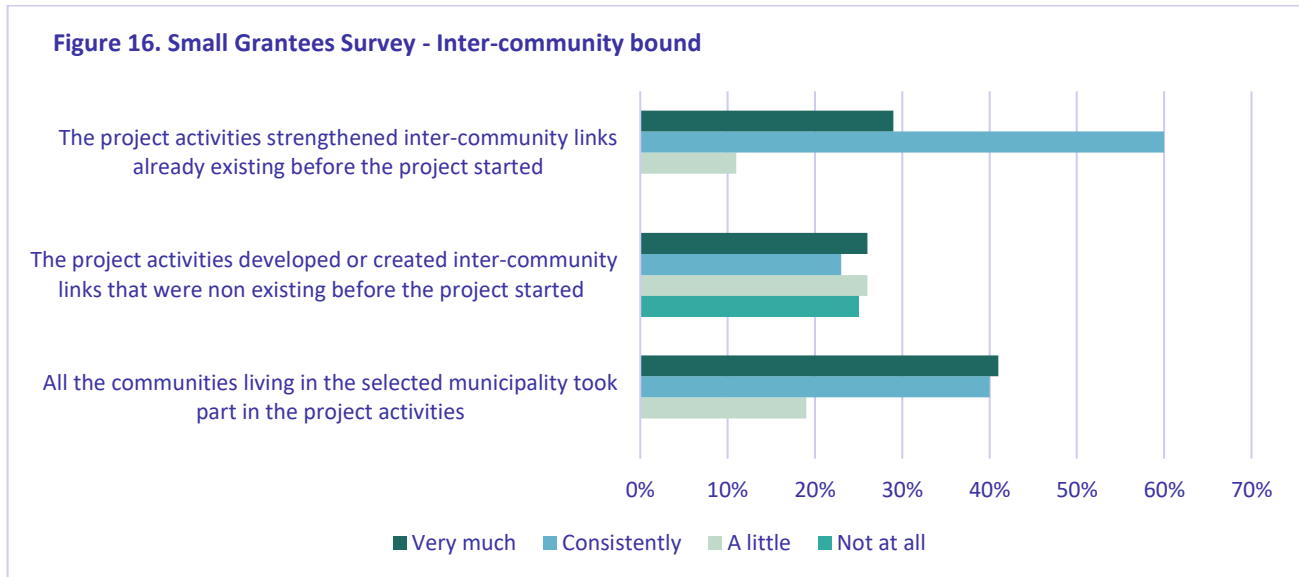
According to the survey's results, the grantees' projects have seen a massive participation of both the direct beneficiaries of the actions and the different communities residing in the municipality. In the planning phase, a wide range of social actors have been consulted, and the natural decline generally recordable during the implementation period has been rather contained in this project.



Regarding networking and cooperation, many of the proposed projects had to partially reshape in course of action, and the active co-operation between Mentoring Organizations and local CSOs seems to have been a crucial asset in fruitfully complete the project implementation (except in specific and localized cases when the above-mentioned cooperation was plainly unsuccessful). Quite controversial are the data about further inter-community collaborations sired by the project: more than half the respondents reported that spin-off collaborations have



been generated by the project, but almost 40% recorded very little outputs of this kind. Finally, with regard to the inter-community bonds expected as one of the main project outcome, it has been widely confirmed that the small grants scheme had a propulsive effect in strengthening already existing inter-community links. However, given the substantial balance of opposite opinions recorded by the Survey on this topic, it's not possible to say how much the component contributed to create or nourish new inter-community links.



Sustainability

The best element of monitorable sustainability provided by this project component was the project management and administration skill set transferred by COSV Team MK during the two trainings on that topic (see page 27). In order to assess the frequency of use of the acquired Project Cycle Management tools in post-training project applications, a Questionnaire has been sent to the participating local CSOs.

Although the collected data are not sufficient to have statistical relevance (only 4 local CSOs on 14 duly fulfilled and sent back the Questionnaire), the selected sample reported to have used the gained skills, template and procedures to apply to 3 new calls for proposals (50%), 1 new call for proposal (25%) or no call for proposals (25%) since the implementation of the Scheme. Moreover, according to the beneficiaries the most useful tools provided by the training have been the administrative ones (templates for budgeting and financial reporting), followed by a project management's classic: the chronogram.

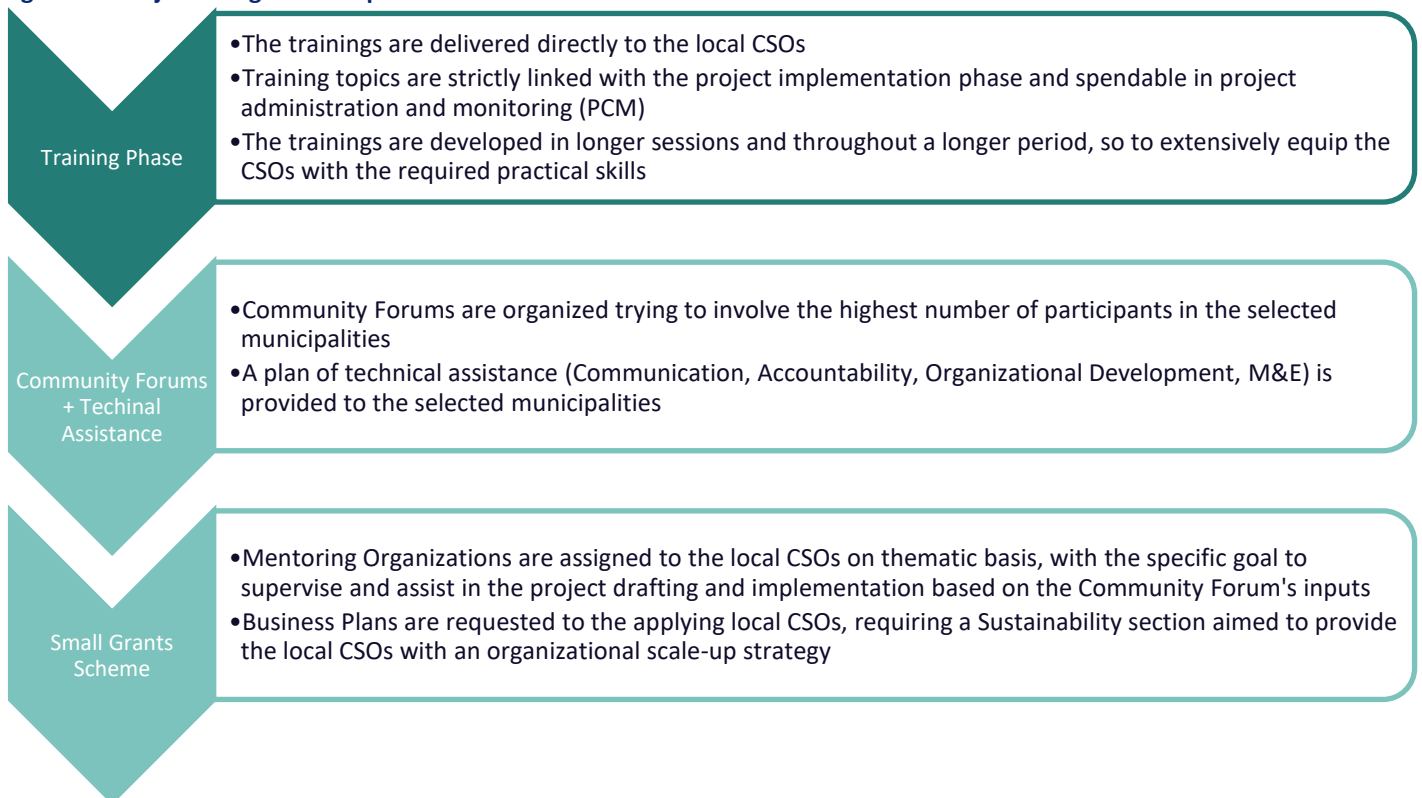
Conclusions & Recommendations

The evaluated project started with an impressive potential of change, given the wide involvement of an extended range of stakeholders (including local institutions) and to the phased approach used in order to build up a progressive path towards mutually beneficial inter-community actions. As a consequence, the project also carried within a high degree of complexity, and it encountered several structural problems partially impeding to fully unleash the mentioned potential.

In spite of that, the project activities accounted for an admirable level of **Efficiency**, reporting a comparatively high number and quality of outputs for the submitted inputs.

In terms of **Effectiveness**, a relevant impediment to a comprehensive effectiveness evaluation has been the consistent gap of monitoring tools able to provide reliable vertical and horizontal logic (between activities and results and between activities/results and their specific key indicators). The present Evaluation's framework represents a tentative to capitalize on the collectable data, but benefitting of no existing instruments to properly minimize the usual performance bias or to undertake a counterfactual analysis. Consequently, what has been concretely assessed is the conspicuous potential of effectiveness expressed by specific project components (particularly the Community Forums associated to the Small Grants Scheme), which might suggest a different design to enhance the overall project effectiveness (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Project Design with improved Effectiveness



The project's **Relevance** has been proven by several indicators, and it's important to stress once again that the planned actions are directly responding to some of the most urgent and at the same time more important appraised needs of the Country.

Figure 17 also shows few important features improving the **Sustainability** of the project, which appeared to be the weakest scoring evaluation criteria. This is partially due to the nature of the intervention itself, which could still be subject to important refinements.

In response to this, the Evaluator together with the COSV Team MK and in accordance with the data analyzed in the present Evaluation, designed three tabs listing the more important Lessons Learnt and relative Good Practices divided per Component, which hope to be helpful guidelines to enhance the actual impact of future similar programs.

Capacity Building of CSOs and Municipalities

Lessons Learnt

Lack of continuity/Alternance of the Participants to the Capacity Building Trainings - mostly due to non permanent contracts in the municipalities and lack of specific person assigned by the municipality to the project

Lack of post-capacity building training follow up within the municipalities - no established mechanisms of info sharing are applied and often no coordinator is appointed to the follow up

Lack of motivation to keep implementing the acquired good practices - because no possibility to be engaged in future activities is forecasted, as well as no compulsory mechanism to follow up with local CSOs

Absence of M&E tools to evaluate the capacity building trainings - the only feedbacks coming from personal observations of the trainers

Good Practices

Highlight the importance of selecting a project-assigned officer to participating municipalities and local partners - possibly from the sections including officers with permanent contracts (i.e. Admin, in the municipalities)

Suggest and support municipalities in developing info-sharing paths aimed to extend the acquired knowledge to other civil servants (option: ToT)

Explore the possibility to equip the civil servants participants with skills they can use as private consultants once ending the public duty - increasing motivation to participate

Develop and implement clear and reliable M&E tools

Municipal Bodies and Community Forums

Lessons Learnt

Lack of motivation in the local community to participate to the forums - due to lack of trust in institutional responsiveness, generated by past experiences

Poor awareness among the communities of the tools to be used to stimulate municipalities' interaction - due to little or no promotion of tools and outreach opportunities

Lack of institutional communication and interaction channels provided by the municipality - affecting responsiveness capacity

Time-consuming and not captivating methodology of consequential interpretation - slowing the interaction, the methodology becomes counter-effective

Good Practices

Strengthen the project visibility so to transform it into a public tool to be used by the municipality as a participatory instrument with electoral potential

Forecast specific instruments targeting the local communities and aimed to provide an overview on available strategies and channels

Foster the capability of the municipality to create a periodical and reliable channel of communication with the local community

Assess the possibility to adopt single language-forums avoiding consequential interpretation

Small Grants Scheme

Lessons Learnt

Lack of financial management and administration skills among local CSOs - leading to frequent delays and lack of compliance.

Good Practices

Set up and put in place a better evaluation greed including previous testing to double-check the possible grantees financial and admin capacities

Absence of structured procedures in the local CSOs - failing to perform a timely monitoring of the micro projects implementation

Trainings not practical enough - or too complicated for the starting level of the grantees organizations

Incomplete due diligence check during the first round selection procedure - the grantees evaluation didn't take into consideration track records and internal feedback

Support the grantees in developing, together with the project proposal, a simple yet reliable system of project implementation monitoring framework

Apply the training curricula to the needs of the possible grantees organization, based on the info previously collected in Evaluations or Need Assessment

Forecast a basic due diligence check on the grantees local CSOs focusing on track records and external feedbacks