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LEARNING FROM LOCAL WORKS PROGRAM APPROACHES IN SERBIA

Summary of the evaluation of capacity building and citizen engagement approaches used by three USAID/Serbia Local Works activities

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
ABOUT LOCAL WORKS ACTIVITIES IN SERBIA	4
ANALYSIS	6
EQ 1:What capacity development approaches have been most effective in improving the performance of supported organizations and initiatives and why?	6
EQ 2:What citizen engagement approaches were used by supported organizations and what initiatives have been most effective and why?	8
EQ3:What citizen engagement approaches used by supported organizations and initiatives have been least effective and why?	11
EQ4:What specific development outcomes have Local Works activities and capacity development approaches achieved?	12
EQ5: How do supported organizations and initiatives see to it that citizen mobilization lasts beyond the life of Local Works activities? What is the likelihood that their performance improvement and citizen mobilization will continue or scale up in the future?	13
RECOMMENDATIONS	14
ANNEX: METHODOLOGY	15

INTRODUCTION

USAID Local Works Program in Serbia was created to drive innovation and experimentation in locally-led development in partnership with local civil society organizations, through different yet complementary activities. These activities provided tailored capacity-building and community engagement support to over 200 formal and informal groups of citizens across the country. They supported citizens attempting to improve the local communities to drive the changes within their operating environment.

This report summarizes the principal findings of an evaluation¹ of the effects and viability of the applied capacity-building approaches and citizen engagement efforts used by supported activities. The evaluation focused on producing lessons learned that could be applicable in similar contexts and with similar programs. The evaluation assessed: the effectiveness of the capacity development approaches (EQ1), successful citizen engagement approaches (EQ2), less successful citizen engagement approaches (EQ3), capacity development and citizen engagement outcomes (EQ4), and the future of locally-led initiatives (EQ5).

The activities under the Local Works Program in Serbia facilitated a bottom-up change by strengthening new active groups and individuals within civil society in Serbia through an agile support system that gave groups what they needed when they needed it. This developed synergy and stronger ties between citizens and civil society organizations as it was based on a more inclusive citizens' approach of "action with" and "action by" the citizens. Ultimately, it promoted the support of activism and the development of new segments of civil society that are community-led, authentic, and instilled with the potential to make social changes.

¹ The evaluation study was conducted by the Foundation for the Advancement of Economics (FREN), and this report is a summary of that study.

ABOUT LOCAL WORKS ACTIVITIES IN SERBIA

USAID launched the **Local Works program in Serbia** to drive innovation and experimentation in locally-led development in partnership with implementing partners, through different yet complementary activities.² These activities included Strategic Advocacy Approaches, Civic Action for Accountability, and Local Engagement and Asset Development, that were subject to the evaluation study presented here. Activities provided tailored capacity-building and community engagement support to over 200 formal and informal groups of citizens across the country. They supported citizens attempting to improve the local communities to drive the changes within their operating environment.

Strategic Advocacy Approaches Activity targets the key mapped obstacles to civil society organizations (CSOs) influence on policy change and democratic community development in Serbia. This activity: a) improves the capacities of CSOs to strategically implement advocacy initiatives and to improve their communication skills and overall outreach of their activities; and b) turns capacity building into practice through advocacy actions using the "learning by doing" principle, rooted in new advocacy and citizens engagement approaches, with constituent feedback loops incorporated in the learning process to adapt advocacy planning. The activity provides an innovative environment for continuous mentorship and assistance in key aspects of the advocacy process. Finally, the activity contributes to the improvement of the enabling environment for CSOs' participation in policy development and public decision-making. The activity is implemented by Belgrade Open School (BOS), during November 2018 - May 2023. The activity supported 53 grantees as of the date of the assessment.

Civic Action for Accountability Activity is built on the notion that democratic government is accountable to citizens and that sustainable democratic change can be achieved if citizen demand for accountability is cultivated. The activity introduces an innovative, bottom-up approach to tackling corruption and accountability gaps through the establishment of a people-powered model of change, where citizens have the courage and support to engage and address issues they care about. It leverages the existing initiatives to channel and grow the potential and energy occurring at the local level to the point where citizens' voice is impossible to ignore. By identifying and bringing success stories and small victories to the center of public attention, this activity shifts the narrative from unmanageable problems to optimistic messages showing that changes are possible. This leads to substantial and long-term democratic change, where citizens are active in holding the government accountable, and where government leaders respond to priorities identified by citizens.

² Local Works Program in Serbia supported six implementing partners/activities; this evaluation is focusing on three of those whose primary focus was on building capacities of local actors to engage with their communities.

The activity was implemented by Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA), during April 2018 - April 2022. The activity supported 61 grantees as of the date of the assessment.

Local Engagement and Asset Development Activity approach is based on the need to develop synergy and strong ties between citizens and CSOs. CSOs in Serbia are implementing "actions for" the people. Such an approach is not inclusive and does not allow citizen participation, but it rather imposes the CSOs worldview. This activity offers a different approach. It supports authentic citizen initiatives throughout Serbia, primarily actions that show potential for community mobilization, led by local activists using local expertise and competencies. With the development of a mini system that quickly identifies and supports new initiatives all over Serbia, the activity connects these new initiatives and activists with existing CSOs and key stakeholders in their regions. The goal is to create an atmosphere where civic initiatives are valued and supported in Serbia. The activity was implemented by the National Coalition for Decentralization (NCD) in the period June 2018 - June 2022. The activity supported 106 grantees as of the date of the assessment.

ANALYSIS

EQ 1: WHAT CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES HAVE BEEN MOST EFFECTIVE IN IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF SUPPORTED ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES AND WHY?

Rapid support, quick small cash support, was very helpful for smaller and newly established local initiatives that were working under time pressure. Carefully targeted rapid support enabled grantees to quickly act and mobilize their communities in joint action, focusing on implementation, while leaving administration to the USAID IP. With the rapid support grantees were able to cover costs such as printing promotional materials, renting spaces for events, and organizing public gatherings, among others. Provided support was limited to constructive mobilization of the community and did not include support for organization of protests.

Grant support, a more complex program of financial and technical support, was helpful for grantees engaged in multiple initiatives or longer-term initiatives. While grant support was provided by the three implementing partners using somewhat different models, grantees found utility in group training, individual mentoring, media support, legal support, annual awards, and an online knowledge portal.

Group training helped build organizational and individual capacities. Networking and knowledge-transfer platforms were especially useful for smaller and newer organizations. Tailor-made training that targeted the specific needs of their grantees was both more useful and less burdensome for the grantees than general organization-management-capacity training. Organizations with multiple years of experience did not find group training as useful for learning. However, all grantees that participated in the group training, regardless of their size or experience, acknowledged group training as an important opportunity for networking and knowledge transfer, even when those courses were delivered online due to COVID-19. Some organizations used the training sessions as an opportunity to initiate new partnerships or create support networks to aid their advocacy efforts and plans.

Individual mentoring offered an opportunity for the grantees to gain specific support to meet their self-mapped needs. Most individual mentoring sessions focused on project management, advocacy, and communications, which were the matters participants most struggled with. Individual mentoring was provided either directly by the implementing partners or by external experts in cases with specific needs. However, as some grantees did not recognize their own needs for capacity development, some grantees were underserved by mentoring.

Media support allowed grantees, especially smaller organizations based outside of the Serbian capital, to gain visibility and raise awareness on the advocated matters. Media support included a range of public and media communication capacity-building exercises

and facilitating access to media outlets. Implementing partners offered support to grantees in the form of expert consultants, public relations advisory services, preparing and distributing materials, training, and mentoring. Grantees especially appreciated the support in planning, creating, and implementing communications campaigns as well as facilitation of access to media with broad coverage, which helped them become more recognized and more respected. They were able to present their activities, call citizens to engage, and reach target audiences such as public institutions.

Legal support, which included counseling and representation, was important for grantees that worked on sensitive topics, as their work was often legally challenged. Legal counseling focused on supporting grantees in understanding the rule of law and policy framework around the topics they advocated for, but also on general regulations regarding work, activism, program implementation, and legal actions. Legal support was also deemed important as most of the grantees were recently established informal activist groups with intensive public advocacy approaches over environmental issues, natural resources, and matters of public interest. Regardless of the topic, or the strength of their arguments, these grantees benefitted from legal support, both in planning and revising aspects of their activism, as none had any legal background nor the funds to pay for such assistance.

Annual Advocacy Awards were empowering to recipients and generally benefited civic engagement, by increasing its public visibility as a societal value. The awards were established by implementing partners to recognize successful initiatives and the individuals behind them. Some of the awards were focused on specific areas, such as environmental or cultural activism, while others acknowledged the most prominent activists regardless of the topic.

An online knowledge portal with various content and networking opportunities was a useful resource for new and small initiatives that needed a good starting point. The online knowledge portal offers activist tools, resources, features successful stories, and provides interactive content such as maps, blogs, and an activist contact center. It also provides an open platform for initiatives to pitch their ideas and receive support for the implementation.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Networking which took place generated new opportunities, especially for new and/or small initiatives, but also highlighted the need for a more structured and holistic approach for this type of support. Half of the networking opportunities utilized by grantees were not planned or happened ad hoc through other supportive models, rather than as planned or modeled networking. Also, apart from networking among grantees, there were not a lot of networking opportunities across sectors, with donors, the private sector, public institutions, and media, which all could play an important part in grantees' initiatives. Lastly, neither of the supported models of networking focused in-depth on the utilization of those networks and the different advantages of such resources.

Capacity development support without financial support has limits in application and utilization by grantees due to commitments to, at the same time, implement programs, and obtain new skills, knowledge, or affiliations. Some of the grantees noted that short timelines and limited funding were quite restrictive and that they were struggling to achieve expected capacity building results and have the programmatic impact they envisioned. Capacity improvements often require various resources including time, finances, premises, staff, that new and small initiatives lack.

EQ 2: WHAT CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES WERE USED BY SUPPORTED ORGANIZATIONS AND WHAT INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN MOST EFFECTIVE AND WHY?

Three factors influenced the success of citizen engagement approaches: (i) who led the engagement, (ii) what was the main topic addressed, and (iii) where the engagement took place. Initiatives led by new groups were generally viewed more positively. Older organizations were often perceived as bureaucratic, elitist, unimaginative, and disconnected from citizens. Without a consistent value system or focus, they were also often perceived as overly conceptual and detached, rather than issue-driven. Alternatively, the initiatives of new groups and organizations were perceived as proactive, highly responsive, well-grounded in the community, and with a clear value system and focus.

Engagement around topics with low conflict potential proved to have overall better chances of motivating the desired audience and achieving desired outcomes. Initiatives focused on urgent or critical topics also yielded more engagement, regardless of the outcome. Lastly, engagement was more successful in some geographical locations than others. This appears to be related to the specific dynamics, relationships, micro-economies, politics, and cultures of individual communities.

The main topics that generated citizen engagement were related to human rights, local community development, and the environment. Human rights initiatives focused on children's rights to education, and information, women's rights to employment, LGBTQI+ rights with a focus on employment and labor market position, and Roma minority rights including improvement of living conditions, among others. Local community development included initiatives focused on citizen participation, rural development, entrepreneurship, animal rescue and care, activism in art and culture, use of public spaces, community development, ecology, and funding.

Environmental initiatives were focused on the rising investor-driven³ urbanism which often opposes public interest, (ab)use of natural resources, cutting of forests, air pollution,

³ Investor driven urbanism is a form of spatial development where the investors and public institutions are making decisions regarding municipal development without much or any input from the citizens. It is driven by private gain, and often results in privatization of urban spaces and disregarding of the public interests.

water pollution and devastation, adoption of important plans and strategies that may have environmental consequences, and roles and responsibilities of public institutions, oversight, and governance.

Many of the initiatives focused on these important, but sometimes sensitive topics, which created challenges for citizen engagement, who were either scared, uninterested, or apathetic. Perceived conflict or "polarization" potential of certain topics generated fear among those who might engage in advocacy efforts. On the other hand, the perceived lack of direct connection of the topic with their everyday lives, made prioritizing topics related to abstract government issues difficult, as people tended to focus their interest on matters that are personal, current, and pressing. Lastly, there was a non-negligible group that did not believe change of any kind is possible and refused to engage, not because of their values, beliefs, fears, or personal sentiment, but purely due to personal apathy.

One prominent challenge that many citizen engagement initiatives encountered, regardless of the topic, was the lack of youth engagement. In the majority of local initiatives, youth were not included; they were not consulted, they were not informed, and were not educated on the topics. Youth from rural areas were the most challenging group to reach, as they tend to associate citizen engagement with volunteering and/or environmental issues, which they do not see as being in their immediate interest. They also have specific interests that are often not supported by the initiatives, such as alternative culture, animal wellbeing, or specific professional development.

Supported organizations engaged women as part of their approaches but encountered challenges. Women were observed in both leadership and support roles. They were present across topics and regions. However, their public visibility remained lower overall, with male activists being predominantly present in the media as well as more easily accepted by local populations, especially in rural areas. Thus, in rural areas, women were not as active as men, except when it came to women-specific topics such as women's entrepreneurship. There are serious demographic and gender-related stereotypes constraining women's activism overall, which women at the face-front of local initiatives contest every day.

Several principles of effective citizen engagement and mobilization were identified:

1. Trust is a baseline. The primary prerequisite of mobilization is building trust, which requires time and consistent personalized communication, not just in terms of content and messaging, but also in terms of having a consistent group of people from organizations engaged in the communication.
2. Adjustment of communication channels to target different groups and local contexts. For effective citizen mobilization, it is wise to integrate different approaches and communication channels as it helps create constituencies across different groups. This is especially important for the engagement of underserved groups such as youth, women, LGBTQI+, ethnic or religious minorities, and people in rural areas.

3. The utilization of different media platforms is key to building larger constituencies. Depending on the targeted audience demographic, including age, place of living, and education, an initiative may choose to use social networks, radio, or television. While many of the initiatives lean toward social networks as an easily accessible, fast, and relatively inexpensive medium for communication, TV channels, especially those with national coverage, play an important role in promoting and affirming local initiatives.

4. Clear, understandable, and informative messaging is key. Some topics are too abstract or complex and require well-thought-out messaging or storytelling to capture citizen attention. Storytelling can be used to entertain, inform, or educate. It is about sharing information creatively and memorably, developing empathy, persuading, and motivating people to take action.

5. Promoting solutions and success stories demonstrates that engagement works and builds a culture of optimism. Showcasing activists' experiences, small victories, and the inclusion of local heroes, influencers, or celebrities, can help to sustain momentum and demonstrate the positive outcomes of citizen engagement as a counterpoint to typical un motivating narratives that the status quo is inexorable.

6. Creativity, authenticity, and active participation engage more people. Initiatives that offer something "different" (i.e., organize authentic events with original content, and events that bring citizens together not just as an audience, but as active participants) can stand out and attract more citizens than traditional approaches.

7. Partnership models that include different stakeholders create stronger bonds and outlooks for success. Building partnerships with different stakeholders, such as businesses, government institutions, and other civic initiatives, can be used to leverage different resources, knowledge, and capacities and provide leverage for greater outcomes. Involvement of relevant public institutions in the early stages of identifying a problem and developing a solution is, in some cases, key to the institutions' positioning.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Engaged citizens and local activists are both engaged in social issues, but it is important to remember that they are typically different demographics with different motivations. Organizations need to be mindful of this in order to strategize on how best to tailor their approaches to engage both demographics successfully.

Typical local activists that lead local initiatives are middle aged and have children. They are experienced in local activism (through participation in civil society, unions, or political parties), have a strong institutional memory or experience in the civic resistance of the late 1990s, and attended university. They are self-employed or work in a private company and have significant international experience. Local activists are also environmentally

aware, emphatic, and have a strong commitment to their values, ethics, and principles. There is an equal chance that they are male or female.

Engaged citizens are predominantly elderly people (70+) with various professional and life experiences, but a common concern – the environment they are leaving to their families, especially their grandchildren. These citizens are ready to support ideas but look to others to lead the way. Citizens like clear, structured, and articulated communication based on facts and concrete solutions. They like to be informed, consulted, and involved. Citizens are ready to provide continuous support, but small victories are needed to keep them engaged. Quick wins are important for maintaining public spirit and motivation. They lack knowledge and are not aware that participation in some activities may have some consequences. Therefore, citizen involvement demands both timely information and education.

EQ3: WHAT CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES USED BY SUPPORTED ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN LEAST EFFECTIVE AND WHY?

The least effective approaches for citizen engagement are those which treat citizens as objects rather than subjects of change. These are the approaches that do not share the ownership with the citizen, that lead the process instead of co-creating, and that do not come back to the citizens once their participation finishes. Usually, such initiatives invite citizens to provide feedback on their ideas or to give confirmation of validation to the ideas in different forms such as public hearings, meetings, surveys, and petitions. They also rely on general topics rather than those which would be of local interest or relevant, do not offer broader context to the matter, and limit solution discussions to targeted audiences.

“Traditional” approaches used by established civil society organizations are often too passive, abstract, or confusing for citizens, thus lacking the potential to interest and engage them. “Passive” initiatives led by established civil society organizations focus on research and reporting, lack participative planning and monitoring, and offer limited opportunities for meaningful citizen engagement. Advocating for public measures or policies with weak citizen engagement efforts, no follow-up actions such as monitoring and evaluating, and no media response, fail to demonstrate to citizens the value of advocacy and engagement or create a snowball effect. Their products, although a valuable form of intellectual capital, most often remain in the organization's archive.

Initiatives or organizations that cover multiple diverse topics face challenges in engaging citizens because they can lack a coherent unifying brand and reputation that attracts citizens or fosters a sense of trust. Their practices are seen as a "dispersion of values" led by the donor community, projects, or trends, rather than rooted in steadfast organizational ideals and principles. It is difficult for citizens to stay abreast of all the subjects and actions

of such organizations and, in certain instances, if a citizen takes issue with one aspect of an organization's missions, they will refrain from engaging with the organization on another cause that they might otherwise support. In sum, this hinders an organization's ability to build a sense of community and create trust, a situation that currently faces some established civil society organizations.

EQ4 – WHAT SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES HAVE LOCAL WORKS ACTIVITIES AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES ACHIEVED?

All three activities demonstrated the potential of locally-led initiatives for making social changes by engaging citizens and generating social capital. All three activities facilitate the change with a bottom-up approach by strengthening new active groups and individuals through an agile support system that gave initiatives and activists what they needed when they needed it. This approach developed a synergy and strong ties between citizens and the initiatives by implementing more inclusive methods of "action with" and "action by" citizens, thus generating citizen power, but also sharing the sense of accountability. This promoted the support of activism among citizens and the development of new segments of civil society that are community-led and authentic and that have the potential to make changes innovatively, mobilize local resources and experts, and generate social capital as a strategic resource.

Supported activists and initiatives increased the demand for change and contributed to the development of a citizen engagement culture in Serbia. Celebration of small victories helped the process of encouraging the demand, as it demonstrated the possibilities and power of citizen engagement, which in settings where victories do not come often, is crucial for citizens' attention and retention. Almost 50 percent of local initiatives were able to shed light on a local issue owing to a strong backup of citizens and other agents of change. Before initiatives emerged and grew, citizens were not as active in participation, be it with public institutions, civil society organizations, or others.

Most outputs and outcomes achieved by the supported initiatives are the best demonstration of the capacity development achievement, and they will continue to exist and serve as a motivation and a testimony that citizen mobilization can bring to fruition. Many initiatives raised awareness on different topics in culture, ecology, urban planning, human rights, and vulnerable groups. They succeeded in motivating people and encouraging the creation of new groups due to their success stories. They provided new community spaces as cultural or community centers that became a base for civic engagement and new activist groups. The local assemblies adopted different action plans of policies. Some public spaces were persevered or created as parks, playgrounds, and green areas in the cities. Vulnerable groups such as people living in rural areas, women, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQI were also supported and encouraged.

EQ5 – HOW DO SUPPORTED ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES SEE TO IT THAT CITIZEN MOBILIZATION LASTS BEYOND THE LIFE OF LOCAL WORKS ACTIVITIES? WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THEIR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT AND CITIZEN MOBILIZATION WILL CONTINUE OR SCALE UP IN THE FUTURE?

The support provided to new and emerging initiatives that were focused on building their capacities and resilience ensured that these initiatives lasted beyond the life of the activities. The support included the building of operational capacities, project management, and strategic development, to ensure initiatives are adept to operationalize their activities. Initiatives were also trained in financial resource diversification, to avoid dependency on a single source or type of source. Most initiatives are now supported by a variety of sources including donor communities, citizens, and the private sector making them more resilient but also more flexible in resource allocation. Lastly, the initiatives were supported with strategic communication and citizen mobilization techniques, as the core aspect of their work. This all led to many of the local initiatives transforming from informal to formal, enabling them to hone the newly acquired skills and knowledge.

Supported initiatives developed their local networks that serve as hubs for other initiatives and offer a system of support and knowledge that will ensure citizen mobilization beyond the life of a single initiative or activity. In future programming, such hub-type organizations may be considered potential brokers on the local level. These would be engaged in the implementation of developed "models of change" based on citizen engagement by mobilizing other groups and initiatives in their communities.

The support provided to civil society organizations that are active for years, enabled them to adapt their approaches to new trends and citizen needs, stay relevant and reinforce their constituency. The support included helping organizations in developing stronger capacities for public advocacy, including exploring new ways of communication with the public, new approaches to engaging stakeholders, or creating pressure on the supply side. This also helped them gauge more interest and commitment to the demand side, something that was not organic for their previous approach.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Even though local initiatives and smaller organizations managed to grow and turn into focal points for disseminating support to locally-led activism, they are still very fragile and at a crossroads with equal chances of success and failure. They are constantly exposed to numerous internal and external constraints out of their control, and their perseverance often depends on their personal and collective resilience and strength. Even when their capacities are in place, non-enforcing or ad-hoc financial and technical support is often a breaking point for them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Promote versatile organizational models in institutional development. The promotion of civil society organization models that are more agile without rigid hierarchies and overwhelming bureaucracy and that support innovation, such as the network model, is of utmost importance for grassroots initiatives. Not all initiatives aim to grow into large-scale civil society organizations, hence they need structures that are at the same time operational and non-burdensome.

Programs, which offer continuous and direct support for local initiatives that are responsive to their specific needs, enhance grassroots activism and increase resilience. These programs can include provision of support in areas such as legal assistance, media outreach and communication, financial management, capacity building, and networking, one-to-one mentoring, learning platform development or expansion, and other types of technical and financial support.

Decentralization of civic programs and the development of “local hubs of change” will generate more civic initiatives and citizen engagement. This approach will bring more intensive development of new grassroots initiatives in underdeveloped municipalities and rural areas, attain the attention of the citizens across the country, and it may reestablish trust and partnership within the civil society sector overall.

Encourage community-mobilizing strategies adjusted to the specific local environments and target groups to enhance citizen engagement within diverse local communities. These can include the integration of different mechanisms and communication channels, consistent communication with the community, the adaptation of the message and the tone, branding, and network building, among others.

Give special attention to working with youth. Youth-initiated or related initiatives have been the lowest in numbers, and youth has been the hardest community to mobilize, for which special attention to engaging them is needed. Promoting the benefits of participatory democracy both to the youth and responsible institutions should be done through the creation of specific campaigns and channels of communication, promotions, and peer-to-peer efforts that would speak to the audience and motivate them to engage.

Intensify coordination within the donor community. Many donors are interested in supporting grassroots activism and locally led initiatives because of their authenticity, motivation, and capacity to engage citizens. To ensure the full utility of donors' interests and contributions, the donor community should intensify coordination to a) harmonize efforts of donors and implementing partners to avoid overlapping and enhance integrated support and b) increase sectoral learning and sharing.

ANNEX: METHODOLOGY

The evaluation approach was based on standard international practices in project evaluation relying on the OECD DAC Evaluation Quality Standards⁴ and Outcome Harvesting/ Mapping principles. The evaluation was focused on ensuring a good understanding of the context in which the Activities are being implemented. Also, the highest possible degree of integrity was secured through a transparent methodology and triangulation of data free from any conflicts of interest and bias, and a participatory approach involving consultations with different groups of stakeholders was used throughout the evaluation process. In addition, appropriate testing was performed to ensure the validity of the evidence gathered by the evaluation. Finally, the evaluation also focused on utility to ensure that all communication relating to the evaluation is characterized by clarity, brevity, and the avoidance of unnecessary technical language.

The main sources for gathering necessary information essential to answer the evaluation questions were a desk study review of relevant organizational and project documentation, in-depth interviews, focus groups with key informants (KIs), and a validation panel with experts.

A desk study was based on the project documentation of general importance for the evaluation and of specific interest for the evaluation. During the evaluation, especially before and after KIs and FGs, the evaluators would conduct an additional search to become better informed and verify the data (conduct data triangulation) about the initiatives and stakeholders they talked to.

In-depth interviews, meetings, focus groups and a panel were organized with the following groups of respondents: representatives of implementing partners; representatives of implementing partners activity partners; selected formal and informal organizations, groups, and initiatives; relevant state and non-state stakeholders engaged with the activities under the Local Works Program; donors engaged in the sector and familiar with the work of the implementing partners; selected informal groups, initiatives, and activists; local community representatives; local initiatives that are not beneficiaries of the activities under the Local Works Program; substantiators.

The evaluation managed to reach approximately 50 local geographic communities, more than 300 people, over 100 initiatives, 15 stakeholders, 8 donors, and 8 experts.

The evaluation was conducted by the Foundation for the Advancement of the Economics (FREN) during spring and summer 2022.

⁴ For more please see: <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264083905-en.pdf?expires=1659774507&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=5599F52C04DDCB94507B0A15B558CA39>

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