VOX POPULI AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

"3D Project: Development Despite Disruption.
Resilient civil society in a time of COVID-19 and beyond"

ANALYTICAL BRIEF BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The Program had been implemented by East Europe Foundation with the financial support of the European Union from October 2020 to May 2022.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER · East Europe Foundation · 3D PROJECT: DEVELOPMENT DESPITE DISRUPTION

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

KIIs – Key informant interviews

NGO/CSO – Non-governmental organization/Civil society organization

CTI – Civil Tech Instruments

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Program – «3D Project: Development Despite Disruption. Resilient civil society in a time of COVID-19 and beyond»

EEF – International Charitable Organization "East Europe Foundation"

ABOUT PROGRAM

Program «3D Project: Development Despite Disruption. Resilient civil society in a time of COVID-19 and beyond» (further - Program) was implemented by EEF with the financial support of the European Union between October 2020 and May 2022.

The Program aimed to help NGOs learn about, develop and implement civic tech tools to adapt to the new realities of the pandemic and coronavirus constraints, simplify the risks of changing the format of activities and help address the pressing issues facing NGOs at the local and national levels.

The Program also aimed to strengthen the EEF's efforts to strengthen civil society, including the institutional capacity of the Foundation itself.

The target audience of the Program is the representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-related initiatives as well as the EEF's staff involved in financial management, communication, and project management.

GOAL AND DESIGN OF EVALUATION

The external evaluation of the Program was conducted by the sociological company Vox Populi Agency in the period between April and May 2022.

The purpose of the assessment was to determine the level of implementation of the Program on the following indicators:
- relevance,
- sustainability,
- coherence (with other activities of EEF and donor organizations),
- efficiency,
- effectiveness,
- impact.

The evaluation criteria are the key ones for evaluating humanitarian and social impact projects developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Because of the hostilities in Ukraine caused by the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation in February 2022, the evaluation also was aimed to pay particular attention to how the results or the products of the Program could be quickly refocused on the urgent public needs related to the war.

The evaluation was carried out by quantitative and qualitative methods of sociological research, using the method of desk research (study of open sources and project documents provided by the staff of the Foundation).

EVALUATION RESULTS WITHIN THE KEY INDICATORS

Based on the results of the external evaluation of the Program's implementation, it could be stated that **all the planned activities have been implemented and the target groups have been achieved in all components**.

The Program had the following components:

- **Grant support** to organizations that have implemented projects in communities. Of the 20 grants, 9 digital tools (chatbots, online courses, portals) were developed, 1 of which did not work at the time of the study (business plan chatbot). The remaining grants were advocated for and promoted using existing digital tools among target audiences.
- As part of the **acceleration program**, new digital solutions/products have been developed aimed at improving interaction in communities or strengthening the interaction between government and the community. 6 digital products were developed.
- **The coaching program** helped to strengthen the leadership qualities and competencies of leaders of public organizations and develop skills in using these tools in their organizations.
- **Online courses** (on open data for NGOs and civil servants; on design thinking and innovation for NGOs) helped to increase the institutional capacity of NGOs.
- **The design thinking course** has become a leader in popularity among various training courses developed by the Foundation.
- Activities aimed at the **institutional development of EEF**, strengthened its institutional capacity.

RELEVANCE

During the implementation period (from October 2020 to May 2022) the Program was relevant and met the needs of NGOs in light of quarantine restrictions and changes in the format of work.

Thus, the majority of respondents from the Foundation's staff and NGOs said that they had a significant request to improve their knowledge and skills in the field of

digital technologies, support the development of e-democracy products and involve the public in decision-making. The Program has been such a unifying and supportive donor platform for them.

Most of the tools and products that have been created under the Program are intended primarily for use in peacetime. Thus, out of 20 developed products, only 5 do not work today or are not available due to hostilities on the territory of Ukraine. Other products - sites, chatbots, and platforms are functioning. However, one of the challenges in wartime is not only the functioning of these resources, but also the re-profiling and adaptation to the urgent needs of society in wartime - for example, the ability to help address social, humanitarian, or other issues related to public involvement.

The program provided for the implementation of innovative and, to some extent, not typical donor project activities and support for NGOs: for example, the coaching component and the acceleration program.

EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

According to all key informants, the tools developed under the grants and the acceleration program proved to be effective in establishing and improving communication within communities and with local authorities. More than half (56%) of the accelerator program participants who developed digital solutions believe that they are effective in improving dialogue both within communities and with the authorities. A significant proportion of respondents found it difficult to answer these questions (44% and 33%, respectively).

A similar view was expressed by grant program participants - the vast majority of those who indicated that their tool worked believed that it was effective in improving dialogue both within the community (86%) and with the government (93%).

• 93.75% of CSOs surveyed who improved their skills in applying innovative tools and knowledge in CSO operations
• 94.1% of CSOs surveyed who improved their skills in policy analysis, project management, fundraising and budgeting, communication, and advocacy
• 68.75% of CSOs surveyed who improved access to decision-making at the local level
• 82% of CSOs surveyed who increased their ability to perform quarantine activities effectively.

Participants of the Program - all components without exception - note that participation in the Program activities - training, grant program, acceleration component, and internal Projects (for the Fund's staff) was effective.

In particular, through the Program, participants gained knowledge and online tools of public influence, support for their leadership and management capacity, financial resources, and mentoring support for creating online or digital products.

According to key informants, thanks to the informational and educational component, the activities of the Program stimulated citizens to be interested and to use civic tech tools more actively. In this way, citizens could learn from various chatbots about the possibilities of influencing decision-making and then influence them using the tools of e-democracy.

According to interviews with key informants, the activities of the Program contributed to the organizational and institutional development of civil society in Ukraine. One of the most notable contributions to this development were the two popular courses "Open Data for NGOs and Civil Servants" and "Design-Thinking and Innovation for NGOs", which provided students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the public sector (for example, monitoring authorities activities).

Key informants unanimously believe that the Program has had a positive impact on the role of public initiatives aimed at implementing and promoting civic tech tools, which have become extremely relevant in a pandemic. Such tools provided citizens with the opportunity to remotely learn about the activities of the government, identify pressing problems and influence their decisions.

The coaching component allowed leaders to solve some problems in their activities or the activities of their NGOs. Thanks to the acquired knowledge and skills, they have the opportunity to practice coaching in their organizations.

The vast majority (82%) of respondents to the quantitative survey believe that the coaching program had a positive impact on the organizational and institutional development of their organization. Among the examples given by respondents: refinement of communication strategy; improving teamwork as a leader and an individual approach to working with team members; understanding how to build an organization's development strategy; the introduction of planning has increased the efficiency of the organization; change of relations in the team.

Participants in the grant program were assessed for organizational capacity, which according to one of the informants can make the organization more resilient to adverse events.

Also, due to this project, the Foundation itself was able to improve its own organizational and institutional development. Within the framework of the Program, various procedures were improved, various IT tools were purchased, and staff training was conducted.

SURVEY OF THE EEF's EMPLOYEES

▪ 92% of respondents are women. 68% were under the age of 39, the rest aged 40-59. If before the Russian invasion the absolute majority (88%, 22 out of 25 respondents) lived in Kyiv / oblast, then due to the invasion 52% (13 respondents) changed their place of residence at the time of the assessment (moving to the West of Ukraine or abroad);

▪ Respondents were asked to evaluate the experience of participating in courses in 4 different areas. In general, first of all, it is worth emphasizing that almost all respondents who participated in certain events, positively evaluate them. In particular, all or almost all participants of the events are satisfied with them, use the information received, note the improvement of relevant skills, and are ready to recommend acquaintances to participate in these events;

Participation in courses and their evaluation: summary information

n = 25 (the number of respondents who chose the appropriate answer is indicated in parentheses)

	Particip ated	Among those who participated:			
		% used a lot of knowledg e/ plan to use	% totally support or support that their skills had been improved	% liked a lot	Recomme ndation index
Activities on improvement of **communication skills** and knowledge	56% (14)	79% (11)	79% (11)	93% (13)	+78% (11)
Activities on improvement of the **project management skills**	100% (25)	48% (12)	68% (17)	72% (18)	+84% (21)
Activities on **knowledge management** system	92% (23)	61% (14)	65% (15)	57% (13)	+70% (18)
Activities on **financing and budgeting**	28% (7)	29% (2)	29% (2)	43% (3)	+58% (4)

▪ Differentiation actually takes place (apart from the level of participation) by how satisfied they are with a particular measure (ie the difference between "completely" or "very" and "rather"). The training sessions to improve communication skills are generally best appreciated by their participants. 56% (14 respondents) took part in these events. 93% of participants liked them very much. In addition, 79% use "a lot" of the obtained information   and the same number "completely" agree that they had improved the relevant knowledge and skills. Index of readiness to recommend these activities to acquaintances - + 78%;

▪ In conditionally second place – are the training sessions aimed at improvement of the project management skills. All 100% of respondents took part in them. 72% of participants liked these events "very much". 48% use "a

lot" of the received information, and 68% "completely" agree that their knowledge and skills on these issues have improved. Index of readiness to recommend these to acquaintances - + 84%;

▪ In conditionally third place - activities from the Knowledge Management System, which was attended by 92% (23 respondents). "Very much" liked by the 57%. At the same time, 61% say that they use "a lot" of information received, and 65% "completely" agree that participation in these activities has improved their knowledge and skills. Index of readiness to recommend these activities to acquaintances - + 70%;

▪ And in conditionally fourth place – the training sessions aimed at improvement of the Financial Management / Budgeting. They were attended by 28% or 7 respondents. Among the participants, 43% say that they liked the events "very much". 29% use "a lot" of the information received and as many "completely" agree that their knowledge/skills have improved. Index of readiness to recommend these activities to the acquaintances - + 58%.

SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE ON-LINE COURSES

▪ Among the respondents who filled out the questionnaire, all took a design thinking course and only 1 respondent took an open data course;

▪ 86% of listeners are women. 57% under the age of 39, and another 38% between the ages of 40-59.

▪ The majority of respondents (71%) did not move after February 24, 2022, and live in the same locality (15 out of 21 respondents). 29% (6 respondents) changed their place of residence. All respondents have some form of higher education, 86% have a completed higher education;

▪ 71% (15 out of 21 respondents) reported that they have at least 3 years of experience in public activities. 14% have experience of up to 3 years (3 respondents).

▪ Among the respondents who had the experience of public activity, the majority work in the field of youth work (69%). Other top areas are good governance and civil society (44%), assistance to IDPs, and refugees (38%), and local economic development (31%). Listeners represent different levels of civic activity - from the community level to the national level;

▪ Students of the online course on design thinking positively evaluate it and note the improvement of their knowledge and skills. 67% liked this course "very much" (another 33% liked it "rather").

▪ 38-52% "completely" agree that as a result of participating in the course their knowledge and skills on innovative tools in daily activities, communication with the public, application of design thinking, and work with the target audience of the project have improved (86-90% "soon" or "completely" note the improvement of knowledge and skills). Index of readiness to recommend a course to acquaintances - + 57%;

▪ Respondents mostly rated their Civic Tech skills at 4-5 - 62%, although only 24% of them rated their knowledge at 5. Another 24% rated their knowledge at 3, and another 14% - at 2.

▪ Only 1 respondent took an online course on open data. The open data course was very much liked by the respondents and some of the received information was used or is planned to be used. This respondent is ready to recommend the course to her acquaintances. Respondent assesses her knowledge and skills in advocacy for "4". At the same time, she fully agrees that this course has improved her knowledge and skills in the field of open data, policy analysis, and advocacy.

The Program has increased the use of innovative tools, including civic tech solutions, by civil society organizations and communities. Promotion, advocacy, and training activities within the various components of the Program enhanced the use of the implemented tools and solutions by target audiences (local authorities, civil society representatives, and ordinary residents).
Based on the statements of key informants, it can be concluded that the coaching component was the most effective and most successful component of the Program. This is because participation in it helped the leaders of public organizations to solve the problems that have accumulated in the NGOs' activities during the pandemic. And thanks to the completed program, participants can use the coaching approach in their organizations.

All respondents who participated in the coaching program said that they liked it. Also, 100% on the occasion will recommend it (scored 8-10, 64% put 10). The vast majority of participants (82%) have used a lot, and the rest (18%) have already used something or plan to use it. Almost all respondents (91%) received individual coaching consultations and find them very (82%) or rather (9%) useful.

Among the results of participation in the coaching program, respondents mentioned changes in their own style of team leadership and willingness to delegate more authority to colleagues, organizational development (for example, understanding how to build a strategy).

One of the informants mentioned the assessment of the organizational capacity of the participants of the grant program.All participants in the grant program who took part in the evaluation said that it was useful. 60% of those who passed the assessment used the Development Roadmap and the vast majority consider it useful. Also, all participants find it useful to assist the specialists of the 3D Project during the assessment of organizational capacity and development of the Development Roadmap. 93% of respondents will recommend such an exercise on occasion.

Among the results of participation in acceleration and grant programs, respondents mentioned an increase in the number of users of their tools, both at the level of individual users and the number of covered communities. Respondents expect an increase in the number of users, as well as an expansion of geographical coverage - reaching the national level.

COHERENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAM

The sustainability of the Program's results, as well as its coherence with the activities of other donor organizations, is, first of all, that the main achievement - knowledge of digital tools of public influence, communication, advocacy, good governance, etc. beneficiaries, will be able to adapt and to be applied within various priority types of activity, including taking into account the state of emergency. According to the study participants themselves, during martial law, the need for online tools not only did not decrease, but even became more important in some cases (for example, finding the necessary information about services for different categories of the population, receiving psychological support, finding housing, coordination of volunteer work, etc.).

In the near future, the participating organizations will need additional support to: refocus their work on urgent military or post-war needs. Special attention should be paid to the synergy between the components of the Program and between its content and other priorities of the Foundation, such as the development of e-democracy tools within the E-DEM platform.

The activities of this program have organically complemented another project of the Foundation, namely the E-DEM e-Democracy Platform. Key informants are confident that all the tools and solutions developed under the Program will continue to work and some of them will become more useful after the war. The main condition for their functioning is the end of the war and the restoration of access to the sources and data with which these tools worked.

The established training courses will continue to operate and are expected to be in demand by the public sector.

INFLUENCE OF THE WAR

▪ Due to the start of a full-scale war at the end of February this year, some components were not fully completed (activities involving group work in the office, public presentations) or tools were not fully developed / implemented under grants or an acceleration program.
▪ At the same time, the Foundation was able to direct the remaining funds to meet humanitarian needs relevant in wartime (for example, to help IDPs).
▪ Also in wartime and under restrictions on access to open data, the functionality of some products developed under the Program has decreased. However, it can be expected that these products will be in demand after the war.
▪ Several respondents stated that they were unable to implement the information campaign due to the start of a full-scale war. We can assume that in the case of a campaign using the tools would be able to attract more residents.
▪ According to the responses of key informants, a significant part of the functioning tools was adapted to wartime conditions.
▪ Of the 20 grants and projects that involved the development of digital solutions and/or products, 15 (chatbots, platforms, or websites) continue to operate successfully, which is relatively high in martial law and may be indicative of the fact

that more than half of the grantees were able to quickly reorient their work and continue to maintain the activity of their digital products.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON FURTHER ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT OF THE CIVIC TECH TOOLS TO THE INTERNATIONAL DONOR ORGANIZATIONS

It is likely thatin the near future, due to military challenges and resettlement of citizens, this format will not only not lose its relevance, but will also need further support from donors for its dissemination in various humanitarian fields. Thus, a systematic approach will be required in such areas as the continuation/coordination/support of volunteering, working with internally displaced persons in communities, and synchronization of requests, needs, and responses to these needs by the community.

- At the same time, the adaptation or introduction of new digital tools relevant to the needs of the war and post-war period, remote servicing will require additional study among non-governmental organizations.
- Priority for further donor support may be activities such as coaching support, grants for the development of electronic or digital services in communities, the provision of social services, and various types of support to non-governmental organizations, including online.
- In the context of hostilities on the territory of Ukraine, as well as with the end of the acute phase of the military conflict, it is necessary to use the established approaches to support non-governmental organizations, volunteers, and activists in using digital tools to optimize their activities.
- Special attention should be paid to supporting non-governmental organizations in maintaining and improving their institutional capacity, resuming their work, and supporting the psychological resources of non-governmental organizations in the postwar period.

TO THE IMPLEMENTER OF THE PROGRAM – EAST EUROPE FOUNDATION

- The results of the Program implementation in various areas demonstrate the combination of activities for the development of public organizations and the development of the Foundation`s capacity is successful. Further projects that provide training and institutional support to CSOs should include components from the organizational development of the Fundation itself - this has added value and in the long-run has a positive impact on further work with grantees and partners.
- Thanks to the established range of contacts with partners who already have digital products and technologies in their portfolio, EEF can identify areas for further "interventions" and initiatives of public organizations for the development of digital tools in the public sector.
- If resources are available, the opinion of grantees and Partners of the Program on modification of available products should be investigated taking into account the requirements of martial law, as well as the post-war period.

▪ Promote the results of this Program among the representatives of the donor community. Disseminate information about available online courses among CSO representatives.

▪ In the short term, the topic of "immediate response" or reshaping of one's work (emergency) will become an important area of support and development of organizations - this should be taken into account when planning further grant activities.

TO THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

▪ After the end of hostilities on the territory of Ukraine, review and adapt existing developed products (both completed and those that were not completed at the time of hostilities on the territory of Ukraine) to the public needs of the postwar period.

▪ Interact with international donor organizations to meet their needs in the areas of organizational support, mentoring, coaching, and psychological support to continue the activities of their organizations.

▪ Use existing knowledge about digital tools of public influence, and institutional and organizational capacity for the preparation of grant projects relevant after the end of the active phase of hostilities in Ukraine.