PROVISION FOR POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
DEMOCRACY FUND
Contract NO.PD:C0110/10

EVALUATION REPORT

UDF-UKR-09-336 ±Your Local Representative   , Strengthening Citizen
Participation in Ukraine

Date: 4 October 2013

Authors
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I. Executive Summary

(i) Project Data

Your Local Representative: Strengthening Citizen Participation in Ukraine project sought to enhance the capacities of Ukrainian NGOs and citizens to influence political processes by providing citizens with tools to monitor and evaluate the work of their elected officials and to advocate for needed change.

The project inputs were consistent with the delivery of the outputs but not with its intended outcomes. The outcomes were too ambitious for nine websites without activities or links to other programs in the sector, and for subgrants of under USD 15,000 each. EEF did manage the project itself in an efficient and professional manner, undertaking pre-grant award surveys and ensuring the monitoring and reporting aspects of the project were done. This project was based on a pilot done by EEF with its implementing partner, the Cherkasy CVU,

EEF did not use its other intended implementing partner, Internews Ukraine, stating that its overhead was too high.

generate the change expected by the project, and more links needed to be made for the use aspect of the information.

EEF had the institutional capacity and expertise required to manage a sensitive subgrant project such as this nationwide, but it ***needed an institutional partner to provide the programmatic vision and links*** for the results of the information collected. The subgrantees as well had the nonpartisan nature and credibility needed to undertake the information collection and monitoring aspects of the project, but they also needed the connection with activities that could use the information within their sites to improve democratic governance. Nevertheless, the ***sites were useful for journalists*** that covered political issues ***and for some of the minority deputies and civic activists.***

The project was extremely ***cautious with its guidelines*** for posting which ***enabled the websites to*** continue ***work without political interference, but also limited ownership*** of the sites and the material to the subgrantees themselves. Updating all of the information is labor intensive and the websites ***lacked integration with the more dynamic social media networks*** that could have helped extend their reach and usefulness. The project might have made more of an impact than was visible to the evaluators, but this is unknown as ***only the outputs were tracked.***

(iv) Recommendations

Selection criteria for NGO subgrante   es, as only 17 NGOs applied for the eight sub-grants and lack of NGO interest in the project was not one of the risks identified.

Interest of media in project.   The project seemed to benefit from the participation of media outlets resulting in savings, but it was unknown if this helped increase its reach.

Conference Hosting.   The final conference was moved from Kiev to Chernihiv which also resulted in significant savings, but the effectiveness of this move was unknown.

Risk management.   The political context seemed to be extremely sensitive as EEF was concerned enough about possible legal action against its subgrantees that it entered into an arrangement for legal assistance if needed.

(iii)   Development context

Ukraine established a democratic system of governance following its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. It had mixed results until the Orange Revolution in 2004 led Ukraine towards more fundamental democratic reforms. However, the   expectations have not yet been achieved with many reforms remaining incomplete. Power is also being consolidated within the executive since the elections in 2010 with a constitutional court decision (2010) reversing the 2004 constitutional amendment that had shifted power from the president to the prime minister and parliament. This, and an increasing emphasis on personal connections in policy making are seen as undermining the checks and balances system and threatening [2]

The European Union (EU) and others have expressed their concerns about the situation in the Ukraine. Concerns included issues around the conduct of the October 2012 parliamentary elections and what are seen as the politically motivated convictions of former government officials in trials that did not meet international standards.[3]

Ukraine has a system of local governance with elected regional (oblast), district (rayon) and city-level councils. Key problems include the concentration of power and revenue at the national level, the fragmentation of lower-level administrative units, and poor staffing of local self-government bodies. Local governance reform and decentralization have been stalled at the national level for several years.

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the parliamentary elections, and 71.63 percent for the presidential elections in 1994, falling to 69.70 percent in 2010.[6] Voters also apparently do not know their elected representatives. For example, in Chernihiv, 86 percent could not identify any of their local representatives or elected officials, while in Kiev, 67.4 percent of the citizens did not know who their representative was.[7]

In recent surveys, most Ukrainians are pessimistic in their outlook towards the future, with more responding that the country is on a path towards instability and chaos than towards stability and prosperity in the future (Figure 1).[8] They also have limited confidence in institutions, with the Cabinet of Ministers having a 28 percent confidence rate and the Ministry of Justice at 17 percent. Local government institutions ranked higher, with confidence in the mayor at 49 percent, and the city/village council at 47 percent. Media had the highest level of confidence at 63 percent.[9]

Figure 1: Future perc   eptions

Figure 2: Preferences for government types
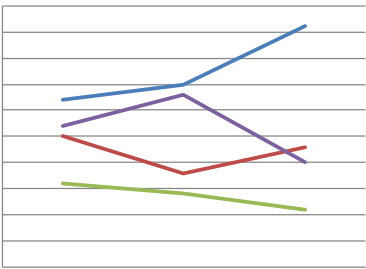
There is also a significant level of apathy about democratic governance although this has been decreasing in the last few years. Having democracy as a preferred type of government is also increasing and is currently at more than 45 percent in a recent poll (Figure2).[10]

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[6] International IDEA, *Voter Turnout Data for Ukraine*
[7] UNDEF,UDF-URK-09-336, *Project proposal,* p 7
[8] IFES, *Key Findings from IFES Ukraine Survey 2012*
[9] ibid
[10] ibid

II. Project strategy

(i) Project approach and strategy

With this project, the East Europe Foundation intended to address what it saw as a growing sense of separation between Ukrainian citizens and their elected leaders, and to strengthen the ability of citizens to influence their political processes. Changes in 2006, resulted in a closed list proportional representation system with the parties developing their candidates list in a nontransparent manner.[11] EEF felt this reduced the incentives for elected officials to be representative, transparent or accountable to their constituents.

EEF identified several issues that it thought this project could address to strengthen the ties between voters and elected officials. These were: the lack of information on elected officials and

work of the elected officials. It intended to do this through subgrants, mentoring and training. All websites were to use the same template, so that they would be standard across regions.

EEF intended to act as the fund manager for this project working with two implementing partners.

be ensured through the engagement of the non-partisan stakeholders in project activities, including the development of local citizen engagement plans, participation in supervisory boards and formulation of recommendations for elected officials and parties. The NGOs would also

deputies, and was tied conceptually to the information provided on the site and reader feedback. Although, in many cases, the websites also included analytical pieces on council decisions or performance.

The disconnect between the project description and implementation was at the grantee level, as these elements were not part of the scope of work used by EEF to generate proposals from the NGOs. The NGOs themselves implemented what was in their subgrant agreements. EEF also did not engage Internews Ukraine as an implementing partner stating that its overhead was too high. Instead it contracted several of its staff individually to undertake some of the trainings with Internews conse-4(s)-6047(n)13(324 710.26 Tm131.42 c62 Tm[.)]TJETq0 -0.144

generally put the contact information of the individual deputies which makes it difficult to contact them directly or send them feedback. The journalists interviewed all thought this site helped them with their research and saved them time since all of the information and related news was on one site. The deputies interviewed also noted its usefulness, although this appeared to be more so for the deputies from the smaller parties that did not have the networks or level of resources that the other deputies had to either collect information or to track the positions of others. Some of these deputies also noted that the website gave them a channel to get their message out, which may have been blocked by the majority party that controlled the council   website and that they felt only provided the position of the majority party.

The sites did not appear to be promoted enough to reach beyond those already active in the sector. Instead of doing this through other NGOs
working on civic issues or participation (which could

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EEF used a small amount (USD 50,000) of U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID) funding from its core Eurasia Foundation funding to co-fund the project. This seemed to be from a sense that donors liked co-funded grant proposals more than from actual need as EEF under spent the project budget by USD 24,060.

The use of a concept that had already been piloted by Cherkasy CVU
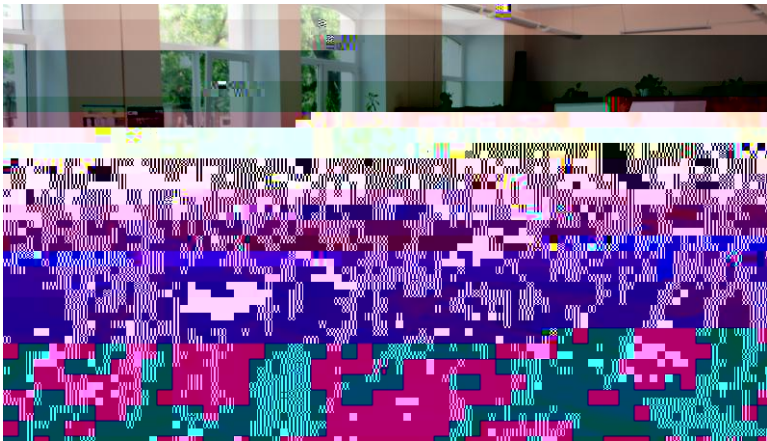
Training on website   *Cherkasky CVU Photo*

for both programs and grantees.

(iv) Impact

The impact of this project ~~is difficult to assess. Outcome data was not collected and the use~~ of the information found on the websites by users is unknown except for a few anecdotal examples provided during interviews and reporting. Neither EEF nor the NGOs collected before/after data on the capacity of NGOs or on the level of citizen influence of political processes with which to compare an end result. Even if this information was available, attributing results to this project would be difficult due to the number of other factors and actors that affect the NGO environment and civic participation in these regions.

The potential impact of the project was limited by its lack of links to the political parties that were supposed to be content. users of the site information and with the NGOs working in the sector on civic participation, advocacy and accountability issues. This could have extended its reach and impact. For example, in Cherkasy, one of the NGO persons interviewed headed a coalition of 24 NGOs focusing on youth and gender issues. If the subgrantee had developed linkages with them, that one link could have extended its reach a

over 3,000 first time users a month in 2013, with more than 1,000 return users a month. This averages out to about 3 returning visitors per day. Odessa, has had 8,372 repeat visitors for 2013 and 33,937 one time visits as of early August. This averages out to almost 40 repeat visitors a day. However, more than 60 percent of all the visits lasted less than five seconds.

(vi) UNDEF added value

It seems apparent that this project would not have been funded withou   as EEF had been turned down by three or four other donors before it submitted the proposal to UNDEF. NED has also funded individual NGOs for similar activities related to monitoring local and regional councils. It seems to have provided grants for similar websites in 2012 which makes it likely that one or more of the UNDEF-funded websites generated interest among other NGOs within Ukraine to pursue similar efforts.

IV. Conclusions

(vi) Better integration of the websites into social networking could have helped to improve its use and increase its popularity. The social media is more dynamic and effective at generating civic action for improved governance than a website that was perceived as dated. Integrating these monitoring and information websites into social networks would be the logical next step for websites of this nature. This conclusion follows findings (i), (ii), (iii) and (vi).

(vii) The project was overly cautious with its guidelines for the sites. This allowed for it to function without political interference which was essential for a project of this nature, but this also ***limited ownership of the site and***

V.   Recommendations

To strengthen similar projects in the future, the team recommends:

(i)   Ensure the selection of partners provides for all of the elements anticipated in the project design. The addition of civic participation, education and advocacy NGOs to a project of this nature would have extended the use of the information gathered that would have helped to improve its relevance, effectiveness and impact. This recommendation follows conclusions (ii), (iii) and (iv).

(ii) Ensure clarity in project purpose. The desired end state should guide the development of activities in the project design. In this case, the activities contributed towards increasing access to information and the ability of NGOs to monitor deputy performance more than increasing civic participation and their links to their representatives. Ensuring a match between the project purpose and activities would strengthen the relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the work. This recommendation follows conclusions (ii) and (iii).

(iii) Promote links with other organizations to help expand the use of the resource and provide the connections with citizens. There are many civic and academic institutions that could help increase use of informational websites and generate civic interest and action. These include other NGOs in the democratic governance sector, advocacy NGOs in other sectors (such as health, gender, youth and education), associations (such as pensioners or professional associations), and with high school and university civics, political science and journalism classes. This recommendation follows from conclusions (ii), (iii), (vi), (vii) and (ix).

(iv) Allow users to update/post information on websites. Adopting a more open, wiki-style site could shift the burden of updating information from the organization to the users. This could help leverage the interest of deputies, political parties and citizen journalists. The website moderator could still maintain control of content by reviewing information/posts before releasing them to the public site. This could help keep the sites current, sustain the efforts and promote wider ownership of the information and activities within the site. This recommendation follows conclusion (vii).

(v) Expand databases and website capabilities in election years to include the bios and information on candidates running for office. This can help to address the incumbency advantage and playing field issues, especially for minority parties and candidates who have fewer means and resources than the incumbents and ruling parties. This also helps provide useful information for voters that can help them to make an informed choice. This recommendation follows conclusion (x).

(vi) Consider use of a professional public relations/web design company to design a modern interactive webpage integrated with social media. With all of the advances in ICT, the development of multimedia interactive websites integrated the social media could be easily and professionally done for minimal funding. Having a more

updated and dynamic site could increase its value for those who are featured there as well as for its users. This in turn could increase its use and effectiveness. This would also facilitate the work of the NGOs that could then focus on the content and use of the sites. This recommendation follows from conclusions (iv), (v), (vi), (vii) and (viii).

(vii) Donors should prioritize access to information, accountability and civic participation projects in consolidating democracies as these are the critical elements needed to increased citizen demand for improved governance and sustain democratic transitions. This recommendation follows conclusion (i).

(viii)   Replicate the project technique of undertaking similar governance activities at local level in different regions to give it national prominence by using the same branding and templates. This can increase its visibility and credibility. This recommendation follows conclusion (viii).

(ix) Projects should ensure they adopt an appropriate performance monitoring plan that uses indicators that can measure project performance as well as outputs. These plans should be able to track performance over time and demonstrate results. For example, if each of these NGOs had placed a user survey on their websites at the start and end of the project, this could have helped identify before/after use for the site and any results stemming from that use. The same could have been done with deputies through the regional or city councils to measure their awareness and opinions of the sites. In addition, some survey data on public opinions could have helped measure changed perceptions of local deputies and their work. This recommendation follows conclusion (xi).

VI. Overall assessment and closing thoughts

The importance of information and ensuring government/official accountability was

question on what was the most important issue facing their community. Instead of getting answers related to the employment situation or the condition of roads that was expected when asking questions about local communities, every answer in every location related to the political situation and the attempts by one party or person to take over the power in that area. In this type of climate, a project that focuses on watching the elected officials and the fulfillment of their campaign promises with the citizens takes on increased importance.

The fact that these NGOs continue to be engaged and to follow the situation is an important part of keeping the democratic space open and from closing further. The main issue with this project was not the area that it had selected, but the lack of links between these monitoring NGOs and the potential users for this information. Although their sites were leveraged by journalists, who use this type of information in their daily work, and by some minority deputies who found it useful occasionally, the project did not link into the possible use by councils or more systematic use with the deputies themselves, with other NGOs doing grass roots civic participation work, or even with the civic education efforts within schools and academic institutions. Had the website made these links and reached a critical mass of users that would actively post comments on a daily basis, it is likely that the deputies and others would have increased their interaction with the websites. However as it stands, the website was used mostly as an informational source for the journalist, with little relevance to the very politicians featured on its pages.

VIII. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation questions:

DAC criterion	Evaluation Questio n	Related sub -questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	Were

Chernihiv: www.dep.cn.ua
Kharkiv: www.dep.kh.ua
Odessa: www.dep.od.ua
Crimea: www.deputat.crimea.ua
Cherkasy: www.deputat.ck.ua

USAID, *Democracy and Governance Assessment Ukraine (PowerPoint),* 2010

Your Local Deputy: Monitoring the Work of Deputies in Local Councils in Ukraine
, Cherkassy,
2012

Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

4 August 2013	
Arrival international consultant	
5 August 2013	
Yuriy Piskalyuk	Project Manager, East Europe Foundation
	Finance Officer, East Europe Foundation
Vitaliy Moroz	Trainer, Head of New Media Department, Internews Ukraine (telcom)
Olesia Arhipiska	National Center for E-Governance

Oleg Gryshyn

Annex 4 : Acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVU	Committee of Voters of Ukraine
EEF	East Europe Foundation
EU	European Union
IRI	International Republican Institute
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RFP	