

# Final sector evaluation

## IcSP support to in-country civil society actors in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and crisis preparedness



**Peter Brorsen**

**Fernada Faria**

EPLO briefing, 8 November 2022



Shaping a more livable world.

## Conclusions

Top 3

- EU stellar job on policy coherence, conflict sensitivity, and partner selection making projects relevant at the onset and with the potential to deliver
- EU 'localisation' efforts are not yet a clear objective/ambition across the portfolio and throughout the project cycle, thus reducing sustainability and potential impact
- EU under-utilises its size and status to
  - Link/leverage its development and political efforts
  - Coordinate efforts within IcSP in-country/regional programme and subsequent EUD programming

## Scope and method

- Evaluation portfolio
  - 2014-21
  - 77 contracts
  - €68m
- Evaluation scope
  - Overall performance assessment
  - Good practices, learning and recommendations
- Evaluation methodology
  - Sample of contracts: 1/3 of portfolio
  - Primary and secondary sources
  - Over 250 respondents in total

## Relevance

### Findings

- Fully aligned with EU external action priorities
- Relevant to intervention contexts, informed by context/conflict analysis, targeting key stakeholders
- CSOs requesting EU to engage more with the respective government institutions, in support of the EU-funded programming

### Good Practices

- Co-creation of projects (in longstanding INGO-CSOs partnerships) → capacity development, ownership and sustainability
- Working via local IPs and sub-grants → adaptation to local context specificities, inclusivity, building trust

### Lessons

- Mapping stakeholders influence and engage potential 'spoilers/barriers' early-on, adapting as necessary

## Coherence

### Findings

No overlap between projects; building on achievements of other IcSP projects.

Limited EU effort to coordinate project partners following awards, focus on preventing duplication, lesser on seeking synergies.

Low probability of receiving post-IcSP follow-on EU funding

### Good Practices

Referral system enabling a comprehensive approach to GBV and child protection in Afghanistan

### Lessons

Identify and pursue links with government or donor relevant projects running in parallel, for instance through referral systems, ensuring alternative options in case of underfunding or termination of activities by referral programs.

## Effectiveness

### Findings

- Intended results mostly achieved, sometimes beyond targets
  - Empowerment of individuals and communities
  - Spaces for inclusive dialogue
  - Building bridges across divides
- Increased CSO capacities and visibility, catalysing funding
- Smart use of tools
  - Media tools to advance women leadership ('Ms President'/Kenya) or PVE awareness raising
  - Kyrgyzstan trainings for imams on democracy and civic principles

### Good Practices

- EU flexibility on Covid-19 restrictions, allowing alternative approaches
- Combination of social/human and professional skills trainings that facilitated socio-economic integration of marginalised/at-risk youth

### Lessons

- Inclusive dialogues with pre-capacitated stakeholders and activities sustained over time (not single events) are critical for bridging across divides.

## Efficiency

### Findings

- Projects were delivered in a timely and cost-effective manner
- Partnerships with local CSOs provided high value for money
- Partners (international and local) had relevant expertise and sufficient capacity to absorb the funding
- EU rules and requirements for funding local CSOs are disproportionate in relation to the size and length of grants and take no due account of local realities.

### Good practices

- Win-win INGOs-CSO partnerships
  - INGO bring technical expertise; external funding; capacity development; advocacy strategies; mentoring, coordination, reporting and facilitation.
  - CSOs/Local IPs bring specific contextual knowledge that is critical for adequate targeting of activities; local presence, cultural and linguistic proximity that facilitate access to remote areas/isolated groups and trust of communities/local actors.

### Lessons

- Increasing funding directly to local CSOs can substantially increase reach and scale of activities

# Sustainability

## Findings

- Knowledge and skills applied through other actions and transferred to other actors
- Difficult to sustain institutional initiatives, at local and national level
- EUD programming not fully aligned with FPI funding cycles

## Good Practices

- INGOs and local CSOs continued to accompany youth beneficiaries, connecting them to other opportunities.

## Lessons / Conditions favouring sustainability of results

- Local CSOs closely engaged in analysis, design, decision-making and monitoring took ownership of projects, which improved sustainability
- Longer-term support, building on previous projects' results, increases the chances of sustainability and enhances donor and implementing partners' credibility
- Expert networks and other contacts (incl. institutional) CS can tap into.



### Findings

- Improved relations and constructive dialogues between stakeholders
  - Increased ability to deal with past traumas that kept groups apart
  - Safer spaces for women civic participation
  - Greater community cohesion
  - More CS involvement and participation in decision-making
- More secure environment, reducing conflict and violence
  - Reduction in criminality in project locations
  - Fewer land grabbing incidents and related conflicts
  - Lower inter-communal clashes
  - Lesser violence around election processes

### Good Practices

- Showcasing results has catalysed additional funding

### Lessons

- Continuity of support over a longer period and on a meaningful scale increases likelihood of sustainable impact

## EU Added Value

### Findings

- EU provides long-term engagement and presence in-country
- EU perceived as politically neutral but use of clout was person-specific and varied over time
- IcSP themes and peacebuilding approaches, focusing on gap areas of support to CS.

### Good Practices

- EU's political clout and high-level engagement, when applied, have supported smoother implementation of projects, facilitated access to political actors, and boosted project visibility and CSOs credibility.

### Lessons

- EU political engagement can be even greater, ideally coupled with direct EU dialogue with local CSOs.

## Cross-cutting

### Findings

- Democracy and good governance mainstreamed
- Capacity development for local CSOs across all projects
- Diversity/inclusivity integrated in gender and conflict-sensitivity approaches that were generally present across the interventions
- Environment and climate change less prominent

### Good practices

- Women empowerment effective in several locations
- Conflict sensitivity promoted across all projects, which has been critical to achieving intended results, and gain a better understanding of conflict drivers and its effects.

### Lessons

- Women empowerment effective in several locations, but still significant hurdles to advance gender equality and challenge stereotypes, especially in growing religious and highly conservative environments.