TRAINING REPORT

<u>Title</u>: "Project Management "
<u>Date:</u> 13-14 November, 2013
<u>Place:</u> Yerevan, Hotel Hrazdan
<u>Trainers:</u> Tatevik Margaryan, Lilit Hovhannisyan, Piruza Manukyan, and Magdalina Khoyetsyan
<u>Number of participants</u>: 12 representatives from 5 grant recipient NGOs and their partners: Huysi Metsamor, Astghatsolk, Midia-Shangal, Areguni, Family and Community

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR EXPECTATIONS

The participants were representatives of 5 grant recipient NGOs and their partners from three project communities: Metsamor, Tchambarak, and Shamiram. They were NGO leaders, members, accountants, as well as representatives of local cultural institutions who will later be able to use the knowledge and experience acquired during the training to refine the project proposal, clarify goals and tasks, revise the budget in accordance with grant and legislative requirements, involve stakeholders, and in general, effectively manage, monitor and evaluate the project.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TRAINING COURSE, MAIN TRAINING BLOCKS

The training contained two blocks: first block covered project management principles and cornerstones, and the second block was related to the grant project framework and guidelines.

In the project management training block, the participants gained knowledge about the following topics:

- project cycle and management functions in each stage

- the goals and tasks of the project, long-term and short-term results,

- indicators of success,

- project risks and ways to prevent/solve them,

- the role of monitoring and evaluation, monitoring tools,

- measuring project indicators,

- stakeholders' role in the project, methods of their involvement.

For each of the topic, participants had an opportunity to develop their skills and exercise the theory in practice in particular through setting/ clarifying the goal and tasks of their grant projects, setting results and indicators, discussing risks and challenges as well as ways of their solution, drafting monitoring and evaluation plans, and planning steps for community and other stakeholders' involvement.

The theoretical part included the power point presentation which is attached to the current report. Presentation of each topic was preceded or followed by group work or exercises so that participants could systemize and/or consolidated their knowledge on the topic and apply it to their grant projects. Ice-breaker and energizer exercises were used in between the sessions.

The grant project background and goals have been presented in the beginning of the training, while the final session of the training was related to reporting guidelines, including:

- narrative report form and delivery timeline,
- documents necessary to be presented for each activity,
- branding issues,
- financial report forms and timelines,
- documents necessary to present for each cost,
- legal requirements on financial documentation of grant projects.

Participants were provided with opportunity to clarify their questions as well as to fill in a sample of financial reporting form so that the procedure is clear to them.

CORE TRAINER'S OBSERVATIONS

What are the participants ready to use

Most of the participants had participated in the project design training conducted earlier in the framework of the project, and they were familiar with basic concepts of program management cycle and their linkages. Many of the participants were also familiar with monitoring and evaluation concepts and had experience in developing indicators and monitoring tools. Thus, more knowledgeable and experienced participants served as experts for others which made group works more effective and interesting. As a result of the training, participants had ready matrices of their projects' goal/task/results chain and ready to use it for managing their projects. They also had developed indicators for each result and plan on how to measure each of them. Finally, participants indicated high understanding and experience in involving community stakeholders and by the end of the training produced a plan of stakeholder involvement envisaging activities for each stakeholder involvement: most of these activities will be further integrated in the project activity plan.

What needs modification or additional information?

Though M&E plan was produced to cover activities aimed at monitoring and evaluation of project outputs, outcomes, and results, it would be useful to have an additional column in Annex 1 (goal, tasks, results and indicators table) which will show the sources of information for each indicator mentioned. This type of information would help participants to easily link their monitoring plans to their tasks and indicators. Similar information would be needed in activity plan where results are included in the last column (probably serving as outputs).

What participants are not ready to use

The duration of the training was too short to cover all the topics in depth; that is why it may be possible that additional coaching and counselling are needed to help the participants in finalizing their project indicators, implementation of monitoring and evaluation, especially in regard to methods and tools of information collection. Also, though the training touched upon various aspects of project management, it was more focused on operational management, monitoring and reporting, while aspects of personal skills related to human resource management, time management, problem identification and solution, etc. were not fully covered and additional training and consulting in this area might be needed.

MAIN TRAINING RESULTS

Generally, participants were very enthusiastic about the training and the topics discussed: the interactive nature of the training, opportunity to link the theoretical concepts with their existing experience, group works on real projects made the auditorium very actively engaged in the training topics and interested in applying the knowledge for community's benefit. Thus, one of the most important results of the training was the increased motivation and enthusiasm for community development projects and understanding of importance of various aspects of project management.

The main results of the training in participants' view can be tracked through the answers for the question in evaluation forms: How do you plan to use the acquired knowledge and skills in your activity.

- I'll pass my gained knowledge to the youth in our community

- use it during the implementation of our project

- in developing and implementing new projects

- I'll use the acquired knowledge in planning new projects and in strengthening the capacities of our organization…

Beside the knowledge and some skills, the training also gave an opportunity to share participants' experience and to continue networking.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER CONSULTING IN THE COMMUNITY

Based on the comments above, the recommendations are as follows:

- to provide on-job assistance in implementation of projects, including consulting in monitoring and evaluation tools, preventing and dealing with risks and challenges, etc.

- to closely follow-up implementation of project activities and consult on providing necessary reporting and corresponding documentation.