

WORKING TOGETHER – DECIDING TOGETHER

FOLLOW UP
MEETING
VINNYTZIA
10 DEC. 2014



Purpose of seminar:

To inform and explore how civil society can gain influence on the budgeting process and the local budgets.

To create an overview of stakeholders and their level of motivation and influence.

To work on a strategy for an advocacy campaign.

Civil participation in decision-making at the local level; what needs to be done?

On 10 December 24 representatives from local government, NGOs and media met at the Press Club of Vinnytzia to explore how civil society could get more influence in the development of the local budget.

The meeting was a follow up to a meeting held in November, where people discussed priority issues and how to influence them.

During the first part of the seminar representatives from the UCIPR and the local government shared information and insight about the creation of local budgets and how civil society could influence the process.

The second topic of the morning was to inform about the present activities aimed at supporting the cooperation between local authorities and the public.

The afternoon was spent, working in smaller groups, to co-create an advocacy plan.

The first task was to map the relevant stakeholders and their level of motivation and interest in improving public participation in creating the local budgets.

The second part of the afternoon was spent planning an advocacy campaign for the above.

The following is a short summary of the days events.

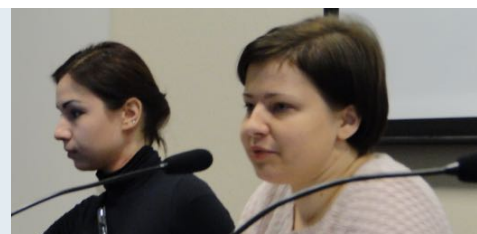
Welcome

Anastasia Krasnosilska Dashkevych, UCIPR, welcomed everyone. She mentioned that NGOs are needed, as they are carriers of ideas and solutions of how to organise or provide public services. The aim of today's meeting is to look at how to cooperate with authorities around budgets.

The local representative of the Council of Europe (CoE) Lyubov Vasylichukis mentioned in her welcome that the CoE wants to make the role of civil society more active and input from civil society can directly influence the CoE program for the next 3 years. "We can influence progress if we have a common goal. We may have different perceptions but with a joint effort we can influence society."

"IF WE CANNOT INFLUENCE WE HAVE NO ROLE!"

ANASTASIA KRASNOSILSKA DASHKEVYCH



INFLUENCING BUDGETS

Anastasia posed a series of questions e.g. who has seen the city budget, who knows what the items or abbreviations in the budget mean. The poll showed that there was not a vast knowledge of the budget or how to influence it. The following presentation and discussion touched, among other things, on the following.

Civil society represents real knowledge of what is not working. The goal of a city budget is to satisfy the needs of civil society.

It would be important that the budget is presented in a simple and understandable manner (not in coded language).

It is important to understand the budget as well as the procedures and timing surrounding it, to be able to influence it.

Some information in the budgets may be classified and therefore not available.

If you submit proposals you have to know the access point i.e. which department or authority you need to address.

You need to follow up on your discussion or request otherwise it gets lost.

Once your proposal has been taken into account, you need to attend the relevant Committee of the Community Council to defend your proposal.

The draft budget as well as all meetings and sessions are announced on the city website. Attendance in City Council meetings needs an application min. two days in advance.

A separate regulation for sectorial budgets is needed

Three representatives from the city administration, who participated in the meeting, shared that the budgets are adopted for a year as soon as the national budget is in place. Before the budget is accepted there is a public hearing on the budget. The interest for the hearings are limited "we need to invite people to organise Public hearings". - Everything is open and transparent. All information is available on the website.



A PROGRAM TO DEVELOP CIVIL SOCIETY

The authorities in Vinnitza have initiated a program to develop civil society and its possibility for influence. The program is a tool to create favourable conditions for civil participation, not just in terms of offering resources but also regulation, a whole framework.

One way of engaging civil society is to arrange competitions. This way it is possible to find the best provider without setting up municipal enterprises.

Anastasia shared statistics showing that approximately 3-5% of the population are active in NGOs. It is not just the 5% that pay taxes so the program should cover all 100% including engaging those 95% who are not active in organisations.

People know if something is not working in a hospital but few know how to influence it. NGOs work directly with people.

Mr. Volodymyr Khoroshev from the city administration presented the different activities that were included in the program. Besides creating the framework other activities like a web-platform, platforms for networking, technical assistance,

CSO incubators, CSO communication with other international NGOs, active involvement of public, CSO strategy papers and programs, financial assistance for cultural and social programs etc.. A full list can be found on the city website.

There is also a wish to develop joint projects between CSOs NGOs and the City Council. In addition to this there is a wish to develop volunteerism in Vinnitza in the next 5 years.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

After the presentation some of the following topics were discussed:

Projects and competitions are interesting in terms of producing new ideas.

There needs to be a procedure to monitor who wins and why some proposals are rejected?

The criteria of how money is given need to be discussed and mutually agreed.

Training is needed for both public officials and representatives of the public, in how to better hear and understand each other.

Experience of how to work with active but not very organised public is missing.

INTRODUCTION TO AN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

The topic of the afternoon was to explore what it takes to create a good advocacy campaign as well as create an actual advocacy plan.

In this case the focus of the plan was participation in the budget process.

A successful advocacy plan should result in positive change.

A good advocacy campaign has six distinct steps from defining the problem, to proposing a possible solution, to analysing the field by identifying stakeholders and key players and their level of motivation and influence, to identifying the main messages of the campaign, to involving the right partners both inside and outside the Council and creating a team that then together can work on the implementation and get the City Council to adopt the changes.

MAPPING THE STAKEHOLDERS

The first part of the afternoons work consisted of doing an analysis of stakeholders.

A matrix consisting of the two axis of motivation and influence was the tool used in the analysis.

Based on the previous in-put, three groups worked independently on the stakeholder analysis.

The experts coached the groups during the work. In the end the findings were collected into the shared overview below.

After collecting the overview Ivan Lukerya UCIPR, shared a few comments on the findings, for instance, that it is good to specify the stakeholders (name etc.) For each major stakeholder you may need to develop a specific strategy. Having a targeted, personal contact makes it is easier to reach results.



Toke Møller introduced the groupwork

FROM INFORMATION TO CO-CREATION.

After the input in the morning Toke Paludan Møller and Monica Nissen from InterChange, Denmark facilitated the afternoon's work.

Toke mentioned that he had for the past 25 years worked with participatory democracy. "You get the best solutions when all stakeholders are in the room collaborating to find the answers. And when you combine good content with a good process."



CO-CREATING THE ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

The second part of the afternoon consisted of actually designing the advocacy campaign.

Before the group-work, Anastasia explained what happens after you have designed the campaign; A draft proposal needs to be submitted to the City Council. It then goes through a longer process of registration, adoption, possibly considered by specialists to finally appear on the agenda after which it can be either adopted or rejected by the Councillors. - At each of the steps you need the help of your key stakeholders.

These steps may vary from city to city. In Vinnytzia, for instance, an executive committee will consider it before the draft is proposed.

After the three groups had worked on their advocacy campaign the results were shared.

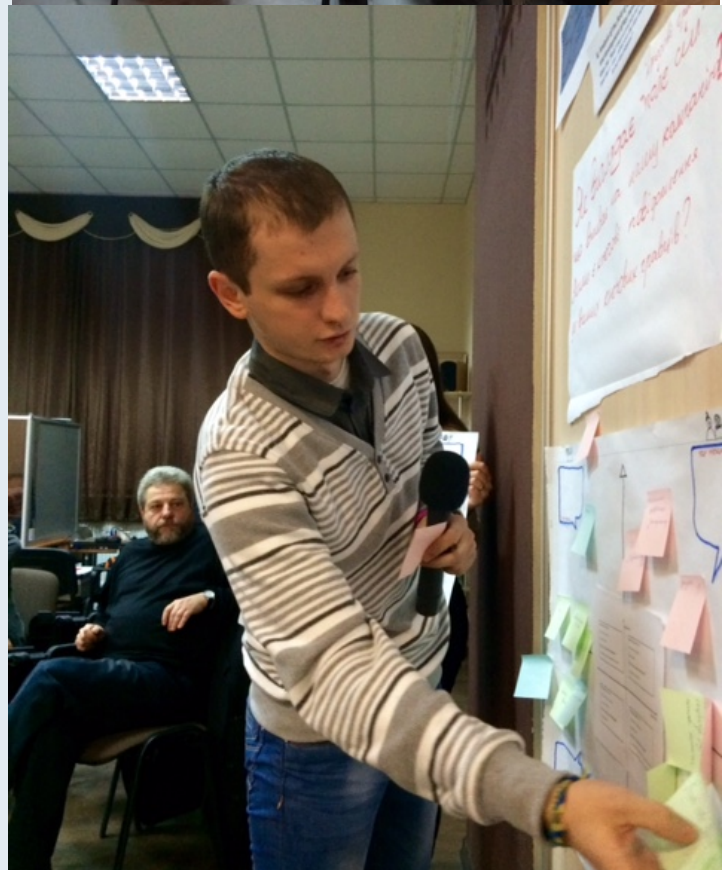
The campaigns had slightly different approaches, but all included many of the same elements e.g. *use of activists, use of media articles at critical points, use of social media, use of experts both in initial phases and later, personal contacts to key stakeholders at decisive moments. In some cases supporters were rallied through flash mobs or demonstrations.* One of the groups added another step of *monitoring the progress of the document.*

Ivan commented on the suggested campaigns. He generally approved but added the importance of having personal contacts to specific Councillors. Protests are not the first means to be used neither is intimidating Councillors with too much press. Otherwise the use of media and blogs were good as well as including experts. And monitoring the implementation was a good idea.

Lastly Anastasia commented that when you make a real advocacy plan an even deeper level of detail and consideration is needed. She encouraged to start campaigning even though one might not be an expert yet. The learning is in the doing.

THANK YOU AND CLOSE

At the end Anastasia thanked everyone for their good work and offered to be helpful with expert assistance in case someone wanted to move on an advocacy campaign. – Finally she posed the pivotal question: “Who is ready”?



UCIPR offered support if any of the participants needed help.