

Community Poverty Reduction “Know-How” project

Sub-grants: Participatory budgeting initiatives

“Community Poverty Reduction “Know-How” project, implemented by a Consortium of four organizations, including CRRC-Armenia, EPF-Armenia, EDRC and Matevosyan Foundation, aimed to mitigate the causes and effects of multidimensional poverty (MPI) in Shirak, Lori and Tavush regions of Armenia by raising public awareness on the idea of multidimensional poverty, building capacities of CSOs and poverty-affected citizens, designing replicable models for addressing poverty and advocating for poverty reduction on the local level.

EPF’s mandate was utilizing the MPI research outcomes and providing tools and methods for public participation in decision making processes in social sector. This was carried out by equipping civil society with the necessary knowledge on participatory mechanisms, to engage underrepresented groups in decision-making discussions and draw responsible local authorities and state attention to poverty reduction issues at local and national levels.

Apart from providing tools and knowledge to civil society, EPF worked closely with socially vulnerable citizens aiming to empower them to participate in decision making processes for addressing various aspects of multidimensional poverty. This range of activities aimed to promote bottom-up processes by mobilizing both CSOs and socially vulnerable citizens in deciding priorities in social sector.

To address various aspects of multi-dimensional poverty, EPF launched advocacy initiatives implemented by local CSOs with mobilization of poverty-affected citizens. Throughout the process, EPF provided robust support and consultancy to ensure the successful implementation of these initiatives. Several examples of sub-grants for advocacy initiatives are provided below.

Implementer: NGO Center NGO

Sub-grant project: “Participatory budgeting in Tumanyan community”

Location: Lori region-Tumanyan community

The goal of this project was to enhance the local social policy offered to low-income families by monitoring the social programs implemented in the targeted community. To achieve this, the project team analyzed the existing social strategy of LG and identified the primary beneficiaries of the programs.

NGO Center NGO prepared a procedure which suggests a new model of social security for local governments. This model was furtherly adopted by Tumanyan community LG. Instead of giving social benefits to the needy people, the new social policy focuses on empowering the needy families to become self-employed. This project achieved two significant successes: 1) Tumanyan Municipality approved and piloted the new social policy by funding self-employment efforts of 4 families. 2) the grantee presented this successful case to Regional Administration of Lori and

other Municipalities. The Regional governor welcomed the idea and promised to support NGO C in disseminating this positive case across other communities of Lori region. In addition, representatives from Tumanyan Municipality had an online meeting with Pambak Municipality staff, to showcase the success and encourage them to adopt the social policy.

Implementer: “Ahnidzor” Development Foundation

Sub-grant project: “Creating equal opportunities for elderly people”

Location: Lori region-Ahnidzor settlement of Tumanyan community

The project aimed to create opportunities for Ahnidzor population to participate in community life through establishment of Community Center for the elderly and young population. Ahnidzor is one of the villages in Tumanyan consolidated community, where no other community centers exist. Ahnidzor Foundation completed the renovation works of the Community Center, as well as organized community events and various capacity building trainings. In December 2023, the sub-grantee participated in the community council meeting of Tumanyan community, advocating for funding for an employee’s salary from the community budget to be able to run the Center after the end of the project. The community council approved the proposal, according to which the part-time engagement of a Coordinator of the Center will be covered by the Tumanyan community budget. Due to this decision, the Center will continue to function beyond the project’s duration.

Implementer: Direct Democracy NGO

Sub-grant project: “Intercommunal Transportation Issue and Ways to Mitigate Community Poverty”

Location: Lori region- Spitak community

Direct Democracy NGO conducted monitoring of transportation services in Spitak community. The monitoring served as a basis for forming an initiative group and organizing a local petition in Spitak community aiming to establish transportation services in Spitak. Over 500 citizens from the community endorsed the petition advocating for enhanced and regulated transportation services. Subsequently, the signed petition results were presented to the Spitak LG which officially approved the request. Unfortunately, the decision faced opposition from the Mayor leading to non-implementation. Spitak Community Council took a further proactive step by appealing to the Government to establish a transport service. The Government then came up with a new legislative package on transportation and submitted it to the NA, which approved the revision of the law on community transportation. This project represents a unique participatory approach enabling the Community Councils to draw the National Assembly’s attention to the urgent community issues. In Armenia, this is the second case when the Community Council applies to the Government to address a local issue.

Implementer: Youth Cooperation Center of Dilijan NGO

Sub-grant project: “Innovative Approaches Directed to Improvement of Cultural Life and Reduction of Unemployment”

Location: Tavush region-Dilijan community

The project aimed to foster poverty reduction in Dilijan community through top down and bottom-up activities. As a top-down approach, YCCD conducted several meetings with Dilijan LG to emphasize the importance of addressing multidimensional poverty in Dilijan. These meetings led to allocation of AMD 2,000,000 from the community budget for community initiatives, to be distributed to NGOs and non-for profit organizations on a competitive basis. Although the Municipality agreed to allocate the funds, the competition among NGOs has not announced yet.

As a bottom-up approach, YCCD organized DiliTon event aiming to improve social-economic condition of vulnerable citizens by providing them with a platform to present their arts and crafts. The event resulted in income generation by the vulnerable craftsmen and artists. The event was co-funded by the Municipality, which organized the sanitation issue, provided transportation to citizens from remote settlements and organized installment of booths for the sellers. The event incorporated cultural elements thus promoting new approaches in organizing cultural life of Dilijan.