

## ANALYSIS OF YEAR-ROUND SCHOOL SESSION ON PROPOSAL PREPARATION

### GAMCON YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The training was carried out with 20 participants – local activists from the Gaguzian Region on 9th and 10th December 2017 in Komrat. The training was done in English, with interpretation into Russian.

The first training day started with a short introduction of the participants and the trainer. The purpose of our introductory discussion was to give word to each of the participants and, apart from introducing themselves, express any views, share any experience or expectations they have which are related to project proposal writing. Examples of questions:

- What have you done so far within projects (prepare, implement, report, help...)
- If you have no experience what have you heard (read..) about projects? What do you think about the work of a project manager?
- What do you expect from these training days?
- Is there any particular idea you would like to work on during these two days?
- What do you plan to do? What projects do you plan to carry out?

Especially the last two questions were to motivate the learners to express ideas from which we select our model projects to be elaborated during the training.

After the ice breaking round I found out that some participants have somehow participated in individual phases of a project life cycle. Most participated in preparation (proposal writing) and some in implementation (reporting, financial management).

The theoretical session which followed, started by a discussion on definition of the term “project”. We came to a conclusion and mutual understanding of what “a project” is. Once this had been clarified, we discussed the purpose of project management tools and some very concrete examples of successful and failed projects in order to understand “why project should be planned and carefully implemented” and why this is a structured process and what are the consequences of “good” and “bad” management. In my examples I referred mainly to projects from my past experience and information

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contained in the *Project Cycle Management Guidelines* (issued by the European Commission). We clarified the phases of project life cycle, content and meaning of each phase and practical implication on the work of project managers. We also clarified the following terminology: *Project Cycle Management(PCM)*, *Logical Framework Approach*, *Logframe (LFA)*.

The last theoretical input was focused on the tools of *Project Cycle Management*. In particular two phases were explained in detail:

- *Analyses* (stakeholders, problems, objectives, strategies)
- *Planning* (building a logical project structure – logframe, activities plan, budget)

This two day training was to cover the *analyses* and *logframe*. The rest was supposed to be part of the follow up training. I highly appreciated the presence of the trainer who was going to carry out the rest of the project management training. We discussed a lot about the content in order to make sure the sessions create a logical structure for the participants and any possible duplicities are avoided.

I demonstrated analyses and the logframe structure on different examples and case studies. The major case study focused on problems of citizens of a town with the public transport situation. The case study is simple to understand and clearly demonstrates the principles of PCM and LFA.

During my presentations we discussed a lot about all the possible practical aspects of project managers work (calls and how to read them, rules of donors, practical problems encountered during preparation and implementation, links between current situation analyses and sustainability of projects, etc.) The participants were extremely active although there was slight language barrier.

The theoretical session ended shortly after lunch and we have returned to our discussion on project ideas. The decision was made to select 4 model projects and split in working groups. The project dealt with the following topics:

- *Problem of stray dogs in the city of Komrat*
- *Free time activities of youth*
- *Building a park for free time activities in a village near Komrat*
- *Improving waste management system*

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All the four groups started to analyse their project ideas by creating a “problem analyses”. The purpose was to take a very brief look at the current situation and of course to practically learn how to apply project management tools in practice. Once each group presented their problem analyses and we made necessary corrections and emphasised lessons learned we immediately switched to the practical application of the problem analyses and discussed how this information is transferred into any application form, what are benefits of good analyses done at the very first stage of the project planning, what are usual setbacks in doing it in practice.

The next step was to prepare analyses of objectives and strategies. Again, each group formulated their objectives and identified strategies. In the end each group selected one strategy out of their analyses to be elaborated as a model project.

During practical exercises in project analyses I tried to facilitate the process in a way that participants understand the difference between “What and how I want to do” and “Why and for whom should I do it?” We always tried to set their ideas within the context of other related issues in order to learn to “step back” and look at the situation as a whole. I emphasised the fact that it is dangerous for any project manager to blindly follow one particular idea and take many unnecessary risks caused by ignoring important external factors (stakeholders, other related problems, legislation, etc.). I did my best to motivate the learners to think broad and a lot prior to starting to write texts into any application.

Working with analyses continued also in the morning of the second day. Once all the four ideas were clear we structured them in a form of a logframe (objectives, indicators, sources of verification, external factors). Each group presented their project in a form of a logframe and we discussed and corrected the structure of each project individually. The participants were advised to keep their logframes and continue with working on these ideas during the next project planning training by elaborating activity plans and budgets.

The last part of the training was linking the instruments we worked with real application forms. I found two calls for proposals (currently open in Moldova) and downloaded the application forms. We opened the documents and highlighted the parts where information contained in the instruments we worked with should be inserted. For example:

- *Problem analyses:* Current situation description

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- *Logframe:* Description of project objectives, results, long-term and short term objectives, Formulation of indicators, Identification of external risks, etc..

The training was closed by a short round of questions and answers where we again discussed very practical aspects of proposal preparation and project implementation.

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