



Recommendations for Improvement of the Efficiency of Development Aid in Bosnia and Herzegovina

2022

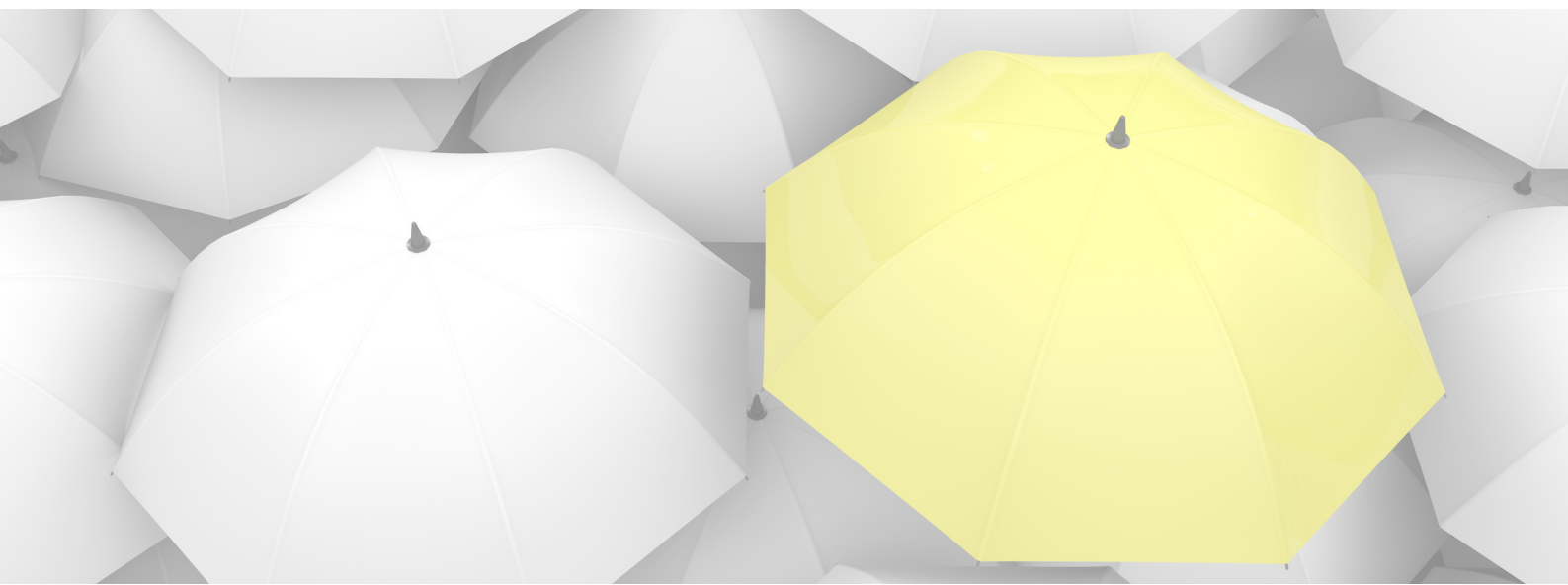
About Civilka

Centar za promociju civilnog društva (CPCD), a local organization from Bosnia and Herzegovina, designed and launched an agile civil society conference in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) under the name Civilka.

Civilka is a new space for social dialogue, where a group of relevant actors from various sectors openly and boldly questioned the most sensitive and important issues related to the development and values of civil society in BiH, with the aim of strengthening and promoting this important sector, which is often deemed an important pillar of the development of democracy.

The first Civilka, attended by 76 participants from non-governmental organizations, authorities, donor organizations, the academic community and consultant companies was held on 12 December 2022 in Sarajevo. The topic of the first Civilka was efficiency and effectiveness of projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Why was this topic selected? In the post-war period in BiH, numerous projects were implemented, with great support from the international community as well as local governments at different levels. However, looking at the overall picture in BiH, it is clear that positive changes in our country are happening very slowly or not at all with unacceptably low levels of development and democracy.

Why do we have more outputs than results in projects and how to achieve a better use of the funds allocated by the taxpayers from EU, BiH, and other countries development partners come from? To what extent are civil society organizations responsible for this situation and how can we contribute more to the development of BiH? We have jointly attempted to find answers to these questions and give specific recommendations for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through three panels, whose recommendations we will present below. The panels were formed according to the four principles of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, to which BiH is a signatory, as well as the majority of donors operating on its territory.



Recommendations

Government

1. Include civil society organizations (CSOs) in all important processes in BiH, at all governmental levels. Pay special attention to the improvement of the consultation processes, as there are necessary improvements needed for the existing consultation mechanism at the state level, as well as replicating the practice on all other levels of government. The current e-Consultation platform is necessary but insufficient as a mechanism for effective consultations.
2. Design and establish a mechanism for the participation of CSOs in all processes related to European integration whereby CSOs will be involved in the very establishment of the aforementioned mechanism.
3. Support the establishment of the fundamental infrastructure of civil society for easier coordination and cooperation between authorities and CSOs.
4. Provide an enabling environment for the development of civil society, as per the 14 European Union (EU) conditions for BiH.
5. Make the allocation of grant funds from the public budget more transparent, linked to development goals or priorities, and monitor spending and performance, adopt and apply regulations in this particular area, and enhance the capacities of officials working on grant allocation in accordance with best practices.
6. Make the data on the size and characteristics of the civil sector publicly available and regulate the issue of the classification of CSOs.
7. When fulfilling the obligations of FATF and Moneyval, take care not to shrink the civil society space.
8. Strengthen the role and importance of the Advisory Body of the Council of Ministers of BiH for Cooperation with NGOs.
9. Strengthen your own role in the coordination of development aid through the work of the Department for Coordination of International Economic Aid at the Ministry of Finance and Treasury of BiH.
10. Define the cooperation between the civil sector and the government more clearly through all strategic documents. Be more open to communication with the civil sector, through both formal and informal meetings and conversations.

Recommendations

Development Partners

1. Include local CSOs in the processes of development and programming of assistance and aid, but also make sure that the participation is accessible to a wider circle of CSOs, not only for those with which development partners directly cooperate.
2. Establish more efficient mutual coordination in order to prevent overlapping of grants, both thematically and territorially.
3. Work on cooperation with local authorities with the aim of strengthening local ownership, which depends on financial autonomy, equal power relations, strategic cooperation, networking and safeguarding of civic space.
4. Review existing practices of providing grants to international agencies and organizations in order to return local ownership to local stakeholders. In this regard, increase the percentage of development aid entrusted to local CSOs and authorities.
5. Demand real partnership between implementing agencies and relevant stakeholder groups from BiH and make the partnership mandatory in the calls for projects.
6. Make the data on all types of development assistance to BiH publicly available in order to increase mutual accountability and transparency.
7. Use local expertise during the programming and implementation of aid, with the intention of creating a more quality response to the real needs of the local communities.
8. Be bolder in analyzing the processes/programs you lead and demand more realistic project evaluation, as well as the evaluation of achieved results.
9. Design more innovative approaches to your work which will be well connected to changing trends and circumstances.
10. Provide multilateral dialogue as soon as possible, make the process open to multiple organizations and interest groups – development partners, authorities, CSOs, the academic community.

Recommendations

Civil Society Organizations

1. Make your work more transparent and accountable towards beneficiaries and the local community, which will, in turn, contribute to a better public opinion and image of the civil sector.
2. Work on the development of your organization in specific areas in order to respond to the needs of the community, but also to become a relevant interlocutor in communication with the development partners and governments.
3. Be resilient to negative phenomena such as money laundering and corruption which occur in the sector.
4. Review your role in the society, but also the vision and mission of your organization and focus on fulfilling them. Connect better with the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and listen to their views and needs in order to respond to the aforementioned in a timely manner.
5. Take bolder positions regarding various phenomena in the society and work towards becoming proactive not reactive, to the authorities and development partners, the media, the academic community, the private sector, etc.
6. Build social alliances, even if its seemingly unusual ones, so as to make the most of the untapped local potential, while in this case the academic community should play an important role as a significant part of civil society.
7. Write better projects and avoid "recycling" previous project ideas. In this process, examine innovative approaches to solving problems as well as good practices you encounter.
8. Mutually coordinate the work on building the CSO infrastructure. Instead of competing, see the potential for joint performance and stronger influence among other CSOs.
9. Work more actively on CSO inclusion issues that concern the enabling environment for civil society work. Organizations themselves must work on expanding the civic space.
10. Take the bigger picture into consideration, connect with other organizations in the region, the EU and the world.

