

CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOG FORUMS

2020

The Civil Society Dialogue Forums are a recurring activity held by the OSCE Presence in Albania since 2018 to bring together civil society organizations (CSOs) and relevant stakeholders at the local level. Our goal is to establish and maintain contacts and exchange information on challenges, needs, capacities and difficulties encountered by CSOs throughout Albania.

THE VLORA FORUM

21 October 2020



13

CSOs attended
the Forum

33

Active CSOs

181.996

Inhabitants*

Source: Source: INSTAT, "Population by prefecture", 1 January 2020.

Brief Summary

The October 2020 discussions in the Vlora Forum pinpointed the importance of civil society engagement in networking on joint causes. Successful campaigns on gender equality, against domestic violence, for environmental protection, show that strength lies in unity. Most Vlora CSOs are well informed about the developments that affect the third sector and have a solid capacity to work together and reach out to each-other.

Challenges

- Despite usually good cooperation, adversarial relations may develop between civil society and local government.
- A challenging environment with regard to protection of natural and water resources in coastal areas.
- Covid-19 exposed Vlora CSOs to gaps in terms of funding and ability to implement projects and retain competent staff.
- At times, no rationale is given by funding agencies to Vlora CSOs when their projects are rejected.

Strengths

- In-depth CSO knowledge of local beneficiaries and situation
- Ability to conduct joint campaigns on Gender Equality, Anti-domestic violence, protection of coastline;
- Availability of a local resource centre for technical assistance and training to CSOs
- Youth centre headquartered in Vlora provides resources and facilities to youth activities.

Way Ahead

- Transforming ad-hoc CSO coalitions into thematically functioning networks
- Addressing the non-recognition of volunteer work in the non-for-profit sector
- Extending social and health insurance coverage to volunteers working with CSOs;
- Local CSOs to be exempt from the obligation to register only in the Tirana District court.

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THE ELBASAN FORUM

20 November 2020



12

CSOs attended
the Forum

39

Active CSOs

295,827

Inhabitants*

Source: Source: INSTAT, "Population by prefecture", 1 January 2020.

Brief Summary

The Elbasan forum's conversations of November 2020, revolved around the need to add targeted calls for proposals for local and new CSOs, including local youth organizations, in order for them to access funding, and on cross-town CSO cooperation, with CSOs from Elbasan discussing the necessity to reach out to those in other towns, such as Prrenjas or Librazhd.

Challenges

- Loss of staff further to reduction of funding owing to COVID-19.
- Need for closer cooperation with international organisations
- Lack of a favourable legal environment discourages business from donating to local civil society organisations
- Personal connections often are more effective than formal applications to access funding.
- Better project-writing expertise needed

Strengths

- A civil society forum coordinates CSOs initiatives in Elbasan
- Good insight from local CSOs on needs of local communities
- Elbasan Municipality has established a local CSO registry
- Elbasan CSOs have established pools of volunteers
- CSOs in Elbasan able to coordinate activities with a considerable number of supporters

Way Ahead

- Municipality to provide for distribution of grants to the local CSOs
- Elbasan CSOs to work toward strengthening their network with the civil society active in the surrounding counties of Belsh, Cerrik and Gramsh;
- Targeted capacity building to be provided to local CSOs based on a careful evaluation of their gaps
- Specific calls for proposals for local youth organizations

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THE KUKËS FORUM 13 November 2020



Source: Source: INSTAT, "Population by prefecture", 1 January 2020.

Brief Summary

The October 2020 Forum with Kukës CSOs, discussed key issues spanning from the management of the COVID 19 emergency, to the role of CSOs during the pandemic and their engagement to face the acute social and economic problems of the region, especially in rural areas.

Challenges

- Limited number and scope of activities of CSOs in Kukës
- CSOs mostly focused on humanitarian assistance, rural farming, forestry, pointing at a relative underdevelopment of the sector
- Lack of skills in project cycle management
- High level of unemployment especially amongst youth (almost 40%)
- Little or no access direct funding for CSOs, and lack of capacities to ensure co-funding
- Covid-19 outbreak negatively affected CSO capacities
- Little information on funding and cross border programmes

Strengths

- High level of willingness at community level to address local development priorities
- Potential to engage civil society organisations as partners to promote eco-tourism, organic farming, and other income generating activities
- Local government interested to rely on CSOs as development partners.

Way Ahead

- Cross-border cooperation
- More capacities on project writing
- Assessment of the gaps of the civil society sector
- Local strategy for CS development
- Establishment of a registry of past and current projects and activities in the region
- Closer coordination among CSOs in Kukës, Has and Kruma