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"Evaluation of selected initiatives under the Polish development cooperation programme implemented through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland in 2012-2014, including selected activities of the Solidarity Fund PL carried out as part of tasks commissioned by the Minister of Foreign Affairs under the International Cooperation Act and programmes and projects for Moldova"

Component I

Final Report

Awarding Authority: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Contractor: ECORYS Polska Sp. z o. o



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Research team:

Adam Rybkowski

Katarzyna Bachnik

Elena Diaconu

Joanna Kawalec

Marta Mackiewicz

Agata Niedolisteck

Elżbieta Świdrowska

Darya Zavertalyuk

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Abbreviations index

CAWI	Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing
DWR	Department of Development Cooperation (of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
FED	Education for Democracy Foundation
FLOP	Forum of Lublin Non-Governmental Organisations
FSM, Fundacja	Solidarity Fund PL
IDI	Individual in-depth interviews
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAUCI	Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation PAUCI
TDW	Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Wschód (East Democracy Society)
EU	European Union
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

As a member of the European Union, the OECD and the United Nations, Poland is engaged in development cooperation for developing countries. It is based on collaboration with partners from less developed countries and is aimed at closing the development gap by improving the quality of life in those countries. Polish development cooperation is coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Broad-based development cooperation includes supporting the development of democracy. Pursuant to agreements with the MFA, the Solidarity Fund PL foundation carries on activities supporting democracy and human rights. Under the Act¹, the Minister of Foreign Affairs may commission the Foundation to carry out development cooperation tasks in countries where specific political circumstances prevail. The main geographic areas of activity of the Foundation are currently the Eastern Partnership countries, as well as Tunisia, Kyrgyzstan and Myanmar. The Foundation pursues its objectives mainly by supporting projects carried out by Polish NGOs in cooperation with local partners in those countries.

According to the applicable guidelines, and to what has already become a common practice in Poland, tasks financed from public funds should be subject to evaluation. Its aim is to check if the measures implemented have been correctly planned, if they respond to the beneficiaries' needs, if they are sustainable, if the funds have been spent effectively, and enables to identify factors that are conducive to or inhibit the implementation of programmes and projects.

Therefore, the main objective was to formulate conclusions on the factors that have the greatest impact on the effectiveness of Polish development assistance, and to present recommendations for measures to be undertaken in the years ahead. The research concerned selected initiatives implemented through the Solidarity Fund PL under the project commissioned by the MFA titled *Support for Democracy*. The evaluation covered projects implemented in 2012-14 in Georgia, Ukraine and Tunisia.

The evaluation criteria based on which the measures undertaken were evaluated included relevance, utility, sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency.

The research methodology assumed that qualitative techniques would be mainly used, including desk research, in-depth interviews with project coordinators, local partners, participants, experts, interviews with representatives of the Foundation and the DDC, as well as case studies, a panel of experts, and the World Cafe workshop. A SWOT analysis was also carried out as well as benchmarking of solutions adopted in other EU member states, with the Computer-Assisted Web Interview (CAWI) employed as a supplementary technique.

The results of the evaluation are presented in a final report as a response to the different survey questions. A synthetic overview of the main conclusions and recommendations is presented below.

¹ The Act of 16 September 2011 on Development Cooperation

In the case of projects related to the development of democracy, including those focused on building pro-democratic attitudes, it is extremely difficult to identify the outcome, in particular where less than a year has passed since some of the activities were completed. Nevertheless, groups of outcomes have been identified which can be seen among project beneficiaries. They include a change of mentality and a change in the style of work, which result from gaining new skills and observing different models. This aspect is important in that the project beneficiaries were largely persons who, on account of their professions, are able to pass on the acquired knowledge (trainers, teachers, journalists, civil servants). This provides a great opportunity for pro-democratic attitudes to be disseminated through them. It should also be noted that training and workshop activities under Polish projects are usually delivered at a high quality level both in terms of the content and forms of communication.

Changes at the institutional level are less noticeable in the short term. These are changes in the day-to-day operation of different institutions, in particular in the atmosphere and working culture. However, there are cases where the implementation of Polish projects has encouraged work on legislative changes and where Polish projects have enabled some institutions to continue operating.

What poses a key issue in terms of the sustainability of the impact of projects on beneficiaries is whether completed project measures will be continued. This requires both organisational and financial involvement on the part of the project partner. Situations have been identified where projects proved unsustainable because the local partner has not become sufficiently engaged in raising funding from other sources.

The inability to implement multi-annual projects has proved to be an insurmountable barrier so far. This is due mainly to the terms of financing Polish aid (from the budget reserve), and it is an issue that needs to be finally resolved. Representatives of the institutions involved in the implementation of development assistance and applicants consider this issue to be key to achieving the intended outcomes. What provides a partial solution is the possibility of implementing modular (two-year) projects, but it is believed to be more of an ad-hoc rather than systemic solution. It is recommended that the implementation period of modular projects be gradually extended – to three years in the first stage. In addition, in the case of measures where the beneficiaries are school or university students, only modular projects are recommended owing to the cyclic nature of work of educational institutions (September/October – June).

As regards the tasks commissioned to the Solidarity Fund PL under agreements with the MFA, it should be noted that they are duly fulfilled. Both the assumptions of the *Support for Democracy* programme and the competition documents, the way proposals are selected, day-to-day cooperation between projects coordinators and project sponsors are conducive to achieving results which yield the assumed outcomes in the long run. Monitoring trips arranged by the Foundation are assessed positively, and meetings at the Foundation with groups on study visits are a very good practice.

Consideration must be given to how the Foundation could provide greater support to cooperation between Polish entities operating in a similar area in the same country. There is currently little synergy between various projects, including between the activities of local

organisations (partners of Polish projects) and other organisations active in a given country. Situations occur where participants from one region do not benefit from outcomes of Polish projects implemented in other parts of the country. Cooperation in this regard between applicants is expected to promote the effectiveness of project measures by triggering synergies.

Thus it is believed that the institutional system in which the Foundation performs tasks commissioned by the MFA, related to supporting democratic processes in selected countries, leads to an improvement of the effectiveness of this aspect of Polish development assistance. This said, note should be taken of the lack of a clear distinction between the Foundation's measures and those implemented directly by the MFA. Consequently, selected measures may be financed with MFA donations and then continued with the Foundation's grant funding; this is understandable from the point of view of the applicants and project outcomes, but it also shows there is an inaccuracy in the system which needs adjustment.

Good matching of the projects implemented with Polish aid funding with the beneficiaries' needs is one of the strengths of such projects. This results mainly from the fact that NGOs have been working in the target countries for a long time, which permits them to accurately identify current needs, to have an extensive network of contacts, to know local partners and the key social actors. While there seems to be a shortage of in-depth and systematic diagnosis of needs, this has had a small impact so far on the relevance of the measures implemented. Another advantage is the strong involvement of local partners, which often leads to continuing measures after projects are formally completed. This has a favourable effect on the sustainability of Polish aid. However, there are some projects under which the recipient public institutions failed to become sufficiently involved and therefore the outcomes have not translated into measures carried on in the country concerned. In the case of projects supporting democracy it is important to maintain a balance between assuming the role of experts who transfer their own experience and models and a partner-like treatment of beneficiaries. The Polish projects are regarded as implemented correctly in this respect. Poles are appreciated mainly for their authenticity in the context of their recent experience of social and system transformation in Poland. Most experts communicate both our good and bad experiences (for consideration) while seeking to arrive at solutions that are tailored to the local conditions.

The strengths of Polish aid include people committed to executing the projects, which applies both to the employees of the institutions involved in implementing development assistance and to the applicants themselves. Project coordinators are strongly committed to their activities and believe their efforts make sense. It is worth noting, however, that the activities of many NGOs rely on a single person, which shows that no professionalised sector of organisations involved in development assistance has evolved as yet. The sector is strongly dispersed and therefore the potential (in particular, competence and experience) of individual persons is not utilised in an optimal way. It has also been found that Polish non-governmental organisations, despite their extensive experience and competence in running projects in Moldova, do not apply for foreign funding. This means that the existing additional opportunities are not being taken advantage of. Grants obtained in this way could be used to continue or disseminate the results of Polish aid projects. Therefore, efforts must be taken to ensure that Polish organisations apply for more non-domestic funding.

It has also been found that diplomatic missions have been insufficiently involved in the coordination of Polish aid because of staffing shortages. The recommended establishment of the Foundation's offices in priority countries where measures are implemented to support democracy would also improve project coordination. Another aspect of development measures that should be taken into account is the need to increase the involvement of Polish businesses in benefitting from the effects of development assistance.

1. Introduction

1.1 Objective of the research

The main objective of the study was to formulate conclusions about the factors that have the greatest impact on the effectiveness of Polish development assistance, and to present recommendations for measures to be pursued in the years ahead.

The objective of the evaluation research was to determine the key factors that influence the effectiveness of Polish development cooperation and to define the main directions of development of Polish aid measures on the one hand, and, to formulate conclusions and recommendations for the process of planning short- and medium-term Polish aid, including the common programming of assistance within the European Union on the other hand. In a broader context, the results of the evaluation study can contribute to improving the quality of public policies in Poland, its foreign policy in particular.

The evaluation study has produced recommendations concerning future programmes and projects that will be implemented under annual plans formulated on the basis of the 2016-2020 Multiannual Programme for Development Cooperation. They will make it possible, among other things, to increase the impact of Polish aid, to strengthen the positive image of Poland as a country actively supporting sustainable development in the world and a valuable partner with stable development prospects, and to support decision-making processes with regard to issues related to development cooperation financed with MFA funds, including decisions concerning the scale of Poland's participation in joint EU programming.

Based on the assumptions, the entire evaluation process was divided into two components:

- Component I – concerning projects implemented through the Solidarity Fund PL under the task commissioned by the MFA, *Support for Democracy*. The evaluation covered projects implemented in 2012-14 in Georgia, Ukraine and Tunisia.
- Component II – concerning projects implemented in 2012-14 in Moldova, including measures carried out by public administration, NGOs and local or regional authorities, as well projects implemented under the Small Grants scheme e and as part of the Foundation's own activities.

1.2 Object and scope of the study

The study concerns selected initiatives carried out within the framework of Polish development cooperation sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland in 2012-2014.

Component I, which is described in this report, includes selected measures carried out for Georgia, Ukraine and Tunisia under the *Support for Democracy* programme commissioned to the Solidarity Fund PL, financed out of a special-purpose reserve of the state budget allocated to the MFA for development cooperation.

1.3 Evaluation criteria

The study was carried out based on the following five main criteria:

- **Relevance** defined as reference to beneficiaries' key problems. Checking if the project has contributed to resolving beneficiaries' real problems.
- **Sustainability** defined as a measurable impact of project results on the target group after the formal completion of the project. Checking if the changes/impact of project results will be maintained in the long term.
- **Efficiency** defined as a justification for the outlays on development cooperation by the outputs and results generated. Checking how project resources were converted into direct output products.
- **Effectiveness** defined as the extent to which Polish development cooperation objectives have been attained. Checking to what extent projects have contributed to the achievement of specific and general objectives.
- **Utility** defined as making use of the effects produced by an intervention (both planned and unplanned), assessed by benchmarking those effects against beneficiaries' real needs. Checking if and how projects have contributed to satisfying the needs of target groups, and if positive or negative side effects have appeared.

1.4 Survey questions

In the course of evaluation of the selected initiatives, answers were given to the following survey questions:

1. What long-term effects are achieved by projects coordinated and directly implemented by the Foundation in the countries under study?
2. Which measures implemented or coordinated by the Foundation have contributed most to the achievement of the objectives/priorities formulated in grant agreements between the MFA and the Foundation?
3. Did projects implemented or coordinated by the Foundation stand out among measures undertaken by other donors, and were they especially useful/ valuable to beneficiaries? If so, which ones and in what aspects was this the case?
4. Which measures implemented or coordinated by the Foundation have contributed most to the visibility of the best Polish experiences and the dissemination of the image of Poland as a valuable partner with stable growth prospects?
5. Did the measures undertaken respond to the beneficiaries' real needs? Has a diagnosis of needs been performed for the different countries? If so, on what data/ information was it based? Have those needs been satisfied by the measures performed?
6. Which projects were most effective in terms of the cost-benefit ratio? Are there any reasons (e.g. political or strategic) for which projects achieving low effectiveness should be continued in future?

Does the commissioning of tasks to the Foundation by the MFA make the implementation of projects more effective and/or efficient?

1.5 Methodology

The chapter below presents the methods and techniques used in the evaluation study. The concept of the study has been prepared on the basis of the Awarding Authority's expectation presented at the tendering stage and additional proposals from evaluators

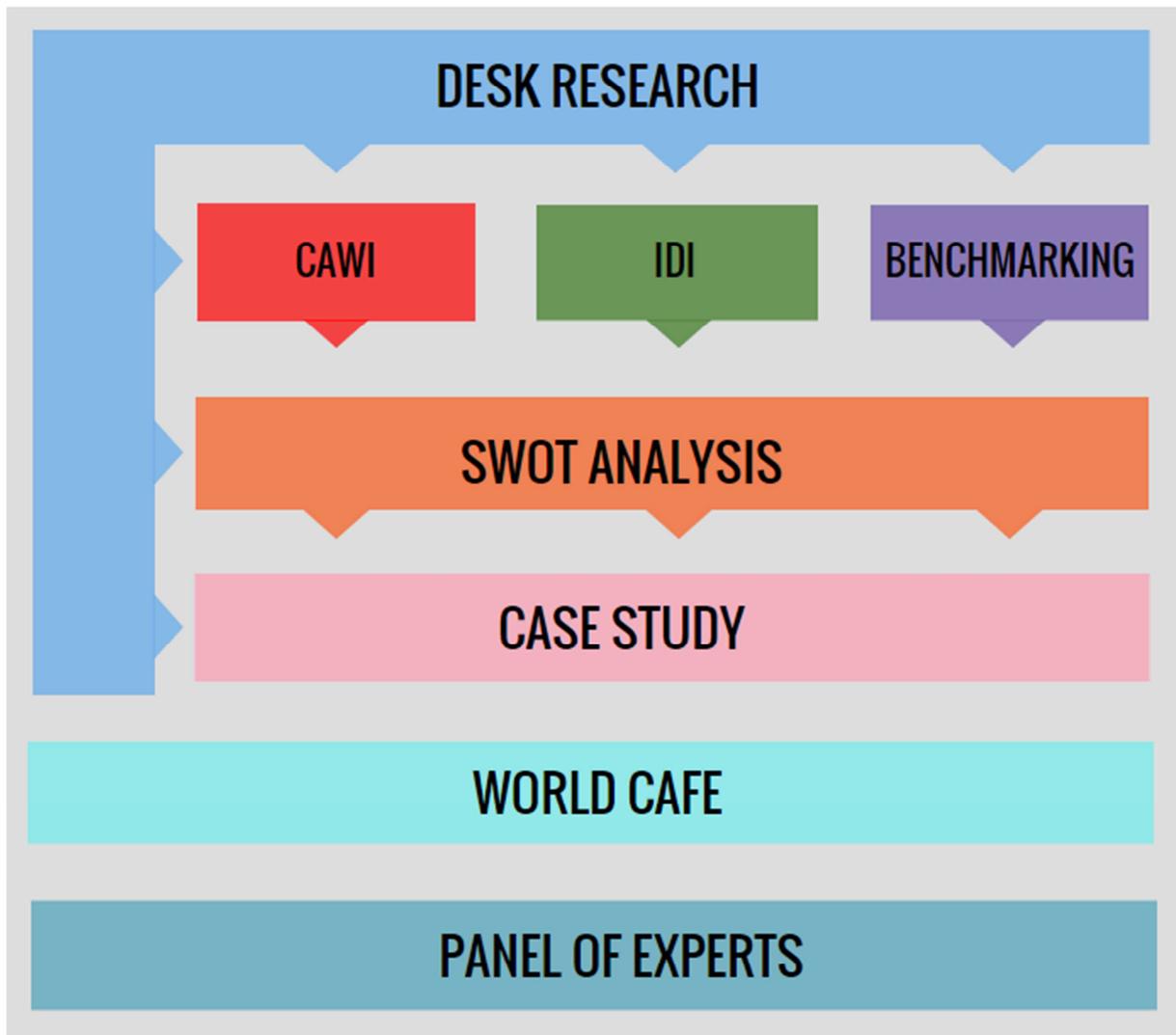
stated in the tender and refined at the initial stage of contract implementation. The comprehensive concept of the study is set out in the methodological report.

In the course of the conceptualisation of the evaluation process, consideration was given to the OECD recommendations found in the document: *Evaluating Development Co-operation: Summary of key norms and standards*.

The following research and analytical techniques were applied to the evaluation of Awarding Authority projects carried out through the Foundation in Georgia, Ukraine and Tunisia:

- Desk research analysis
- Computer-Assisted Web Interview (CAWI)
- In-depth interview (IDI)
- Panel of experts
- SWOT/ TOWS analysis
- Case studies
- Benchmarking
- World Cafe

The graph below shows all the techniques applied together with the chronology of their use.



Source: In-house

The application of each of the above techniques is described in detail below.

Desk research

The desk research has been carried out in three main areas:

1. Analysis of documents, including:
 - 1A. Project proposals – the Awarding Authority provided the Contractor with a set of proposals concerning 39 projects implemented in Georgia, Ukraine and Tunisia. In the course of the evaluation, all of them were analysed in-depth .
 - 1B. Project implementation reports – as in the case of applications for funding, all project implementation reports were analysed.
 - 1C. Documents concerning the programming of Polish development assistance.
 - 1D. Selected publications available e.g. at www.polskapomoc.gov.pl.

- 1E. Documents of the Foundation, including the Statute of the Foundation, final reports on project implementation submitted by the Foundation, documents concerning the Support for Democracy programme.
2. Analysis of data and media materials, including:
 - 2A. Statistical data on Polish development assistance (ODA),
 - 2B. Information available on the MFA and the Foundation's websites, in the www.polskapomoc.gov.pl portal, and on websites of relevant Polish diplomatic missions,
 - 2C. Information and promotional materials on Polish development assistance,
 - 2D. Press, radio and TV materials on Polish development assistance,
3. An analysis of outputs resulting from the implementation of projects, including brochures, post-conference materials, manuals, etc.
4. Analyses, studies, reports and forecasts concerning the social and economic situation of Ukraine, Georgia and Tunisia, as well as Moldova.

Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI)

In order to examine the opinions and experiences of project participants, the CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing) technique was used.

The web interview was addressed to all the project participants whose data had been acquired by the evaluators. Therefore, the Contractor requested all project promoters to provide email addresses of the project participants. Information was circulated to the addresses provided, concerning the objectives of the survey, assurance of research anonymity and confidentiality, and a link through which the questionnaire could be completed. The questionnaire was completed by 195 project participants of the nearly 800 addresses to which the invitation to the interview had been sent.

In-depth interview (IDI)

Within the framework of Component I, at least 5 in-depth interviews were conducted under each of the twelve selected projects. The respondents included: coordinators and/or representatives of project promoters, beneficiaries and other persons involved in the implementation of projects locally. Following a preliminary analysis of projects, the evaluator carried out in-depth interviews with persons involved in the projects mentioned above. In selecting the projects, the evaluators were guided by the following rules:

- differentiate projects in terms of their duration to the maximum extent possible,
- as far as possible, select projects implemented by different institutions,
- ensure the share of projects indicated by the Awarding Authority to be implemented in different countries.

Overall, within the framework of Component I, 65 in-depth interviews were conducted with persons involved in the implementation of projects.

In order to ensure better understanding of the context of the research, in-depth interviews were also conducted with representatives of the MFA Department of Development Cooperation and Solidarity Fund PL.

SWOT/ TOWS analysis

The SWOT analysis involves the identification of resources/strengths and weaknesses of the issue examined (in this case, of the evaluated projects) and the identification of opportunities and threats created by the external environment. On the one hand, it enables an internal analysis to be carried out of the projects evaluated, and on the other hand, it makes it possible to diagnose the environment in which the project is implemented.

The objective of the SWOT analysis was to diagnose the factors impacting the effects of projects, both with regard to the past and to the future.

Case studies

A case study is a format of qualitative research which consists of a multi-faceted description of a phenomenon or a situation, based on the application of at least several data acquisition methods. The purpose of the study is to demonstrate models that are worth copying (good practices) and potential mistakes that should be avoided. In this case, the techniques used include desk research, analysis of legacy data (project documentation, reports, outputs produced in the course of project implementation), in-depth interviews with representatives of project promoters and with project participants.

For the purposes of case studies, projects were selected which provide good practices in terms of achieving the objectives of Polish development assistance.

8 case studies were carried out as part of Component I, including:

- 3 case studies for projects implemented in Georgia,
- 2 case studies for projects implemented in Tunisia,
- 3 case studies for projects implemented in Ukraine.

Benchmarking

At the first stage of the research, benchmarking of development assistance solutions adopted for Georgia, Ukraine and Tunisia by selected developed countries was performed alongside desk research.

The benchmarking exercise involved:

- an analysis of reports on the development assistance provided by selected four countries, including mission documentation, strategy of activities, support areas, institutional conditions, reports on the effects of support,
- an analysis of statistical data concerning the assistance provided (including financial data),
- an analysis of OECD/ DAC (Development Assistance Committee) data and reports,
- individual telephone interviews with persons responsible for implementing projects in selected countries.

The benchmarking was prepared separately for activities in Georgia, in Ukraine and in Tunisia. Countries under analysis included Sweden, Slovakia, Germany and Portugal.

World Cafe

World Cafe is a form of workshop which ensures the participation of people engaged in the subject matter concerned in the process of developing the evaluation results. Thanks to its loose structure, it allows conclusions to be designed and participants' opinions to be gathered in a flexible and dynamic manner. The workshop was conducted in the last stage of the evaluation process, when preliminary hypotheses and conclusions had already been drawn up.

Apart from four researchers, 15 people took part in the meeting, including representatives of the MFA DDC, the Foundation and NGOs performing the projects under study. Four subjects were discussed at separate tables during three rounds, and the workshop ended with a wrap-up of conclusions.

Panel of experts

A meeting of experts was held in the final stage of the research. Its objective was to present and discuss conclusions formulated by a team of evaluators with key participants of the process of implementing Polish development assistance. Those taking part in the panel included the Deputy Director of the MFA DDC, the President of the Foundation and a representative of Grupa Zagranica. The panellists' observations and their suggestions

relating to individual proposals have been taken into account in this report.

2. Description of the projects

Within Component I, evaluation covers 41 projects, including 13 measures in Georgia, 8 in Tunisia, 18 in Ukraine and 2 carried out by the Foundation. The projects were performed by Polish NGOs in partnership with organisations or institutions from assistance recipient countries. A large part of Polish beneficiaries had previously implemented measures in those countries or had cooperated with the Foundation or the MFA.

In 2014 in Georgia, almost all projects were a continuation of the 2013 projects owing to the fact that they were modular (two-year) projects. Only one project titled *It's our turn. Forming a volunteer network in Georgia* was undertaken for the first time, and a project concerning a dialogue at housing community level was not continued in 2014. It is worth noting that no beneficiary from 2012 carried out a project in subsequent years.

The 2012 projects concern civic education and promotion of the activity of local communities. In the subsequent years, the projects were more diversified in terms of the subject matter. They included both the *School of Debates*, a project promoting mediations: *Mediation: conflict transformation in Georgia*, and the project *Together for children's rights and democracy*.

In Tunisia, only one project was continued (*Fix –Kairouan. The Civic Fund*) in 2014, while the rest of the projects evaluated were not continued in subsequent years, and the applicants have changed every year. The subject matter of the projects is also diversified: there is a project addressed to local media, the Academy for Young Social Entrepreneurs, and training for local leaders.

In Ukraine, two 2014 projects followed up on prior-year measures: one concerning support for leaders of the childcare system reform, and the other concerning the establishment of public information centres. It is worth noting that some of the Ukrainian projects are implemented at schools of different levels, and at universities.

The Foundation's own activities involved organising workshops and a study visit for Tunisian media representatives, NGOs and public administration employees, the aim of which was to present the Polish model of dealing with the past.

3. Conclusions concerning individual research questions

3.1 What long-term effects are achieved by projects coordinated and directly implemented by the Foundation in the countries under evaluation?

The projects evaluated within the framework of Component I were implemented under the Foundation's programme *Support for Democracy*. Pursuant to its assumptions, the objective of the Programme is to support pro-democratic institutions and democracy in countries including those undergoing system transformation, such as Ukraine, Georgia and Tunisia. In answering the question about the long-term effects of implemented projects, it is necessary to bear in mind the nature of the subject matter concerned. In the course of field work, it was often emphasised that the effects of actions in support of pro-democratic transformation processes are very rarely visible during the two or three years after project completion.

Therefore, based on the evaluation carried out relatively soon after project implementation (most of the projects evaluated are those undertaken in 2014), the long-term effects are hard to identify clearly, all the more so as they are usually soft effects. It should also be kept in mind that given the relatively small scale of the Polish aid projects, they are not expected to bring about a change of the social and political system. As the title of the priority suggests, the projects under study are intended to support changes towards democracy, but it is obvious that it is institutions, organisations and people in the recipient countries that play a primary role in the process. Therefore, in examining *Support for Democracy* projects in terms of their long-term effects, the expectations attached to them should be kept in mind.

Nevertheless, certain categories of changes generated by project activities and factors ensuring and impeding the sustainability of projects can be identified.

The effects achieved by projects can be divided into two main categories:

- 1) Effects at individual level – i.e. effects achieved among beneficiaries, by direct project beneficiaries that concerned their attitudes, knowledge and skills.
- 2) Effects at institutional level – i.e. changes in the functioning of institutions – both regional and central ones.

1) Effects at the individual level

Change of mentality, approach, horizon

Most of the activities evaluated generate positive changes among the direct project beneficiaries. Due to the high quality and diversified form of the activities, as well as adequacy with the needs, participation in project activities produces significant consequences for their participants – in both private and professional lives. This largely concerns the attitudes, values advocated, and the range of opportunities opening up for project participants. One of the project coordinators stated:

"Thanks to the experience gained by the head teacher and teachers, they will not make a step backward, and that makes this change irreversible – the fact that pupils are participating, that they have become actively involved in resolving school problems, that they debate, do something for their school, and they do this with true commitment."

Participants of training events and workshops run as part of the Polish projects often take advantage of the skills and knowledge gained after their completion, applying them to other

A two-year project titled "**Mediation: conflict transformation in Georgia**" conducted by the **Partners Polska** foundation was aimed to support mediation institutionalization processes. Under the project, pilot mediation centres have been established in Tbilisi and in Gori. They are aimed, on the one hand, to mediate conflicts (including ethnic ones) in border areas and to pilot economic mediations in business and family matters, and, on the other hand, to educate and to promote mediation as an out-of-court way of resolving conflicts e.g. among lawyers

activities, other projects, or to their day-to-day work. One example is a participant of a mediation project in Georgia (see the box on the left), who - while she had not had an opportunity to conduct a classic mediation, she has been using mediation to alleviate tensions between the employer and employees or people in custody in the course of their work in a prison institution, and previously in a municipal centre of culture. Another example is a project by the Edukator Association (see the box below) whose teacher took part in another Polish-Georgian civic education project and has been implementing the knowledge and skills acquired previously during school activities.

A change in attitudes is clearly noticeable among participants of projects implemented in Tunisia. These are persons who have become actively engaged in the process of building the civil society fuelled by the enthusiasm triggered by the Arab Spring. New opportunities have opened up mainly before journalists, some of them finding work in the local media thanks to their participation in projects. This also applies to persons who have recently been actively involved in abolishing the regime, creating foundations for the Third Sector, and are currently heading democratic institutions, such as *Le Centre International pour la Justice Transitionnelle* (CITJ).

It is commonly believed that changes in attitudes among Ukrainians have taken place not through participation in Polish projects but through political changes of the last three years, which have created a suitable climate for activities promoting democracy. In this context, the Polish projects respond to the needs arising from the transformation process taking place recently.

To corroborate the above conclusions, one should note the assessment of the usefulness of participation in the project for improving the participants' professional and personal situations. Exactly half of them declared that participation in the project definitely improved their situation, while another 22.2% stated that it rather improved it and 16.7% were sceptical about it.

Spółeczno-Oświatowe Stowarzyszenie Pomocy Pokrzywdzonym i Niepełnosprawnym "Edukator", an association providing assistance to disadvantaged and disabled people, has carried out a modular project in Georgia titled "**Together for children's rights and democracy**". In 2013, young teachers and students were being prepared for the role of leaders promoting human rights, children's rights and democracy in schools in Shida Kartli. The following year, the leaders with the help of Polish coordinators trained school staff councils, and then came to Poland for study visits during which they familiarized themselves with the Polish democracy-building experience.

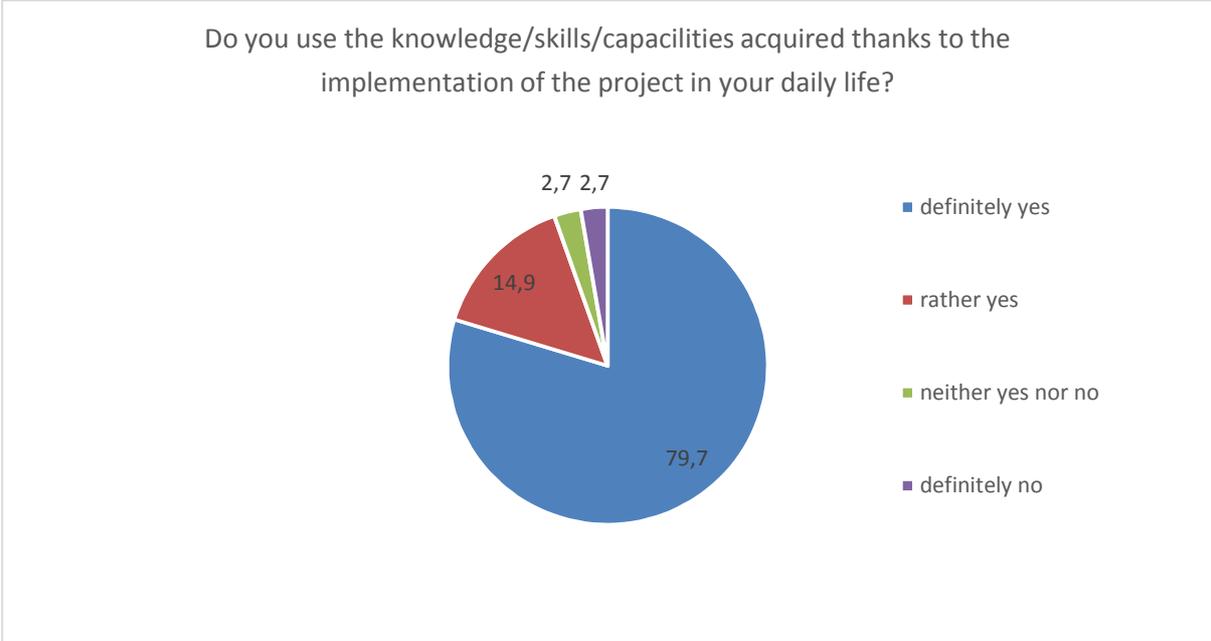
Chart 1. Assessment of the improvement of personal/professional situation of project participants



Source: CAWI survey among project participants.

The second question in the questionnaire connected with the above research question was whether respondents were using the knowledge and skills gained in the course of the project. The results are shown in the chart no. 2. Almost 95% of people use this knowledge, while 80% of them definitely so.

Chart 2. Assessment of the use of the knowledge/ skills/ opportunities gained in the course of the projects.



Source: CAWI survey among project participants.

Education of committed trainers of good quality

Long-term effects at individual level are particularly important and noticeable in the case of projects containing the trainer component, i.e. preparing beneficiaries for the trainer role. The quality of the TOT (*training of trainers*) component proposed under the Polish projects is usually of high standard – it teaches specific skills and offers an opportunity to use them in practice both in the course of the training and during other project activities – in a trainer’s work.

As a result of the Polish projects, trainers are "born" and often continue their trainer commitment after the project is over. Participation in good trainer workshops often leads to a choice of the relevant career path – the participants continue careers as trainers, moderators, take up social and educational work. Thus trainers provide significant support to local institutions – schools, NGOs or state institutions.

In 2012, the **Education for Democracy Foundation** carried out a project in Tunisia titled "**Transition trainers as drivers of change in Tunisia**". The objective of the project was to train trainers who came from different cities of Tunisia and representing different professions and interests. The trainers who were trained during a workshop and a study visit to Poland delivered training for leaders of local communities in 3 Tunisian cities and held consultation meetings in 3 further locations. Under the project, the Tunisian partner's website was also upgraded.

One example is a group of students trained under the Edukator association's project mentioned above, who work as trainers under other projects (run by the same Georgian partner, but also by other institutions). Also some teachers trained under the Education for Democracy project (see the box on the left) are known in the local community as educational trainers and run workshops in other schools. One of the teacher trainers was hired by the city administration to conduct a communication workshop for taxi drivers under a municipal programme for tourist transport development.

Similar effects are generated by projects implemented in Ukraine which also involve the education of a group of trainers who then transfer the acquired skills to other recipients. This applies, among other things, to projects related to respecting human rights and children's rights at care and isolation institutions, as well as to journalistic activities conducted among pupils and many other measures.

In Tunisia, a distinct group of change leaders has evolved. They are persons who participated in the Arab Spring and then were involved in development assistance projects, and are currently engaged in the development of structures and foundations of the civil society. This concerns both projects implemented as part of the Foundation's own activities and e.g. a project of the Educational Society of Malopolska (see the box on the right) or of the **Foundation of Active People and Places** (see the box on the next page).

The **Educational Society for Malopolska** organized a project in Tunisia in 2012 titled "**Academy for Young Social Entrepreneurs in Tunisia**". The project involved the training of young Tunisians in basic leadership skills and their equipment with tools which are useful in social work. In addition, the most active participants of workshops were invited for a study visit to Poland where they participated in a series of meetings with social innovators.

The **Foundation of Active People and Places** has organized a project titled "**Young leaders of local communities of Sousse and neighboring towns**" which took place in Tunisia in 2013. The project was addressed to NGO leaders and to administration officials. The participants were invited to Poland and Germany (Brandenburg) for study visits, while trainer workshops were organized in Tunisia.

Importantly, for the group of beneficiaries consisting of teachers, the knowledge workshops and trainer workshops run in the framework of Polish projects distinguish themselves among other training events organised for teachers (e.g. by ministries of education) and as such leave a permanent mark on their professional lives: their approach to pupils, methods of conducting classes, etc.

Thus Polish projects disseminate trainer capabilities among different professional groups, which results in the multiplication of knowledge and skills acquired during the project. One of the persons involved in the implementation of the project stated:

"Sustainability lies in the competence and education of leaders and activists – people who have become competent in conducting activities with others, and who lead local initiatives."

2) Effects at the institutional level

At the institutional level, changes are much less noticeable, mainly owing to the fact that these are short-lived projects, which can hardly be expected to lead to institutional changes at a regional level, not to mention the national level. This is due, on the one hand, to the nature of the Polish projects, which, usually having no large coverage in geographical terms or in terms of the number of participants involved, and having no large funds available, are only capable of generating local, and not system-wide changes. A relatively low institutional effectiveness results also from political circumstances of the projects – the state systems of the countries where the projects are implemented are of a significantly hierarchical nature, where some institutions are strongly subordinated to other, which makes them hardly independent, flexible and ready for change.

Among projects which seem to have had a small impact on institutional change, mention should be made of the measures undertaken in Kairouan related to the establishment of a civic fund in that city (see the box on the right). Despite the fact that the project was continued in the following years, it is estimated that without significant institutional changes, and without a guarantee of higher financing the assumed effects will not be achieved. It should also be kept in mind that civic funds (or similar "participatory budgets") are a tool that assumes a very high participation

Fix-Kairouan. The Civic Fund is a project of the **Press Club** foundation which was implemented in Tunisia in 2013 and 2014. The project was addressed to NGO leaders and the local authorities of the city and the Kairouan district. Its objective was to support the NGO sector and the local government in preparing the Civic Fund. Under the project, training was held in Tunisia and a study visit to Poland took place. The measures made it possible to create an infrastructure and an institutional and legal framework for the fund's grant activities.

of the local community in deciding how to allocate a part of the local government budget. This requires both a well-established and strong position of the local government and a developed civil society. Therefore, despite the positive impact that such projects may have on the democratisation process, the assumed results seem to be too ambitious for such a young democracy as Tunisia.

However, despite those difficulties and constraints, several evaluated projects have led to institutional changes or to a high probability that such effects will occur. They include:

A change of the atmosphere and culture prevailing in an institution

These are soft effects, observable in the behavioural patterns and attitudes of the institution's employees and clients. In educational projects, these effects were mainly observable at school – in the behaviour of pupils, parents, teachers – pupils realise they can expect something from their seniors, that they can express their needs, etc. One of the project coordinators stated:

"The culture of schools participating in the project has changed towards democracy, openness, participation, inclusion of the local community – has changed irreversibly, because what has happened cannot be erased – unless another head teacher comes and introduces a different style of running the school. This always depends very much on the head teacher – he or she is the key figure."

In addition, as mentioned, the education of good trainers who train other persons, drawing on the acquired knowledge and skills and thus multiplying the effects of projects, also affects the substantive support of institutions, especially local ones.

Legislative changes

The changes are least often achieved through projects owing to the fact that they require large inputs in terms of time and labour, but in some cases they are successful. One such example is an agreement with the Georgian Ministry of Justice concerning regional courts' obligation to refer eligible cases to the Mediation Centre. Consequently, this provides a basis for the dissemination of the mediation mechanism as well as greater tasks for two Mediation Centres which were set up under the project. In Ukraine, new tools for monitoring the situation in care and isolation institutions are used as a result of projects related to children's rights. In Tunisia, Polish projects (see the example in the box below) have affected the shape of the institutions related to system transformation, including *Le Centre International pour la Justice Transitionnelle* which was established drawing on the experience of e.g. the Institute of National Remembrance or on the Polish experience of vetting and, as declared, intends to take advantage of the experience under Tunisian law

Solidarity Fund PL out its own project in Tunisia titled "**Transition justice in the Tunisian context**" Under the project, FSM, together with the Institute of National Remembrance, the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, the Polish Bar Council and the Polish Embassy in Tunis organized workshops and seminars in Tunis and visits to Poland, during which public administration staff, media representatives and NGOs discussed issues concerning democratic transformation in Poland, competences of the IPN, the issue of archives or vetting.

Examples include both editorial teams of local newspapers that built websites under the TDW project (see the box below) which Georgians would otherwise not have done because of the cost involved. Such websites enable editorial teams to function in a sustainable way – broader

In 2014, the **East Democracy Society** implemented the project **"From Informative to Interactive Media: Georgian Local Newspapers on the Web"** in Georgia. Under the project, independent Georgian local and regional newspapers learned how to create website pages and received support in the form of training on the technical rules for making web-based editions of newspapers and web-based journalism. Some editorial teams also familiarized themselves with the experiences of Polish publishers concerning the operation of web portals and web pages. This way, Georgian local and regional newspapers, performing mainly the information function, were prepared for the introduction of web-based participatory (civic) journalism.

coverage, better access to readers, greater advertising and announcing capabilities, and hence greater chances of surviving on the market after the project ends. A similar effect was achieved by a project carried out by the New Media Association to create media for young people in Ukraine that involved building a portal that gave work to local beginning journalists. In Tunisia, a similar effect was achieved by projects

implemented by the Association of Local Newspapers concerning the development of local

In 2013 and 2014, the **Association of Local Newspapers** carried out the project **"Tunisian journalist in action"** in Tunisia. The objective of the project was to support the development of local democracy through education and promotion of activity of journalists and young social activists from Tunisia, especially from economically least developed regions. The Tunisian Local Press competition was held as well as seminars for journalists and bloggers and internships at Polish local newspaper editorial offices at

media, (see: box below).

Generating cooperation between local institutions in a specific area

Polish projects initiate and support integration and networking of local institutions and specific professional communities, e.g. at schools or newspaper editorial offices. This usually comes as a

The project **"Public Information Centres in the Lviv, Mykolaiv, Rivne and Vinnytsia Oblasts"** was organized in Ukraine by the **Lublin NGO Forum Association Union**. The activities involved social participation and implementation of selected best Polish experiences of modern management of public administration, strengthening self-governance and local democracy, dialogue and public consultations. The basis of the project was support provided to public libraries, the NGO sector and local communities with regard to cooperation with public administration in creating a network of Public Information Centres available to the general public (at libraries/NGO offices) and providing e-services in small cities.

by-product of a project – the very fact that projects bring together people and institutions from different regions or different villages in the same region, and the proposed measures bind them together through activities for some time (joint practical activities during project workshops, jointly conducted workshops for direct beneficiaries – e.g. schools, administrative units, etc.), acquaintances and contacts are established. Without Polish projects, certain professional groups

and institutions would probably never have met or cooperated. The cooperation established is a long-term effect, as is the associated exchange of knowledge and experiences, as evidenced by a school exchange, cooperation of local journalists and their activity in the Association of Local Newspapers in Georgia and Tunisia, or the creation of a mediator community, and, above all, combining various initiatives and institutions that are or may be involved in mediation – not only judges but also non-governmental organisations, schools, universities, and city administrations, etc. A manifestation of a community coming alive is the formation of the Association of Mediators in Georgia, which sets standards for mediator work, and the development of local journalism in Tunisia. An example of similar activity carried out in Ukraine is the establishment of cooperation between libraries where Public Information Centres were created (see box below).

"Editorial teams pointed out that a community was set up thanks to our projects – some people met, some had met before, and information exchange was lacking; it was not until the launch of our projects that they got to know each other and shared experiences. Now [2015] a new newspaper, Swaneti, has joined the project – the support it has received from our other participants is really impressive."

This comment made by one of the coordinators has been reflected in conversations with participants of the projects.

In addition, the following factors affect the sustainability of projects:

Project duration – the longer a project is implemented and financed, the greater the chances that the project will be sustainable. Needs can be better understood when the projects are longer – such projects are based on an in-depth understanding of the needs and are potentially more sustainable. One obstacle to achieving long-term effects is the lack of funds for the future – owing to a short timeframe, the planning of measure often lacks a long-term perspective. This is very often the case with consulting bodies – there is no idea how they should function in the future.

Our Home Association carried out a two-year project "**Support for leaders of institutional child care system in Ukraine in Mykolaiv region**". The project was held in 2013 and in 2014 in Ukraine, and its objective was to support civic initiatives. The activities were geared towards strengthening a reform of the system of child and family care, its promotion and preparation of strategies and standards based on activities in the Mykolaiv Oblast. Training was organized for the potential staff of the reformed institutions, transformation possibilities were examined in the selected oblast, and training was provided to trainers in methods of working with children and families.

PAUCI Foundation in Ukraine "**Strengthening the control role of judiciary in the balance of power in Ukraine**". The project was addressed to the young generation of Ukrainian lawyers and journalists in six cities. It was aimed to bring them closer to understanding the issues of judiciary ethics and independence, encourage the young generation to join the discussion on the crisis in the judiciary and on proposed reforms, and provide examples of the functioning of Polish courts. Seminars were held for lawyers and journalists, as well as a study visit and an international conference in Kyiv with the participation of

In the course of the study, measures were identified whose actual implementation timespan greatly exceeded the period for which the funding was granted, some continuing as long as 6 or 7 years. An example of such measures in Georgia is the

Edukator Association's pre-school education project or Our Home Association's foster care homes (see box) – both projects are financed mostly by the MFA, with the first one also under the Solidarity Fund PL's call for proposals. Projects of this type – implemented on a longer-term basis – allow local activities to become regional, with successive years delivering outcomes at the national level. In Ukraine, the examples of activities that yield long-term effects are projects sponsored by the PAUCI Foundation, which has been drawing on MFA's grants for several years, and by the Foundation (see box for project).

However, this observation is connected with another conclusion, which may be seen as undesirable from the point of view of the institutions involved in the implementation of Polish aid. Organisations that want to build on their achievements in future, apply for further grants, which is understandable and normal. The system enables them to submit proposals for projects which in fact continue previous measures both under the Foundation and MFA call for proposals. This means that there is no clear division between projects implemented directly by the MFA, and those carried out through the Foundation. Also discussions with representatives of those two institutions show that there is no clear distinction between projects that should be implemented as "support for democracy" and those classified as other development assistance. Therefore, in the evaluators' opinion, there is a need to revise and refine – at least at the definition level – which activities will be carried out in the years to come through the Foundation.

In addition, it is recommended that educational projects should provide for modularity, because otherwise the effects are not clearly visible, as they do not cover the entire school year cycle.

Local activities, support in the remotest regions – Polish projects have been reaching local beneficiaries, providing support which was not available in remote regions (in the case of Georgia and Tunisia). This is one of the guarantees of sustainability, as beneficiaries declare a strong need for such measures. Usually, it is the only support they receive (e.g. schools or editorial offices), and hence knowledge and skills as well as other solutions proposed under projects meet with a positive response. Some institutions would have been unable to exist without this support – e.g. local editorial teams, the existence of which changes human mentality over time.

A strong local partner recognisable in the country/region – the more a partner is engaged substantially and the more he/she is recognisable, the more sustainable are the effects. The positive examples include Civitas Georgica or the Commissioner for Human Rights in Ukraine or Labo Democratique in Tunisia, their opposite being the partner of the TDW project already mentioned, who shows relatively little substantive involvement in

"From the university autonomy and academic ethics to the "Instytut Artes Liberales" Foundation. The objective effective anti-corruption practices in Ukrainian higher education fighting corruption in the Ukrainian higher education system and academics took part in a series of workshops and seminars partners.

"Increasing the standard of protection of rights of children placed in isolation and care facilities in Ukraine" is a project undertaken by the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights. Under the project, a series of workshops and seminars were held concerning the principles of monitoring human rights and a study visit to Poland was organized to present the operation of the National Prevention Mechanism and our methods of monitoring Polish care and social rehabilitation institutions for minors. Monitoring concepts and tools were also developed. The project took place in 2014.

project activities. In the Ukrainian projects, most partners are highly committed to their activities, although they are not strong partners. It is most important to ensure that the idea of a project be developed in close cooperation with the partner's representatives – a special example is the mediation project in Georgia, where both its idea and its future arise directly from the professional involvement of its Georgian initiators. In Ukraine, projects concerning children's rights (see box below) and combating corruption at schools of higher education (see box below) are also examples of close cooperation already at the stage of developing project assumptions.

Cooperation with local government institutions – projects providing for cooperation and effectively cooperating with local government institutions yield the most sustainable effects: the pre-school education project of the Edukator Association and, to a lesser extent, projects implemented in Georgian schools are some examples. One of the project coordinators stated:

"We teach how local governments can create problem-oriented strategies – the local governments with which we've been working have created local strategies for pre-school education development (based on a model that we provided) – which Sakrebulo approved as a document of the local law – and this ensured the sustainability of results."

In the case of a project implemented by the Press Club in Kairouan and many projects carried out in Ukraine, cooperation with the local government also was (and still is) a necessary condition for the achievement of intended results.

Extending the duration of a project measure through the mechanism of own contribution offset in time in relation to project implementation – one of the coordinators suggested using a mechanism of own contribution to ensure project sustainability, especially in the case of annual educational programmes. This would mean that the project promoter may provide a real contribution in the form of voluntary work or work paid under other projects, and carried out after project completion, as a result of which e.g. teacher support points which are set up in October could continue in existence beyond the end of a project, e.g. for another 3 months. In the respondent's opinion, this mechanism would prevent generating a project contribution which is currently often completely fictitious.

"If you could prove your own contribution after project completion, when you can show it for example by February. You declare it in advance, and then someone can check it. You don't have to bother with this [looking for your own contribution] during a project and instead you can do this after the project is completed – that you are continuing the activities, you are obliged to do this, and then you can do this on a voluntary basis or under another project."

Lack of funds for follow-up monitoring of effects, ex-post evaluation – project promoters relatively rarely undertake in-depth, qualitative monitoring of project activities, both during the implementation of projects and after their completion. This is due both to the lack of time during a project and the lack of funds for its implementation. The monitoring role is often assumed by the Polish partners, during short stays in the project country. It is worth considering at least small funds for the monitoring of effects or ex-post evaluation, performed several

months after the completion of activities. Such monitoring could be combined with the consultation mechanism supporting beneficiaries in implementing project results. The funds for such measures should not be high – it is the question of the cost of transport and several days' work of a local coordinator. It is worth noting that for a project promoter such activities could be helpful in developing a concept for another project based on identified outcomes achieved so far.

3.2 Which measures implemented or coordinated by the Foundation have contributed most to the achievement of the objectives/priorities formulated in grant agreements between the MFA and the Foundation?

A reply to the above research question is also given in the following subsections. Here, individual priorities from grant agreements are overviewed together with a brief description of the implementation of projects commissioned by the Foundation.

Nevertheless, it should be noted at this point that all objectives and priorities set out in the grant agreements were implemented in the successive years under evaluation.

Priority I. Civic freedoms in a state of law

The implementation of projects under this Priority concerned mainly supporting a system that guarantees observance of civic freedoms, supporting independent and local media, and activities relating to human rights. The evaluators are of the opinion that the achievement of this Priority was furthered mainly by numerous media support projects. They were implemented in Ukraine, in Georgia, and Tunisia. In particular, the implementation of projects in the latter country met with high interest and enthusiasm. A representative of the Tunisian partner says:

"Local press developed most in the south-east of the country, on the Djerba Island, in Gabès and Sfax. It is worth noting that before cooperation with Poland under this project, we had no local press in Tunisia whatsoever. A lot has changed thanks to the Poles."

Importantly, supporting journalism is the best example that measures towards building a civic society take time and need a substantial input. Nevertheless, in Tunisia, which enthusiastically welcomed reforms after the Arab Spring, the effects could be seen very quickly. A representative of the partner under the local media development project stated:

"Journalists started cooperating with one another, they are not tied only to their own local community, they started moving around in search of interesting news. Journalists are networking, they've set up a journalist group on Facebook, through which they help one another and share information. So far, we have no local newspapers in paper form – this requires funds. We need time for local press to develop. Probably this won't be soon, but we hope we'll manage to achieve this in a few years' time."

Priority II. Support for young leaders of transformation and democracy

The second priority was connected with the implementation of priorities concerning support provided to local leaders and increasing the participation of young people in public life. Thus,

the projects implemented included both activities in Ukraine (e.g. projects of the European Cooperation Centre, the Happy Child Foundation), in Georgia (e.g. the Foundation for Sustainable Development) and in Tunisia (e.g. the Foundation of Active People and Places). Under this Priority, the achievement of objectives was largely influenced by a number of projects for training and supporting groups of local leaders who become champions of change towards democracy at a later stage. What also played a considerable role were projects aimed at supporting civic activity among youth.

Priority III. Strengthening the potential of local communities and civic society.

The coverage of the Priority also partly includes the effects of the other two areas. It concerns mainly the strengthening of the mechanisms of self-governance, civic dialogue and good governance at local level. The implementation of these measures was closely related to the reforms undertaken in the recipient countries in recent years in the field of local government. In Georgia, a mediation support project focusing on changes in the judicial system, yielded interesting results. In Tunisia, an approach to the civic fund in Kairouan is an example of a project under which mechanisms are yet to be activated to enable Tunisians to take over and finance the measures, but which is nevertheless continued at the moment. What is viewed as a success in Ukraine is a two-year project involving the creation of Public Information Centres based on a network of public libraries.

To sum up, it should be noted that through the implementation of the projects, the provisions of the agreements between the MFA and the Foundation have again been fulfilled. The Foundation is believed to have fulfilled its tasks within its area of activity, i.e. democratisation projects.

It should be pointed out there is no clear distinction at the project implementation level between what falls within the remit of development assistance financed directly by the MFA and what is involved in supporting democracy, i.e. a task entrusted to the Foundation. In the evaluators' opinion, some of the Foundation's projects may be regarded as going beyond the Priorities mentioned above if narrow definitions were applied to the "Support for Democracy" area. This issue concerns mainly projects related to education. The issue needs to be clarified in the near future.

The **strengths** of the solution proposed, which provides for assigning tasks to the Foundation related to support for democracy in selected countries, include mainly:

- the Foundation's very good understanding of the needs in the countries receiving support,
- the ability to adjust activities to a changing political and social situation,
- good and flexible cooperation between the Foundation and NGOs implementing projects at all their stages,
- high competence and extensive experience of the Foundation's staff,
- using calls for proposals in situations that require quick and focused action.

3.3 Did projects implemented or coordinated by the Foundation stand out among measures undertaken by other donors, and were they especially useful/ valuable to beneficiaries? If so, which ones and in what aspects was this the case?

The following factors distinguish the projects from those of other donors:

A very local character of measures owing to which the Polish projects are mostly targeted at beneficiaries who have no access to other projects or grants. One example is local journalism – while other grant providers do exist in that area, the editorial teams supported by the Polish organisation are so local and consequently small that they are not covered by their projects. This often results from lack of access to information on such opportunities or a lack of competence to participate in a call for proposals. This is also the case with educational projects – interactive teaching methods, while officially promoted by the Georgian Ministry of Education, currently being reformed since 2015, have not been known or used in remote villages of the Racha or Svaneti regions, where the FED project was implemented – teachers had neither the competence nor access to materials or training in that field. Equally local were the projects implemented in Tunisia (e.g. in Sousse or Kairouan) and in Ukraine (the Public Information Centre project covering the different oblasts or in Kryvyi Rih).

A good diagnosis of needs – while most project promoters do not have a formalised method of diagnosing needs and research, thanks to an understanding of the realities both by the applicants and partners, the projects reach those who need them. The accuracy of a diagnosis also involves a good sense of the historic moment for undertaking certain interventions – an example is the FED project implemented in 2012, when interactive teaching methods were practically non-existent in the regions of Georgia, and the mediation support project which is a part of a series of changes in the justice system or the FLOP project carried out in Ukraine, concerning Public Information Centres.

No copying of other donors' activities – the project promoters are looking for a niche – an example is the Edukator Association's project which, touching upon the issues of civic education, children's rights at school and social activity of schools, "enters" other donors' areas of activity (e.g. the PH International project, UNICEF activities), but what it offers to the beneficiaries differs significantly from the measures of other donors – e.g. the activities under the project were not based only on Civic Clubs operating at schools, but provided for more extensive extramural social activities. Also innovative are e.g. the FLOP projects based on libraries in western Ukraine.

"Giving a fishing rod instead of the fish" and high-quality measures investing in people – even if beneficiaries have access to other funders in a given area, the format of support received from them or from public institutions is often insufficient. In the case of projects related to the development of journalism, this is so because other donors provide funds for specific outputs (newspaper insert, website, remuneration for specific jobs), while the educational process, learning tools or the roles of specific materials, etc. are less often or never financed. Likewise, in the education area, the projects propose activities which are considered exceptional due to their qualitative character – ministerial or other donors' training rarely contains such a large practical and interactive component, which allows beneficiaries to develop new skills.

The utility of activities for beneficiaries arises from the following features characterising project measures:

- **a high quality of activities** – their high substantive standard which requires actual involvement of participants,
- **accurately respond to existing needs** – mainly through the involvement of local organisations,
- **high flexibility and readiness to take into account local circumstances** – the beneficiaries stressed that Polish projects fall in line with the existing institutional environment, and therefore are not detached from the local realities. There is also a high understanding of the cultural context.
- **a friendly working atmosphere and commitment of both parties to a project** – the beneficiaries can feel that project organisers and trainers are people substantively engaged in the project, they care about good quality of work and achieving smart results. Consequently, the beneficiaries become more motivated, and copying the attitudes of project promoters they do their best to perform their tasks properly.

3.4 Which measures implemented or coordinated by the Foundation have contributed most to the visibility of the best Polish experiences and to spreading the image of Poland as a valuable partner with stable growth prospects?

The visibility of Polish projects is largely related to the nature of Polish projects and activities, but the factor that plays a special role is the question of time – multi-annual projects or projects financed over longer periods certainly bring many benefits, while in the case of one-year projects there is hardly any visibility.

The image of Poland as a valuable partner of development assistance is affected mainly by the features that make us different. Importantly, these are also the features that compensate, to a large extent, the objective fact that relatively small funds are earmarked for development assistance delivered by Poland.

Therefore, it is worth mentioning those special features of Polish projects that affect their visibility:

- **In-depth understanding of the local realities** – as described above, owing to close cooperation with partners as early as the project concept development stage, the activities in the *Support for Democracy* area are considered relevant.
- **Flexibility in matching local conditions** – e.g. in taking into account the farm work cycle, specific periods of school activity, etc. As one of the interlocutors said:

"Poles have a better understanding of the specificity of Georgia than other, foreign partners and funders. Our coordinator knows Georgia like not many Georgians. With Poles, planning everything is easy – they know that when farm work has to be done no meetings with locals would make sense, etc."

This observation is even stronger in the case of Ukraine. Both Poles themselves and Ukrainians, and representatives of other donor countries can see the advantage of Polish projects because of their understanding of the specificity of Ukraine, dependencies between different institutions, as well as linguistic proximity. It is a common opinion that this facilitates the implementation of projects. Poles present themselves as experts in development assistance in Ukraine, which is partly justified.

- **No unnecessary red tape** – e.g. in accounting for projects. Assistance recipients know that all projects, irrespective of the donor country, will be perceived as involving too many formalities in accounting. However, they have got used to this over time and are aware which requirements are indeed necessary, and which result from officiousness. Tunisia is an exception, where the need to document costs incurred with an invoice is not understandable to everyone. However, one of the Georgian partners said:

"Poles are easier to work with, because there is less red tape; everything is fixed at the beginning of a Polish project, and we look at things in a similar way. Take UNICEF, for example, where many Georgians work – I've had some contacts with them (with Georgians) and there's so much bureaucracy there that I was absolutely stunned (in spite of my many years' experience in administration). You won't feel this in Polish projects. They understand the realities better."

- **High substantive commitment of Polish partners and coordinators** – there is widespread belief among assistance recipients, irrespective of the recipient countries, that Poles deliver development assistance in good faith and for idealistic reasons. Partners know that with a limited budget it is not pay-related issues that drive decisions to be involved in development projects. Also the partners have no chance to be paid as high remuneration for their participation in a project as they could expect in the case of USAID, IMF or European Commission funding. One of the Georgian partners said:

"I can't say Czechs are hard to work with, but they don't understand Georgian specificity as well as Poles do. Polish partners are deeply engaged in the process, they take upon themselves a part of the burden of events. I don't see Poles' involvement as control".

- **Investing in human capital, in soft skills – universal values** – many beneficiaries pointed out that Polish projects were different from those proposed both by other NGOs and public institutions in that exceptionally much attention was paid to what often were special needs of recipients and to developing working methods that could lead to changes in mentality. This leads the beneficiaries to build their competences around universal values which are applicable in the course of their further social or professional activity.

"The training events are organised taking into account teachers' needs, they are aimed at developing the skills in the future, they are not one-day events, and they are interrelated."

Examples of this kind of approach include education development projects. And while there are other donors, none of them offers soft components – Japan builds kindergartens, Lithuania and Latvia renovate and equip educational facilities. Only the Polish donors think about preparing staff for running those pre-school centres:

"We always add a soft component – our approach is based on the belief that access is foremost, or otherwise a pre-school will not exist, but what comes next is quality – if we buy tables and chairs, but do not change the attitude of carers, teachers whose role seems to be limited to imposing discipline, no actual change will take place – a child's development will not be fostered. We always add a soft component – teacher training – we suggest a programme where the carer's work means looking at the child's development in a conscious way."

- **Proximity of historical experience**, which leads to understanding between partners. Project promoters and beneficiaries emphasise how important mutual understanding is, resulting from a similar historical past, and on the other hand from Poland's great achievements:

"Poland is a very important example for us, because it is close to us in terms of mentality, history, kind and number of enemies. But also in terms of relations – the attitude I can feel from Poles is that they all love Georgia – all this affects cooperation – attitudes towards cooperation. We – Poles and Georgians – have very much in common. This is why we find it easier working together, but we also learn a lot from them. Georgia is changing following in Poland's footsteps "

"And Poles understand us well – they understand everything very well [problems, difficulties] , because they have gone through all this and this is why it's very easy for us to work with them. And they find it easier to understand us. We've known each other for so many years and they know our situation so well that we no longer have to explain our situation".

- **Conveying practical skills** – practically all Polish projects contain a practical component, which makes them stand out distinctly among other measures, especially in training projects addressed to schools and teachers. **Wisely organised study visits to Poland** are an exceptional element that lends a practical edge to knowledge and experience transferred – preferably using the training component during the visit or a detailed review of the visit after return. It is important to identify well the participants' needs and expectations before the start of study visits. What is equally important is the right choice of places/ institutions to be visited, which guarantees that participants will study various practices and will be able to use the knowledge gained in their work or activity. It is worth noting at this point that, in principle, Polish projects meet the above conditions.
- **Measures implemented in regions and generating bottom-up changes** – many project promoters and beneficiaries pointed out that working in regions is a unique feature of Polish projects. In the opinion of many respondents, it is a highly relevant approach, serving gradual

bottom-up changes in the local country, while observation of those results is significantly deferred in time.

"Polish projects, which are so very local, play a great role in developing education in Georgia – especially education in regions."

Factors affecting the visibility of projects:

- **Project duration** – multi-annual projects (supported under modular projects or financed over several years) yield more visible effects and thus help to promote Poland's image. The logic of small, but long-term steps is necessary for such projects which entail changes in mentality, investment in human capital or soft skills. This is neatly reflected in the following quote:

"Civic education is at a very low level here and a lot has to be done in this area. Let me give you an example from another area: driving culture – why do Poles fix seatbelts? For safety. And Georgians – to avoid a ticket. A question of mentality."

- **Cooperation with local state institutions** – while such cooperation is often difficult to establish, projects that rely on cooperation with the authorities to achieve impact while cooperating with local institutions as a result of multi-annual activities, are capable of generating much better and visible results. The question of cooperation with a local institution unfortunately depends on very many local factors which vary over time and are highly subjective, i.e. on the person holding a particular office at a given moment, the overall political climate in the country and the region, and finally on changes in the main political parties.

It should be noted that not all of the evaluated projects managed to engage public institutions in continuing the projects on a sustainable basis. This testifies partly to an incorrect diagnosis of the situation or the overly optimistic assumption that project outcomes will be continued.

- **Focus on soft measures**

In the course of evaluation, the issue of the ratio of soft projects to infrastructural projects emerged at the global level of Polish aid. Opinions were expressed that the recipients of services, in particular Georgians, but also Ukrainians and Tunisians, appreciate and respect Polish projects supporting democracy, but what would evoke greater enthusiasm were infrastructural projects thanks to which the results could be used almost immediately. This issue was explored, but it was mostly criticised. Project partners and recipients emphasised that there were no infrastructural projects under the Support for Democracy programme because, with some exceptions, there should be none. A vast majority of recipients have a good understanding of the idea of the Programme and can see its effects.

"Soft support – the niche for Polish aid – is what we should promote, highlight and show – that we have our programme, that we have teacher education programmes. This is our brand and our unique approach – provide equipment, but do so together with a change in approach, with a training component. And this Polish approach is visible – it stands out,

although Poland is not the largest donor, it is worth demonstrating our unique quality just like this – to buy equipment is simply not enough",

Focusing on soft projects in the Support for Democracy area also has a pragmatic dimension. It should be kept in mind that in infrastructural projects Polish aid will never match IMF's, EU's or USAID's support. On the other hand, soft projects supporting democracy have already established a brand which is worth making use of in future.

3.5 Did the measures undertaken respond to the beneficiaries' real needs? Has a diagnosis of needs been performed for the different countries? If so, on what data/ information was it based? Have those needs been satisfied by the measures performed?

The answer to the above question was given from two points of view. The first one focused on the projects themselves and the issue of relevance of the activities. The other one concerned a broader aspect and provided an answer to the question of whether, in global terms, projects carried out through the Foundation meet the needs of the target countries.

To start with, the majority of the project promoters have not undertaken a diagnosis of the needs defined as a separate measure, study, or in-depth monitoring of the local situation. However, such role is played by conversations and meetings with partners and beneficiaries which continue throughout the period preceding the submission of a proposal under a call for proposals. Most project promoters have carried such a diagnosis of the situation, problems and needs during their previous activities in the target country. Therefore, the awareness of the local situation usually relies on a previously gained knowledge of both partners, but also on direct contacts with the participants of previous projects. The beneficiaries of projects that have already been in progress for several years often emphasise that many months before the end of a project the project promoters inquire about any existing needs, plans for the future and areas in which it is worth supporting their development – one example is a Polish coordinator who often has additional meetings with editors to update her detailed knowledge of the local situation, in addition to evaluation sessions at the end of workshops.

As regards one-year projects, there is no doubt that the projects whose initiators are the project beneficiaries themselves are more effective and more adequate to the needs. Entering into cooperation often arises in such cases either from personal international contacts of individual people or from a previous study visit in a specific area, as a result of which project partners get to know each other and build their cooperation on content-based interest.

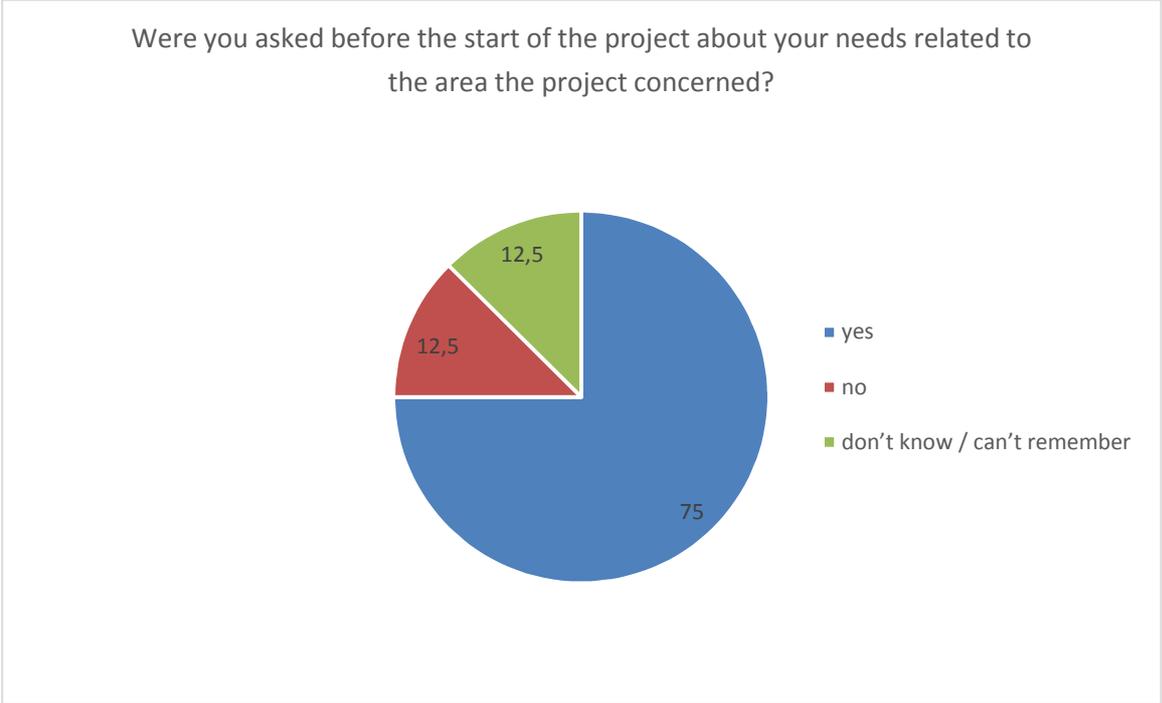
In other cases, where the initiator of cooperation is the Polish side, a diagnosis of the local situation and real needs of a specific group is sometimes imprecise, which is reflected in the effectiveness of project activities. This is usually due to the inability to travel to the target country and a particular region, which provides a better opportunity to understand challenges in a current situation prevailing in the area concerned. Project promoters very rarely use other options of financing a fact-finding visit. Due to very short implementation times of the Foundation's projects and the related huge time pressure over the course of the project, it seems that the offering should also be open to organisations that have been working in the area for many years, as under previous projects they often had no time or opportunity for an

additional journey, e.g., to visit the beneficiaries in their regions (e.g. local editorial offices or schools). An example of how such funds earmarked for a diagnosis can be utilised successfully is the situation of TDW, an organisation working with editorial teams in Georgia. After receiving funds from an external donor several years ago, they could organise a tour of local editorial offices, which enabled the Polish partners to see for themselves the condition of the editorial offices, how they worked and what support they needed. As emphasised by coordinators, it is the only way to establish a closer and more direct contact with beneficiaries. Beyond any doubt, the existence of opportunities for such visits also makes it possible to better diagnose the cooperation with a given partner, as nothing can replace a face-to-face meeting of partners and their direct conversation about a project and the needs to be satisfied with the use of projects.

In creating projects, many organisations also learn the broader context of the area in which they intend to become involved – relevant strategic documents or international agreements (e.g. applicable agreements with the European Commission or the European Union), but often this is limited to meeting formal requirements for a proposal rather than real in-depth understanding of the local legal situation in a particular subject-matter area. This results largely from a shortage of time for such an in-depth analysis, which requires additional translations from the local language. At the same time, Polish project promoters do not attach much importance to legal provisions because their working logic is often focused on providing assistance and sharing experiences with the immediate recipients – individual persons. Almost never do initial projects provide for changes at a central level, due to which project promoters do not see much need to refer to formal documents. What is more important to them is what people and specific social groups need.

The above conclusions closely correspond with the data acquired in the questionnaire survey. It shows that exactly 3/4 of the respondents were asked in some way about needs related to a planned project.

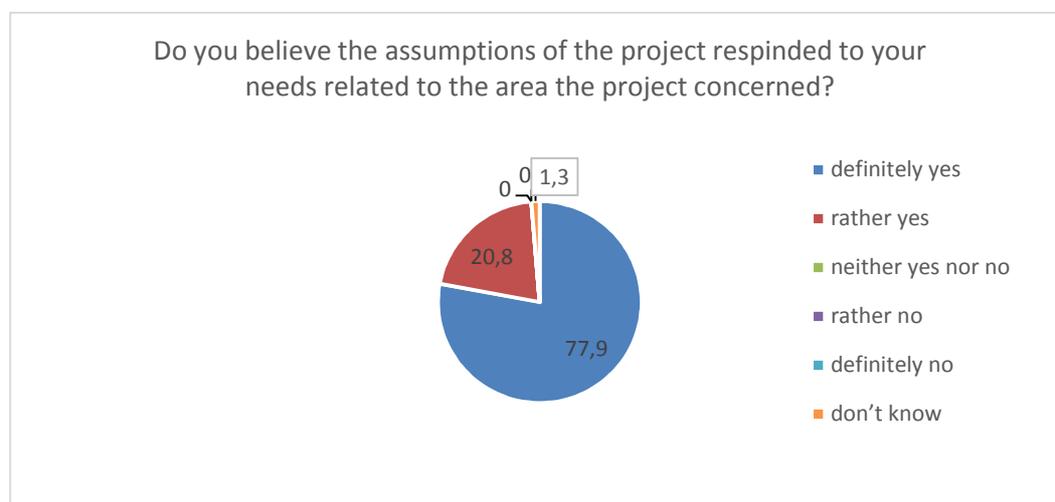
Chart 3 Assessment of a survey of recipients' needs



Source: CAWI survey among project participants.

More importantly, almost all respondents (as in the case of Component II) believe the project responded to their needs.

Chart 4. Assessment of the relevance of projects



Source: CAWI survey among project participants.

Polish projects usually respond well to the needs existing in the particular target group with which they work. This usually is the case because of the high commitment of Polish partners and their profound understanding of the local situation. In addition, the Polish partner is often the initiator of work at the local level, in a remote region – for the local partner, it is sometimes the first contact established with such remote regions. A good diagnosis of the needs, understanding of the local situation combined with local work in remote regions where beneficiaries have no access to another type of support – all this makes the projects respond to local needs.

The area that obviously needs refinement is the diagnosis of the needs and capabilities of institutional partners, mainly state institutions. Project promoters are sometimes too optimistic hoping for cooperation with local units of state institutions, which in fact proves impossible or hardly realistic. A special example of such relationship is the cooperation with the Resource Centre in Georgia, i.e. regional school and teacher support centres (institutions reporting directly to the Ministry) without which working with schools is practically impossible, while on the other hand developing deeper cooperation going beyond the formal dimension (e.g. using trained teachers - trainers from remote villages) is often doomed to failure. It seems that this area needs some refinement and support from the Foundation and the MFA.

Also from the point of view of all the activities pursued by the Foundation, it should be noted that the measure undertaken in the Support for Democracy area are in line with the needs of the recipient countries. The Foundation has a good understanding of the current needs, which arises mainly from the knowledge and competence of its employees, but also from experience in implementing individual projects. The relatively strong involvement of project sponsors in the implementation process makes it possible to directly ask the recipients about their needs related

to further activities. What is also important is the evaluation of projects, which is required by the Foundation and which provides a starting point for programming further activities.

Also the call for proposals procedures minimise the risk of co-financing a project that does not meet the recipients' needs. In the evaluators' opinion, in pursuing tasks commissioned by the MFA, the Foundation has a vision of what kind of projects are most useful in a given year and which could contribute to providing real support to democracy in the target countries. It is also worth noting that the Foundation is able to commission activities through calls for proposals, the scope of which is strictly defined in terms of the place and time of execution, as well as the scope of activity. This makes it possible to quickly and efficiently perform tasks dictated by a dynamic political situation.

3.6 Which projects have been most effective in terms of the cost-benefit ratio? Are there any reasons (e.g. political or strategic) for which projects achieving low effectiveness should be continued in future? Does the commissioning of tasks to the Foundation by the MFA make the implementation of projects more effective and/or efficient?

The issue of effectiveness of projects falling within Component I is related to their utility, as it concerns the relation between the inputs (in terms of finance, time and personnel) and the effects achieved. As already mentioned, in the case of projects concerning support for democracy it is difficult to assess long-term effects of projects over a period that has passed since their completion. What can be assessed are the direct results and factors affecting utility. This clearly shows a correlation between the utility of projects and their effectiveness, i.e. it is assumed that high effectiveness occurs where projects are useful from the recipients' point of view.

The projects assessed as being most effective are those which managed to deliver results directly benefitting recipients. Therefore a high rating is assigned to projects in the course of which a group of leaders was created (they are usually trainers who have improved their skills) who will subsequently share their knowledge and experience with others. This is because they can bring about a sustainable change in attitudes in a relatively large group of recipients. High effectiveness is also reported in the case of the network of Public Information Centres established in Ukraine, as the project enjoys high interest among recipients and provides capacity for further multiplication of activities by the Ukrainian partners.

Equally high effectiveness has been seen in the case of projects supporting local media in Tunisia. The implementation of the projects made many young journalists and social activists aware of the importance of local media to the process of democracy building. By changing the participants' awareness, the project results will be reflected in the development of local newspapers.

In the case of Georgian projects, basically all the evaluated projects were assessed as being effective, with the reservation that most of them needed continuation and that a lack of support next year could result in the loss of sustainability and hence a significant deterioration of effectiveness. This applies e.g. to the mediation process support project.

Hence projects that do not provide for the creation of a sustainable structure or under which no group of leaders has emerged that would be committed to a further dissemination of project results, are considered less effective. This applies, e.g. to the project supporting the elimination of corruption at Ukrainian schools of higher education – even though the project was highly relevant and efficiently delivered, the effects of its implementation are hard to see today. Thus it cannot be concluded that its effects have satisfied the expectations and needs of the target groups, and hence it cannot be assessed as being effective.

In response to the last part of the above research question, the evaluators thoroughly analysed numerous statements by the interviewees, in which they compared the Foundation and the MFA. The situation itself where the two institutions are viewed as competing with each other is unfavourable for the Polish aid system. It should be kept in mind that the Foundation was established to provide development assistance in promoting democracy in countries lacking democratic instruments. The MFA commissions tasks to the Foundation which require sufficient flexibility owing to their nature, which is hard to come by in a public administration department. Indeed, the question whether the decision to commission the Foundation to implement projects under the Support for Democracy programme contributed to the improvement of their effectiveness and utility was the main subject of analyses in response to the above research question.

In the course of field research, the respondents often emphasised a significant change in the coordination of projects implemented in cooperation with Solidarity Fund PL as compared to the projects carried out directly under the supervision of the MFA. In this context, the respondents do not raise any explicit objections against the MFA, but do emphasise that the Foundation is an institution that performs its tasks well. This applies both to the substantive engagement of employees and to the overall vision of the building a development policy in the area of support for democracy. The most appreciated aspects are those facilitating mutual cooperation: high commitment of project sponsors in the process of their implementation, friendly, but also highly competent attitude to problems emerging in the course of activities, understanding of the countries in which projects are carried out, and appropriate feedback provided during projects and after their completion, as well as good organisation and efficient execution of monitoring visits.

Project promoters' suggestions for the Foundation

The fact that the advantages of working with the Foundation are noticed does not mean that project promoters cannot see areas where improvements would be welcome. They could also be categorised into organisational and content-related issues.

Organisational issues:

Providing feedback after rejection of a grant application – project promoters whose project was rejected pointed to insufficient information about reasons for giving a lower rating to their projects. Project promoters receive feedback which is highly positive in its wording, contains individual remarks of a cosmetic nature but fails to provide specific information on what exactly has caused the project to be awarded a few points less than another one. The reasons given

include comments that e.g. administration costs are high, which is of no value to the project promoter if the competition rules are observed (15% of the budget is not exceeded).

I would expect better information, because this would enable me to improve the project – as long as the costs do not exceed the 15% limit, an opinion that they are too high seems to me inappropriate and contrary to the rules of procedure – I should not be given such an opinion as long as I don't exceed that amount; to me, such an opinion is useless because I know administration cost simply have to be incurred. They can hardly be overestimated – a project will not execute itself automatically.

Greater clarity and transparency of rules applied to financial accounting – the project promoters points out that sometimes it is not quite clear why certain rules concerning financial documents change every year – documents which are accepted in a given year turn out to be incorrect the next year (with no general legislative changes in between). This is especially difficult for project promoters because they learn about this in the course of financial monitoring, i.e. usually mid-way into the project. Even though correcting documents and exchanging comments, and the whole process in general proceed smoothly, project promoters suggest that any such changes should be notified at the start of a project.

Content-related issues:

The content-related expectations towards the Foundation largely depend on the particular coordinator's personality and way of working – some appreciate close, peer-to-peer cooperation and the donor's support, while others treat such relations officially, without going into much detail. Both attitudes can be observed among very experienced coordinators and those less familiar with international cooperation. This makes some of them expect certain content-related activities inspiring a community, while others would rather explore information about the area and the region of their work directly with their local partners.

The best experts on Georgia are Georgians, so I don't need experts from Poland. I don't know how the Foundation could help me as coordinator – I've already been dealing with coordination for 20 years and do not expect much support any more. As soon as a project is accepted, I acknowledge my obligation to report, meet all contractual provisions, but I'm also independent and expect a degree of freedom. I don't want anyone to interfere with the project's execution, I do recognise the sponsor's rights, but...

At the same time, other coordinators appreciate support in the form of content-related meetings concerning a given area or country, while admitting that they usually do not participate in them, mainly because of their absence during the implementation of a project in the recipient country.

Yet among the suggestions was one concerning **evaluation support** – in-depth training, workshops, the ability to turn to a professional who could support the coordinator in organizing a project evaluation.

I'd like to complete such training because it is very useful in the coordinator's work – no matter whether or not the coordinator hires someone to do the job, such knowledge would

come in very handy. I attended one training course but it was too short – I had expected more. First of all, that such training would be delivered using active methods. Another course was supposed to have been arranged this year, but not enough people were interested.

To sum up the issues concerning the above research question, it should be said that the Foundation does fulfil the tasks contracted by the MFA. The execution of tasks related to the promotion of democracy in Georgia, Tunisia and Ukraine by the Foundation has made their implementation increasingly effective. The Foundation, while using public funds is obliged to settle its accounts with the MFA in a transparent manner, may carry out activities in a more confidential way where confidentiality is required. This is related mainly to the risks involved in working in undemocratic countries.

4. Conclusions

- What remains a basic barrier in implementing Polish aid is the inability to finance multi-annual projects. All actors involved in activities in Georgia, Tunisia and Ukraine are aware of this problem. The introduction of the possibility to apply for two-year (modular) projects is a step towards solving it, but the problem still exists (Sect. 3.4, p. 27).
- Projects implemented under the priority, *Support for Democracy*, are characterised by high relevance. This is due to, among other things, the good identification of the recipients' needs. This identification is carried out based on the applicant's experience and contacts with local partners, and much less often on a systematic diagnosis. (Sect. 3.5, pp. 29-31).
- Good cooperation with local partners making the projects more relevant is one of their strengths. In many cases, cooperation between Polish and local organisations has already been going on for many years and it is related not only to the initiatives undertaken within the framework of Polish aid. The partners engage content-wise, and they are often invited to contribute to the concept development process even in advance of the grant application. This clearly affects the relevance of projects, and consequently the effectiveness and sustainability of the measures undertaken (Sect. 3.4, p. 25; Sect. 3.5, str. 29-31).
- Projects which have not attained the planned utility include those where state institutions failed to be involved at a sufficient level. This applies to situations where activities carried out by NGOs were not reflected and are not continued in measures undertaken by the administration at subsequent stages. For this reason, long-term effects are not achieved despite the achievement of the planned results. There are two reasons for non-involvement on the part of institutions: ill-advised project assumptions in situations where institutions have no such activities within their remit, or failure to produce effects that would encourage institutions to become involved. (Sect. 3.5, p. 31)
- The success of a project often hinges on the right choice of the coordinator – they are usually individuals with leadership skills, very strong personality and highly committed to substance. The coordinator is usually the driver of cooperation between the applicant and the partner. However, this gives rise to the problem (a potential rather than an actual problem now) that in a situation where the coordinator cannot continue a project or follow-up for any reason, there will be nobody around to replace him or her. Experience builds coordinators' potential and personal skills, and the organisation's potential to a much lesser extent (Sect. 3.4, p. 30)
- Sometimes projects prove unsustainable because the local partner has not become sufficiently engaged in trying to raise funding from other sources. As long as the Polish organisation provides financing, the partner is interested in activities, but if the project receives no financing and there is no pressure from the Polish organisation, the partner is no longer interested. Local partners often do not look for other sources of funding and the project is discontinued.
- In the case of projects which assume work with a group of pupils or students, modular projects prove particularly useful. It is very difficult to work in a school and carry out activities that make sense and produce the intended effects within 3 months (basically, September - November). Nevertheless, few organisations want to realise modular projects (Sect. 3.1, p. 19)

- A problem has been identified of Polish NGOs tending not to apply for funds under international programmes or those financed by other countries. This is disadvantageous, as grants obtained this way could be used to continue or disseminate the results of Polish aid projects. Therefore, efforts must be made to ensure that Polish organisations file more applications for non-domestic funding.
- No clear demarcation is drawn between activities carried out by the Foundation under priority Support for Democracy and the projects implemented by the MFA. The lack of a clear distinction between these areas is visible mainly in projects concerning broad-based education and supporting local activity (Sect. 3.1, p. 19).
- There are different models and different expectations of beneficiaries regarding the Foundation's role in preparing and implementing projects, from very formal ones – fulfilment of obligations, no need for support from the Foundation, to a very direct model of ongoing contact and consultations with the funder. Meetings at the Foundation with groups on study visits are a very good practice. (Sect. 3.6., p. 34)
- Monitoring visits arranged by the Foundation are highly appreciated. The visits are useful in the current and final evaluation of projects, help to understand the realities under which activities are carried on, and build relations between the Foundation's project sponsors and coordinators, local partners and recipients. (Sect. 3.6, p.33)
- What remains an open question is whether the Foundation should place more focus on cooperation between Polish entities operating in a similar area in one country – e.g. to combine support provided to a local newspaper with school events under educational programmes. Organisations do not tend to think in terms of the common good (generating a social change together) and instead think in terms of their own successful project. Some even communicate in a straightforward manner their disbelief in such initiatives because organisations are compete against each other and are not willing to engage in such activities. However, cooperation would certainly be conducive to the effectiveness of project activities – a synergy producing better results in the target country (Sect. 3.6, p. 34)
- There is currently little synergy between various projects, including that between the activities of local organisations (partners of Polish projects) and other organisations active in a given country. This results in lower effectiveness of projects. Situations occur where participants from one region do not benefit from outcomes of Polish projects implemented in other parts of the country (e.g. publications, educational materials developed, etc.).
- Polish businesses have been found to underperform when it comes to benefitting from the outcomes of development assistance. The benchmarking shows that other European countries do not conceal the fact that development assistance may also serve the development of business links. (Appendix 2, Benchmarking)

5. Recommendations

No	Recommendation content	Implementation method	Rationale	Recommendation addressee
1	Solutions should be introduced that will enable multi-annual projects to be undertaken.	<p>Possible system solutions should be sought. A change of the way projects are financed – now out of budget reserve – to direct financing out of the MFA budget should be considered.</p> <p>The possibility of applying for three-year (modular) projects should be considered.</p>	<p>The non-availability of financing for multi-annual projects makes applicants unable to plan long-term support in the field covered by the project. Ensuring longer-term financing would make it possible to undertake larger projects providing receptively meaningful effects. It would also make it possible to build the potential of those NGOs that implement democratisation projects.</p> <p>Two-year (modular) projects produce a greater effect, therefore an effort should be made to introduce three-year projects.</p>	DDC/Foundation
2	Greater attention should be paid to a comprehensive and systematic diagnosis of recipients' needs at the project concept preparation stage.	<p>In the competition procedure, credit points should be awarded, when evaluating applications, for a complex diagnosis based on multiple sources, including an analysis of documents, publications, research, data, etc.</p> <p>Another instrument that can be used to a greater extent is that of fact-finding visits prior to the submission of a proposal – even if partners know each other well, such a visit, combined with</p>	<p>The research has shown that projects involving measures supporting democracy are relevant in principle, but the relevance is based on experience stemming from cooperation under previous projects. There is often no reference to data, analyses and research. Partners are usually the source of information about needs.</p> <p>There are cases where possible involvement of local institutions or their willingness to continue activities after a project has been</p>	Foundation/Project promoters

		the possibility of making a detailed diagnosis of the situation may significantly reduce the risk and costs of implementing a project.	completed was too much taken for granted.	
3	In the case of projects concerning education, the use of modular projects is recommended.	In the competition process, two-year projects should be promoted among projects concerning education. Applicants planning to undertake activities at schools or universities should apply for two-year projects.	Because of the school year cycle (September-June) one-year projects do not work when their activities involve pupils or students. Under such projects, the effective time of work with recipients amounts to 1 or 2 months.	Foundation/Project promoters
4	One should revert to mechanisms of supporting Polish entities in raising funds for development projects from sources other than the Polish state budget (in particular, from foreign sources) by providing a part of own contribution required by funders.	It is necessary to go back to the mechanism of "own contributions" that would be used to establish partnerships, diagnose needs and prepare applications to foreign competitions.	Increasing the potential of Polish organisations will enable them to seek foreign funding. This will make it possible to achieve the effect of multiplication of the outcomes of projects implemented under Polish aid programmes.	DDC/Foundation
5	Greater involvement of diplomatic missions in the implementation of Polish aid measures, e.g. by creating positions dedicated to Polish development assistance, thereby strengthening the staffing of embassies in the priority countries for Polish aid.	It should become a standard that an international cooperation position is maintained at Embassies in priority countries. Such an Embassy employee should maintain closer ongoing contact with project promoters and partners.	The role of Embassies is key for effective implementation of projects. These are MFA representatives available locally who can support beneficiaries and partners, monitor the implementation of projects and become involved in the networking process to a greater extent.	MFA
6	It is suggested that the Foundation's project offices should be opened in the priority countries for Polish aid, through which the Foundation's activities will be carried out (modelled on the Solidarity	The opening of offices should be the Foundation's own activity financed with the MFA funds. The scope of activity of the offices should be adjusted to the local needs and conditions, but it is	The setting up of the Foundation's offices will help to establish cooperation with institutions and organisations from priority countries, stay in touch with them, diagnose needs, monitor projects, provide ongoing	DDC/Foundation

	Fund PL Office in Kyiv).	necessary to draw on good practices of the Information Centre for Local Authorities in Moldova and the Solidarity Fund PL Office in Kyiv.	assistance to beneficiaries and recipients, etc. It will also make it easier for the Foundation to carry on its own activities in the priority countries for Polish aid. Poland's position as donor in the priority countries will be strengthened.	
7	It is recommended that the MFA's and the Foundation's tasks should be defined in a more precise manner and that the allocation of tasks between the MFA and the Foundation should be maintained under projects commissioned to the Foundation for implementation, so as to avoid the risk of duplication of measures financed from different sources.	A discussion is necessary about the allocation of tasks between the MFA and the Foundation, ending with specific conclusions and leading to a decision for the years to come.	Efforts should be made to achieve clear prioritisation of Polish aid and a clear allocation of tasks between the MFA and the Foundation. A clear division line will also facilitate communication with project promoters and the planning of activities with regard to cooperation with individual funders, having regard to their project cycles.	DDC/Foundation
8	The improvement of the utility of projects relating to the education sector implemented in Georgia may be achieved through closer cooperation at the institutional level and support for the modernisation of the Resource Centres.	Consideration should be given to the implementation of a project supporting the modernisation of the Resource Centres as the Foundation's own activity. Proposals for cooperation in this area should be discussed with the Georgian Ministry of Education. It is necessary to become actively involved in supporting the educational reform in Georgia.	The lack of involvement of state institutions in continuing project activities is a significant problem in terms of the utility and sustainability of Polish projects related to education in Georgia. System-based support to administration units will be conducive to sustainable involvement in the process of continuing projects.	DDC/FOUNDATION
9	Greater synergies should be sought between different projects for Polish aid implemented in different countries.	In providing Polish aid, the role of embassies should be increased, which should gather information on an ongoing basis about projects	Little synergy has been identified between various projects, including that between the activities of local organisations (partners of Polish projects) and other organisations active in a given country. This results in a	DDC

		<p>executed in different countries.</p> <p>The creation of a public electronic database of projects, project materials and names of project promoters (Polish and local) is worth considering.</p>	<p>lower effectiveness of projects. Situations occur where participants from one region do not benefit from outcomes of Polish projects implemented in other parts of the country (e.g. publications, educational materials developed, etc.).</p>	
10	<p>Efforts should be made to ensure that the effects of project implementation are linked more closely to business benefits of Polish economic operators.</p>	<p>Polish businesses must be promoted to a greater extent as service providers / equipment suppliers under projects. Cooperation with relevant units at Embassies should be tightened, especially with the Commercial Departments.</p>	<p>In the event that in order to implement a project equipment or services have to be purchased which are not available in the country where the project is being carried out, it seems reasonable to make sure the suppliers are Polish enterprises. This will help to expand activities in what are often new markets.</p> <p>Measurable benefits gained in connection with the implementation of development assistance tasks should be communicated to the general public.</p>	<p>Foundation/ DDC/ Embassies</p>

