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Civic Engagement in Local Governance (CELoG) Program

Quarterly Progress Report

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJC - Asparez Journalists' Club

CRRC - Caucasus Research Resource Centers-Armenia

CELoG - Civic Engagement in Local Governance

CoP – Chief of Party

CSO - Civil Society Organization

CFOA - Communities Finance Officers' Association

ECRG - Engaged Citizens for Responsive Governance Project

EPF - Eurasia Partnership Foundation

FoI – Freedom of Information

GOAM - Government of Armenia

ISTDC - Information Systems Development and Training Center

LG - Local Government

LSG - Local Self-government

MAB - Management Advisory Board

MICE - Media for Informed Civic Engagement

MIC - Media Initiatives Center

MMIS - Municipal Management Information System

MTAD- Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development

NA - National Assembly

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

OAS - Organizational Activity Seminar

TARA - Territorial-Administrative Reform in Armenia

TIAC - Transparency International Anti-corruption Center

YB-Youth Bank

YPC - Yerevan Press Club

POLITICAL CONTEXT

The reporting period had several important developments that allow imagining major tendencies in LG further development.

One of the most important developments of the reporting period was the LG elections in 69 communities of Armenia. This development was particularly important in light of the community consolidation process, since the significant number of these communities were multi-settlement communities. Although CELoG consortium did not monitor the election, however it was following the process and major developments. These observations have particularly shown that although in general there is decrease of interest towards electoral processes in Armenia, however in case of LG elections particularly the importance of the community council elections in voters' perceptions is growing. It is also worth mentioning that the level of understanding that the LG elections became more important after the constitutional changes has grown.

Another important happening in the reporting period was the address of President Serj Sargsyan to the LG representatives during the conference organized in Dilijan on December 9th. The speech was systemic by its essence though was controversial in terms of the discrepancy between the expectation formulated and the existing reality in LG sector. One of the major highlights of the speech was the underlined necessity for LGs to become more self-sustainable and to rely less on the support from the central authorities. Sargsyan has stated that LG should take and carry more responsibility to lead the community development process and initiate community level reforms. This in line with the statements of the Prime-Minister Karen Karapetyan on targeting the economic development of communities seems to be a legitimate speech and a logical expectation. However the controversy in Sargsyan's statements is between the formulated expectations and the readiness of central authorities to provide more resources and autonomy to local level. This creates a concern that the active phase of decentralization reform that is approaching will launch in conditions where there is discrepancy between the activities, expectations and vision expressed on declarative level and the actual situation in the communities and the country in general.

SUMMARY OF CONDUCTED ACTIVITIES

Objective 1: To sustain and improve civil society's ability to engage citizens and articulate their interests in local self-government and in the process of the implementation of the decentralization reform;

1.9 Ensuring the quality and user-friendliness of texts, media materials and web materials (EPF)

EPF continued to support consortium partners in development of media materials. EPF team members have authored several articles for Hamaynq-Hamategh newspaper issues, assisted InfoTuns in developing success stories for celog.am web portal as well as worked closely with JCA team during the development of 11th and 12th issues of the quarterly newsletter.

In addition to that EPF team has finalized the design of CELoG dissemination materials (notebooks, folders and T-shirts) that were submitted to CFOA for approval and will be printed during the next reporting period.

Activity 1.10. Cooperation with other development actors and other consortia (CFOA, EPF, AJC)

During the reporting period CELoG team continued its cooperation with other development actors. CELoG has periodically used its communication resources -- the website, mailing lists and Hamaynq-Hamategh monthly for dissemination of announcements, news and other information about CSO Depo, MICE, Engaged Citizens for Responsive Governance Project (ECRG), My Armenia and other projects.

CELoG team also supported MICE during a training organized by EPF for media outlets. Namely CELoG team members have provided with handout materials related to LG sector as well as facilitated group work on LG related media projects during the training. In addition to the above mentioned CELoG team also supported MICE project in providing comments on some of its LG related media products.

Objective 2: To strengthen civil society’s capacity to monitor the central and local government institutions and officials, and the implementation of the decentralization reform

2.2 Annual media awards (YPC)

Monitoring of the Armenian media coverage on LG

During the reporting period, YPC carried out a monitoring of the Armenian media coverage on LG issues. Around 20 broadcast, print and online media organizations were monitored including Public Television, Armenia TV, Shant TV, Hetq.am, Aravot.am, ALTv.am, Panorama.am, Armtimes.am, Azatutyun.am, 1in.am, Armlur.com, Armday.com, Civilnet.am, A1plus.am, Tert.am, News.am, Shamshyan.com etc. Media outlets mostly covered the pre-election campaign of LG elections to be held on November 5, 2017. Publications mainly presented partisan affiliation of nominated candidates. Almost all pieces emphasized the dominance of the ruling Republican Party. Media mainly referred to the candidates’ figures, their positions and property, business and family ties. The election programs of the candidates were almost neglected mostly because of the absence of the candidates’ pre-election platforms.

The monitoring of the October coverage showed that, as in the preceding and final process of the community consolidation, the publications continued to express the negative attitudes toward the overall consolidation process such as the unwariness of the residents about the importance of the LG strategic reforms, the fears that might arise after the community consolidation and the rapid positive social outcome expectations of the population from the reforms.

In November, media coverage was mostly dedicated to the LG elections, in particular the issues of electoral process, violations recorded during the voting and cases of obstructing the work of journalists. Media stressed the fact that the local elections did not bring new faces and individuals to the local power, as in 37 out of 52 communities acting community leaders were elected, some of whom have been in office for more than 20 years. The elections and the community consolidation have become an occasion for the media to address specific issues of the local life. For example, in this context, environmental issues in Alaverdi as well as the examination of lawfulness of Vanadzor community council's work by the Constitutional Court were reflected in media coverage.

The most memorable LG event in December was the speech of the Armenian President S.

Sargsyan during the meeting with LG officials in Dilijan, when he openly stated that they would not allow community leaders to waste state funds. Moreover, the president made it clear that he is well aware of the corrupt practices of some mayors. Media responded very actively to this event: some have completely published the President's prolonged speech, while others have made some quotes and published analytical, critical pieces.

Another important event in December was the launch of the Community Level Access to Social Services (CLASS) Program in Armenia", which will support the establishment of a social worker institution within the LG system over the coming years.

2.3 Collection, classification and placement of materials related to budgets, policy and legal changes and amendments, suggestions on reform improvement on www.publicdata.am (AJC)

During the reporting period AJC and EPF teams had a joint meeting to discuss possible structural and content related improvements of the www.publicdata.am website based on the decisions of the consortium on this issue made during the consortium retreat in September 2017. Particularly, two issues were discussed: classification of CELoG related components of the website under a single set of categories and more user friendly data visualization of the LG Transparency report. AJC has started implementation of discussed activities and during the next reporting period the improved version of the website will be presented to the consortium.

2.4 Public discussions of annual community budgets and community development plans (CFOA)

During the reporting period CFOA has provided technical support to the target LGs in organizing and implementing public discussions of the community budgets. Starting from mid-November CFOA experts have contacted heads of selected communities proposing technical assistance and necessary methodological support for organization of the hearings. CFOA experts have offered formats of brief budgets, charts and visual materials to help LGs to present the information on budgetary figures in user friendly manner. As a result public discussions in 32 communities were organized in December, from which in 27 communities CFOA experts partook and provided necessary assistance (See Annex 9 for the list of communities).

Total number of participants in discussion was 1175, from which 589 (or 50.1%) male and 587 (or 49.9%) female. It should be mentioned that in comparison with previous reporting periods there is a significant increase in the number of participants. In a previous year there were around 780 participants. In comparison with the last year, there is 50% of increase this year.

Among the above mentioned public discussions the pilot approach of using community website to promote online discussion of the community budget was applied in Ashtarak. As a result, there were in total 18 comments and suggestions submitted online by community members, which illustrates that such action can precede the offline public discussion to stimulate substantial public involvement (See Annex 1 for the snap-chart of the community website). During the next period ISDTC and EPF will organize a discussion to analyze the case and develop proposals for institutionalization and improvement of this mechanism.

2.10 Shadow report and an alternative roadmap (EPF)

During the reporting period EPF has received the first draft of the shadow report on community property management in Tumanyan, Tatev and Dilijan communities. Currently EPF team is communicating changes and improvements with the team of experts to finalize the report that will be presented during the next reporting period.

During the InfoTun planning session in Armavir the joint brainstorming brought up an idea to organize grassroots level discussion on consolidation of communities in Armavir region. This idea was communicated with CFOA and resulted in launching the process of development of an alternative road map on community consolidation in Armavir region.

EPF, CFOA, Armavir InfoTun and CRRC teams jointly developed a questionnaire that was firstly used for telephone interviews with LG heads and afterwards during a town hall meeting. Representatives of community institutions, LGs as well as active citizens were invited. Both activities resulted in development of possible consolidation scenarios that were afterwards compared and compiled with each other. The final report on the alternative road map contained general observations on the perceptions and expectations of the population from the consolidation process. The second part of the road map offered possible scenarios and combinations for consolidation of communities in the former Armavir region of Armavir marz. The report was submitted to CFOA. It is planned to share the report with MTAD and LGs from Armavir region as well as to organize presentations for all interested stakeholders in case of necessity. (See Annex 2 for the alternative road map report).

Objective 3: To increase citizens' access to independent and reliable information on the decentralization reform

3.2 Small grants to target communities, Infotun and Youth Bank networks for monitoring (CFOA, EPF, CRRC)

CFOA Small Grants

During the reporting period CFOA was managing 5 sub-grants in the framework of the small grants component. As in the previous stages, the grants were designed to foster public participation in the communities by using different means and tools. For instance, in Tumanyan consolidated community the main focus was on Community development plan and Budget for 2018. For this purpose active groups were formed in each settlement of the community to monitor implementation of the development plan and make suggestions for the budget.

In Gavar, Sarukhan, Noratus and Karmirgygh (“Geghareg” NGO), as well as Tegh and Tatev (“Dynamica” Initiative) communities, capacity building seminars, focus-group discussions on community issues and competition were organized. “Geghareg” NGO, which is implementing the small grant in these communities, was actively involved in community hearings and provided communication channels for wider dissemination about community council meeting.

In Parakar and Metsamor communities the cultural life is used for active participation. A number of cultural events and contests are organized to bring the communities' issues to the LG's attention, create dialogue among different actors and jointly address the issues.

Youth Bank Network

After the trainings for YB committees, announcement of the call for project ideas and receiving 116 project ideas from 10 Youth Banks, YB Committees have evaluated and awarded **29 small scale community projects** (See Annex 3 for the full list of project proposals). The YB Committees Members have arranged additional meetings with all successful applicants and have discussed the course of the projects and proposed some additional steps to make the projects more LG related. As a result in many cases either active involvement or project co-funding was provided by LGs.

During the next reporting period YB Committee members will make the final evaluation of the project results.

InfoTun Network

During the reporting period 8 InfoTuns in line with the planned activities, have organized 24 events and trainings with involvement of 458 participants (258 female and 200 male).

In November EPF team visited all 8 InfoTuns and conducted strategic planning sessions with the staff and beneficiaries of InfoTuns. Based on the results of these sessions each InfoTun developed its activity plan for the 4th project year.

The reporting period was rich with successful cases in all InfoTuns. Below are some highlights of InfoTun activities for the reporting period. (See Annex 4 for the full report of InfoTun activities).

- The continuous efforts of Ararat InfoTun members resulted in construction of 3 intercommunity bus stops by the local government.
- The community theater of Armavir has staged its performance with the promotional and organizational support from InfoTun activists, as well as received additional funding from the Ministry of Culture.
- The efforts and follow up of Martuni InfoTun resulted in decision of Community Council in November to provide new premises for three community non-profit organizations - community library, the Art school and development center for kids with. As a new facility the building of former sanitary inspection was selected.
- Vayk InfoTun had several meetings with the designated officials from the municipality of Vayk community. During these meetings cultural events plan for the year 2018 was developed.
- The initiative of Gyumri InfoTun on improving the public transportation in Mush 2 district has caught the attention of other civil society actors. As a result the InfoTun in cooperation with Biosofia CSO have conducted additional study for the state of public transport in other parts of the city as well.
- Vanadzor InfoTun activists continued online coverage of community council sittings ([21.11.2017](#) and [20.12.2017](#)). In addition to online coverage, Vanadzor InfoTun hosted [discussion](#) on topic “A year after Vanadzor community council elections: observations and assessments” organized by Media Center.
- Ijevan InfoTun initiated study of community issues to address the identified ones in the framework of InfoTun activities. The survey was conducted among 113 citizens. One of

the main issues according to the results of the survey is the waste collection in the city and lack of cultural and entertainment places and activities.

- Syunik InfoTun was actively cooperating with the active groups from Khoznavar, Qarashen and Tegh, and organized discussions of Tegh community annual work plan (AWP), based on which the community budget would be developed. This initiative was important both as a tool to ensure civic engagement in budget discussions and as a means to raise awareness how the process works. After these meetings, Syunik InfoTun developed a list of suggestions to be presented during budget hearings.

CRRC Research Fellowships

In the course of the reporting period CRRC has organized public presentation of the major findings of the studies on local governance issues. All five studies have been finalized by the end of September 2017 and the public presentation took place on October 12, 2017 at Erebuni Plaza Business Center. Three following papers out of five were introduced during the public presentation¹:

1. “Determining Factors of Voters’ Participation in Local Elections of Community Head in Armenia” by Lena Mamikonyan;
2. “Education and Gender as Factors for Awareness on Local Governance. Qualitative Research in Yerevan” by Arthur Babayan;
3. “Public Awareness and Participation in Local Self-Governance: Multidimensional Approach” by Sonya Msryan;

The presentation was attended by NGO representatives, communities’ representatives, researchers and students and was followed with lively discussion. Overall, 11 male and 13 female participants attended. In January 2018, papers will be posted on CRRC-Armenia website.

During the fellowship program, fellows received systematic guidance from CRRC staff (Tigran Matosyan and Mariam Arakelyan, in particular) in order to successfully accomplish their research objectives. Brief information on the content of the papers is available on [CRRC-Armenia website](#).

¹ One of the papers entitled “The Quality of Local Services and democracy in Armenia: does the community size matter?” and prepared by Arman Gasparyan was presented earlier in September, 2017 during EPF OAS. The other research work “Respect for informal community authorities (“*taghayin heghinakutyunner*”) and participation in local governance in Armenia” completed by Ofelia Grigoryan was not presented due to the her absence from Armenia.

3.3a Supporting petitions to *avaganis* through collection of signatures in communities (CFOA/EPF)

CFOA finalized the petitions to the community councils in 3 communities. In Dilijan community the selected issue was the construction of the bridge in Haghartsin. 250 signatures were collected and package was presented to the Community Council. On 30 November 2017 during the Community Council meeting construction of the bridge was approved and it was instructed to prepare documentation for the construction.

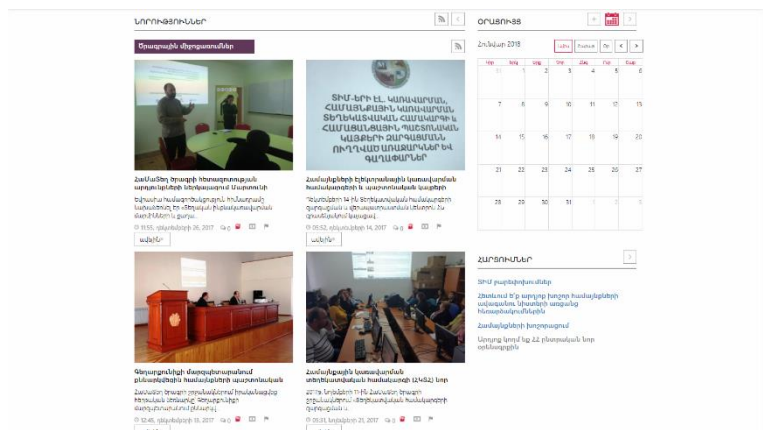
In Yeghegnadzor construction of the bus stops was selected. These issues were identified through the public discussions. The initiative group collected around 160 signatures and presented to the Community Council. This initiative was also successful and the decision to the Council passed a decision to allocate funds for construction of three bus stops in G. Narekatsi, A. Mikoyan and V. Gevorgyan streets.

In Vedi the initiative was about the renovation of the road to the high school. 120 signatures supporting the petition were collected. During the Community Council meeting a number of alternatives were discussed. The Mayor stated that the issue is well known but there are no funds for reconstruction. The estimated cost of reconstruction is 210 million AMD (equivalent to \$ 450,000 USD), thus it was decided to apply to central authorities and donor organizations for co-funding. The initiative group was offered to take part in this process as well.

3.4 Development of media and IT products for dissemination of information on LG (ISDTC, EPF, CFOA, AJC)

During the reporting period ISDTC continued its day-to-day work on administration of the celog.am web portal.

With the support of other consortium members new posts were added in different sections of the portal (See table below for the number of new posts per section).



Number of visitors in the mentioned period is 6,444 and the overall number of portal visitors as of 30.12.2017 is 28,950. (See Annex 5 for more information about web portal updates).

N	Page title	Number as for the previous reporting period	Number as of 14.01.2017
1.	News	200	261
2.	Surveys	5	6
3.	Calendar	68	15
4.	Reforms	14	19
5.	Survey	3	3
6.	Videos	72	99
7.	Photo Album	11	12
8.	Official Newspaper	20	24
9.	FAQ	14	22
10.	Registered Users	45	47

ISTDC also continued management of Facebook page by posting materials from CELoG web portal, partners' websites, InfoTuns' materials, official information from MTAD website, municipal websites, as well as LG-related news from online media, such as Hetq.am, Tert.am, 1in.am and others. (See Annex 6 for more details on Facebook page updates).

During the reporting period CFOA published the [October](#), [November](#) and [December](#) issues of "Hamaynk-Hamategh" monthly newspaper. The newspaper presented the information on implementation of the CELoG project, developments and news in the LSG sector, as well as other topics of interest. The editorial column of the newspaper has become an important platform for introduction of expert opinion on the outstanding aspects of the LG reform. The column is also used as a tool for urgent reaction and response to activities and decision of the government and proposing alternative approaches and ideas on the reform implementation.

The 11th (Annex 7) and 12th (Annex 8) issues of AJC quarterly newsletter were developed and issued during the reporting period. These reports included information related to community consolidation, InfoTun activities, CELoG project products, as well as stories about cultural, social, economic aspects of the life in target communities.

3.5. Production of talk shows on decentralization and broadcast via national TV channels (YPC)

Four TV talk shows were produced and broadcast during the reporting period. All TV program links were shared on CELoG Facebook page and uploaded on the YouTube channel of YPC.

#34 "Mamuli Akumb-HaMaTegh" TV talk show

Date/time of broadcast: October 30 at 18:50, November 2 at 17:30.

Topic: The annual assessment index of the RA local self-government for 2015 and 2016.

Program host: Boris Navasardian, YPC President

Invited speakers:

- Vahram Shahbazyan, CFOA expert group leader
- Sona Balasayan, CRRC-Armenia Research Director
- Naira Arakelyan, Armavir Development Center President
- Abraham Artashesyan, CeLOG Project Coordinator, CFOA vice-President

#35 “Mamuli Akumb-HaMaTegh” TV talk show

Date/time of broadcast: November 13 at 18:50, November 16 at 17:30

Topic: 2017 November 5 LG elections and the current process of reforms

Program host: Boris Navasardian, YPC President

Invited speakers:

- Ashot Giloyan, Head of the Local Self-governance Department of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development of RA
- Vahan Movsisyan, CFOA President, CeLOG Project Director

#36 “Mamuli Akumb-HaMaTegh” TV talk show

Date/time of broadcast: November 30 at 18:50, December 3 at 17:30.

Topic: Addressing the situation in Vanadzor municipality after the Constitutional Court's decision

Program host: Boris Navasardian, YPC President

Invited speakers:

- Ara Ghazaryan, Human Rights European Convention expert
- Yeranuhi Soghoyan, Hetq online newspaper journalist
- Narine Avetisyan, Lori TV Director
- Sara Petrosyan, Hetq online newspaper journalist

#37 “Mamuli Akumb-HaMaTegh” TV talk show

Date/time of broadcast: December 11 at 18:50, December 14 at 17:30.

Topic: The Role of Mass Media in Implementing LG Reforms: The Draft Law on Television and Radio

Program host: Boris Navasardian, YPC President

Invited speakers:

- Nelli Rafayelyan, Shoghakat TV journalist
- Anzhela Stepanyan, ALT TV Chief Editor

- Ashot Melikyan, Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression, President
- Armine Tukhikyan, Urban Foundation Programs Director

Objective 4: To improve the civil society enabling environment with a special focus on decentralization.

4.3 Sensitizing community CSOs to the issues of improving their enabling environment (trainings, YBs, InfoTuns) (EPF)

During the reporting period EPF has launched series of introductory meetings in InfoTuns to present the results of the study on LG-CSO cooperation mechanisms and discuss the applicability of presented mechanisms in communities.

The first presentation took place on December 20th in Martuni InfoTun and involved representatives from LGs and CSOs from Martuni, Gavar, Vardenis, Madina, Geghhovit, Vaghashen and Artsvanist communities. EPF team has presented the major outcomes of the study and introduced mechanisms of LG-CSO cooperation that were revealed while examining the experience of several European countries.

The presentation was followed by discussion on possible application of proposed mechanisms in particular communities. During the discussion the model applied in Tartu, Estonia was discussed and Martuni municipality representatives have shown interest in allocating certain amount of resources from the community budget for public planning and project implementation. During the next reporting period EPF will continue series of presentations as well as follow up on particular results of each presentation.

PROGRESS TOWARDS RESULTS

The launch of the fourth year of the project was quite active due to both the intensity of project activities and the necessity to communicate project products with beneficiaries. The project was also rich with practical results provided by local initiatives, InfoTuns and events organized by project partners.

Overall, the progress registered by the project includes progress in cooperation between LGs and civil society actors in target communities, joint efforts in addressing LG related issues to central level as well as systemic development and dissemination of information about the LG sector through project media and communication tools.

It should be also mentioned that there are some positive signs of more effective and sustainable cooperation between various actors on local level which is essential for the effective implementation of decentralization reform and ensuring LG autonomy in decision making process on local level.

Objective 1: To sustain and improve civil society's ability to engage citizens and articulate their interests in local self-government and in the process of implementation of decentralization reform.

Progress towards results registered during the reporting period under this objective can be divided to two functional parts. The first relates to the internal and external communication of the project aimed at ensuring effective contribution of project partners to the work of each other. This is also strongly connected with the process of seeking for project results capitalization opportunities through improving, synergizing and building up on products of project partners through involvement of other members of the consortium.

The second part is the continuous cooperation with other development actors which is built on mutual trust and applicability of each other's products. The exchange of expertise, methodologies, sharing of professional and empiric experience as well as implementing joint activities form a positive and constructive environment that is essential for cooperation. Taking into account that CELoG has entered its 4th year of implementation and there is already a long history of cooperation with other development actors, the knowledge and understanding of possible interlinkages and cooperation opportunities has grown significantly.

Objective 2: To strengthen civil society’s capacity for monitoring the central and local government institutions and officials, and the implementation of decentralization reform.

The progress registered under the second project objective during the reporting period can be described as illustration of project flexibility and adoptability to changing situation and needs. This can be seen from the media monitoring conducted by YPC, the rethinking of the functionality of publicdata.am website, the bottom-up logic of the alternative roadmap that was developed during the brainstorming session at Armavir InfoTun. All these examples illustrate that the project is capable to reflect on the situation in development and to come up with new ideas and tools that allow achieving additional results. For example, the alternative road map case has three major outcomes: the first is practical information on consolidation of particular communities, the second is the reflection on the general process of community consolidation with expectations, problematic aspects and perceptions collected on local level, finally the third important outcome is the model of consulting at the local level which can be applied in other regions as well, not only by the consortium but also by the central authorities.

Last but not the least is the tendency of growth of interest towards community budget hearings among the population. This is a result of active work of CFOA team of experts and their effective cooperation with local authorities and community activists on one hand, and by the objective growth of importance of such events on another.

Objective 3: To increase citizens’ access to independent and reliable information on decentralization reform.

During the reporting period the project continued to register various cases of successful local initiatives through small grants, InfoTun and Youth bank networks. An important tendency that can be observed is the increase of cooperation cases between LGs and local civil society actors. The support or co-funding received by YB projects from LGs is a bright example of this.

In general it should be stated that the LGs in many target communities became more open and cooperative. This can be explained by several reasons. One of the major reasons is the understanding among LGs that they are the primary beneficiaries of the cooperation. The second reason is the continuous efforts by local civil society actors to establish cooperation which is based on mutual benefit. Finally the third major reason is the increase in communication and cooperation capacities among both parties which is an empiric result.

Another important group of activities implemented under this objective is aimed at wider communication and awareness-raising. The updates of the portal, new issues of monthly newspaper and quarterly newsletter and TV talk shows continue to provide wider society with a large variety of important information about the LG sector. The materials produced and disseminated by the consortium allow to reach different social and age groups with a variety of important information where each particular addressee can find what he/she is looking for.

Objective 4: To improve the civil society enabling environment with a special focus on decentralization

The practical application of the research on LG-CSO cooperation has started to give its results during the reporting period. The first presentation in Martuni has illustrated that introduction of various mechanisms of cooperation from point of view of their functionality allows the participants to select and adopt the mechanism that corresponds to their particular needs. This means that there is a significant room for cooperation between local authorities and civil society and it should be cultivated. The presentation has also illustrated that both actors are in need of methodological assistance and advices which to some extent defines the logic of possible further steps to be undertaken by the project in this direction.

DATA ON PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Data on all indicators are established in the Activity M&E Plan for the award activities. Data are disaggregated by gender where relevant.

- ✓ 3 presentations of community websites and MMIS
- ✓ Public discussions of community budgets organized in 32 communities (1,175 total participants, of which 589 male and 587 female);
- ✓ 3 issues of Hamaynk-HaMaTegh newspaper published and disseminated – 2,000 copies each;
- ✓ 2 issues of quarterly newsletter developed and disseminated
- ✓ 4 Talk shows developed and broadcast on Yerkir Media TV station;
- ✓ 28950 total visits to celog.am portal as of 31.12.2017
- ✓ 8 Infotuns have conducted 24 activities with participation of 458; 258 female and 200 male
- ✓ 3 CRRC research fellowship reports presented to public
- ✓ Petitions process supported in 3 communities

- ✓ 1 presentation of LG-CSO cooperation study report

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

There were no major problems encountered during the Program implementation process. All issues are being communicated with both the lead organization and USAID. There are several technical issues that are matter of time. Particularly, the use of the celog.am portal as a visibility is running good while application of the tool as an internal communication mechanism is not yet functioning effectively. This issue will be on the agenda of the communication team.

A COMPARISON OF ACTUAL EXPENDITURES WITH BUDGET ESTIMATES

Actual budget expenditures were mostly in line with the budget estimates.

PRIORITIES FOR PROGRAMMING DURING THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

There are several priorities for the next reporting period.

- To support local initiatives in terms of institutionalization of LG-CS cooperation,
- To reach out the central authorities with the feedback collected on local level,
- To continuously continue raising most actual topics and issues through CELoG media tools
- To continue work on capitalization of project products through cooperation with other development actors, LGs and local civil society actors.

All these priorities are strongly connected with Program objectives and current logic of its development.

V. Movsisyan
CoP of CELoG Program
31.01.2018