

Cross-Project Evaluation: Community Development in Georgia



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OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

Brot für die Welt has supported ten Georgian Partner Organizations (POs) active in Community Development (CD) in Georgia since 2016 in different areas of work.

The most active Georgian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working on CD in the Country, established a Community Development Coalition (CoDeCo) in 2010. Out of its nine members, six are partners of *Brot für die Welt*. *Brot für die Welt's* POs repeatedly expressed the idea of initiating a joint 'lighthouse project', preferably within the framework of the CoDeCo, to exploit thematic synergies and test new formats for supporting CD.

The cross-project evaluation focused on the work of *Brot für die Welt's* partners on CD in Georgia and assessed their approaches, successes, and complementarity effects through cooperation. The evaluation also covered the feasibility of the 'lighthouse' project.

From July 2022 to March 2023, 18 projects (five of them in more detail) were evaluated by a team of Georgian and international experts. The evaluation covered the activities and results of the POs between 2016 and 2022.

METHODOLOGY

During the evaluation, the team applied quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The complex assessment approach implied desk research, group discussions, interviews, online surveys, and a workshop. In that regard, the evaluation covered individual interviews with *Brot für die Welt's* partners, partners and beneficiaries of *Brot für die Welt* supported projects, other organizations' representatives working on CD, and local government authorities. During the field visits focus group discussions were also used as a tool for interaction with beneficiaries. Online surveys complemented individual interviews with *Brot für die Welt's* partners and other actors of CD, while a CD workshop with representatives of *Brot für die Welt* partner organization focused on the feasibility of the 'lighthouse' project.

FINDINGS

Brot für die Welt's PO interventions are highly **relevant** to the needs of end users. When tailoring their activities, the POs apply participatory learning and action approaches, investigate local strategies, and conduct door-to-door surveys and needs assessments. Even though there is a tendency for female prevalence in participation in project activities, the partner organizations ensured gender equality in the distribution of projects' benefits. Youth is recognized as a key change agent by all the POs.

POs use a plethora of approaches or tools but are not anchored in specific theories of change. They are focused on **human development** at the local level, thus supporting the sustainable development of communities. Operations of the POs are in synch with community needs. In cases of any mismatch, *Brot für die Welt's* flexibility was highly appreciated by POs. Due to the pronounced socio-economic disparity between Georgia's capital and regional areas, the projects' intervention logic remains relevant.

The CD activities of the POs proved to be cross-cutting and **complimentary**, even though targeting different sectors/thematic areas. Partners try to complement each other when implementing projects in the same communities. However, more coordination could yield greater achievements. Projects of the POs are aligned with several national or international strategies. POs cooperate well with other CD players, such as civil society organizations, religious groups, and sports clubs. Cooperation with local governments and businesses varies from region to region. Non-CoDeCo partners of *Brot für die Welt* wish to be part of CoDeCo to improve coherence and cooperation.

The main objectives of the assessed projects of POs were not focused on CD but targeted its dimensions. Because of the lack of clear CD objectives and indicators at the project and *Brot für die Welt's* strategic levels, as well as the assessment's cross-project nature, the evaluation analyzed only the **efficacy and success** of project activities addressing CD dimensions. Nevertheless, based on CD definition and indicators by CoDeCo, all organizations effectively target CD within their CD niche.

POs claim that they did not encounter any **conflict** during the projects' implementation. To prevent conflicts and mitigate unintended adverse effects of projects and interventions, POs run participatory problem-solving processes. Overall, POs contribute to community **cohesion** and largely show an outstanding level of sensitivity towards individual and group disadvantages and vulnerability.

POs implemented only a couple of synergetic joint activities. But the level of the ongoing collaboration and interdisciplinary cooperation within the frameworks of current projects lays grounds for further development of **synergies** among them, conditioned by future joint projects. All POs find *Brot für die Welt's* support adequate in both the resources provided and the expertise.

CD activities of the POs contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Georgia through their thematic priority directions. Despite disabling factors to CD (e.g., population's nihilism, political polarisation), there are numerous **unintended positive effects** at the individual level, such as improving the women's position in small patriarchal communities, creating jobs and income-generating opportunities, understanding individual rights and how

to obtain them. The replication and scaling-up of the measures can be observed, despite different regional contexts affecting POs activities.

All projects have a **systematic approach** and strive to maintain the positive effects of the CD activities. However, since CSOs are donor-dependent, the evaluated projects cannot fully ensure the longevity of effects. Due to a lack of common activities, CoDeCo only partially affects the **sustainability** of CD projects as a valuable source of information exchange and experience. Partners outline the importance of developing CoDeCo since a coalitional approach is essential for long-term results.

Recommendations:

- Implementing a collaborative CD project can significantly contribute to the sustainable development of communities in Georgia. *Brot für die Welt* should continue a holistic approach to CD in Georgia by supporting CoDeCo, and its institutionalization through a Development Workshop, supporting designing a country-wide Pilot CD Lighthouse project through a Project Development Workshop, and funding the CD Collaborative Project.
- For sustainable development of communities, and enhancing cooperation among CD stakeholders, CD partners shall: develop a CD concept paper defining the term CD; develop a Georgian CD strategy and advocate for it; continue advocating for effective implementation of the decentralization reform, focusing on boosting fiscal decentralization policies; establish constructive working relationships with local governments and businesses. Non-CoDeCo members should join the coalition for their benefit and to further enhance the CoDeCo as a CD platform.
- For streamlining its management, activities, and funding opportunities, CoDeCo needs institutionalization, setting governance structures, policies, and revised memberships. The 3-5 years strategy needs to be developed, including organizational and program development components with respective fundraising strategies. Based on it, CoDeCo shall develop a collaborative country-wide Pilot CD Project Proposal for *Brot für die Welt*.