



# TRANSNISTRIAN REGION NGO FORUM



## GENERAL OVERVIEW OF NGO SITUATION IN THE TRANSNISTRIAN REGION **REPORT**

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## **General overview of the transnistrian region associative sector**

### **Summary**

From 2006 the Promo-LEX Association, with the financial support offered by National Endowment for Democracy, leads the Resources and Development Center for Transnistria (RDCT), with residence at Coșnița village, Dubasari district, i.e. in the middle of the transnistrian region, and in one of the region settlements, being under the jurisdiction of the constitutional authorities of the Republic of Moldova. The public local and central authorities, which understand the role and importance of such institutions for the regional civil society, render assistance and support to RDCT. For such actions we would like to express our gratitude.

In the frames of this Center, the NGO Department realizes its activity, i.e. render the assistance to the representatives of the associative sector of the region. For the purpose of better and more efficient activity, for promoting NGOs of the region and for encouragement of the partnership with them, in March 2007 Promo-LEX organized the Donors Fair for the representatives of the associative sector of Transnistria, having invited the donor organizations, which presented their granting programs for the Republic of Moldova, in which the residents of the Transnistrian region were able to participate. After analyzing the results, the impact and the perspectives of collaboration of Transnistrian NGOs with various national and international institutions, with the purpose of evaluating the level of organizations' development and the identification of the solutions for the development and the consolidation of the civil society in this region, Promo-LEX proposed the organization of the First Transnistrian region NGOs Forum.

The event took place in two stages, being financially supported by the OSCE Mission to Moldova. October 25, 2008 100 representatives of the approximately 45 transnistrian region NGOs, in the frames of the four Thematic Round Tables (divided according to the domain of activity: Youth, Ecology, Human Rights and Social) discussed with the experts the problems faced by the NGOs, initiative groups, beneficiaries and communities.

November 15, 2008 in the frames of the second stage of the Forum, the experts presented the conclusions and their recommendations for each field of activity to the transnistrian NGOs leaders, State structures representatives, donors' organizations and to other guests of the event. In the frames of the Forum the participants listened the reports of the experts concerning each examined domain, having the possibility to pass the opinion and to supplement the final conclusions and recommendations.

In the frames of this research, the experts, in equidistant and professional mode, tried to touch upon the principal problems and obstacles from legislative, institutional and financial point of view, which the nongovernmental sector of Transnistria faced with. The analysis of these factors should appreciate the level of development of the NGOs of the region, their capacity for the obtaining and

correct and transparent administrating of finances, received from the donor organizations, their capacity for inter and extra sectorial relationship.

Their aim is the identification of the problems which impede both to development and the consolidation of the civil society in the transnistrian region, and to their collaboration with various persons from and out of the region.

## **Introduction**

*Civil or political society opposes  
to paternal authority and State of Nature and  
it is the generator of  
progress and order, based on Law.*

John Locke

The development of civil society is the obligatory necessity for the democracy in transition. More over, this demand is important in the divided country, which the Republic of Moldova is. From the moment of the obtaining its independence in 1991, the society of Moldova had the separate evolution, and also the associative sector knew the other development. However, in the vest of the country, controlled by the constitutional authorities of Chisinau, NGOs beneficated the support of the international community, having many opportunities for the development and the consolidation of one civil society viable in our country. More over, also as the transition, the process is still developing with its successes and failures.

Unfortunately the situation concerning this chapter, on the territory controlled by the administration of Tiraspol (hereinafter referred to as transnistrian region), due to the situation and the atmosphere in the region, the civil society had no possibility to develop and respectively, to participate in the processes which influence at the life and at the development of the society. The absence of the free access of the civil society representatives, authorities, mass-media and the diplomatic missions in the transnistrian region, as well as the numerous obstacles in the course of the correct and transparent implementation of some projects, financing and assistance of the civil societies from this zone has become more complicated, and sometimes impossible. As the result, the inhabitants of the transnistrian region are those who are in loss. So, at present there is great difference between the state of the civil society of the Transnistrian region and civil society of the rest of the territory of the Republic of Moldova.

In general, this is a well-known fact that NGOs accomplish the function of think-tanks, offering the various assistance and support to the various categories of persons, they accomplish the function of the social agent of changes, contribute efficiently to the economical development of the community, they act as the supplier of education and training (active policies at the market of labour force and the development of abilities), entrepreneurship, associations and the schemes of self-assistance, enforcement of the communities capacities. etc. All

this, in our opinion is absent in the Transnistrian region, because these NGOs are at the initial stage of development.

It is common knowledge that the development of the civil society supposes the development of the communities, but the quality of the civil society influence the level of development of the community, region and the country in total. A civil society is the key player and it is able to do that what the authority cannot do. At the same time, the activities of NGOs should serve for the authorities as the right indicator and the compass, orienting them to the disadvantaged communities or groups.

The situation at the non-governmental sector of the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova remains at the weak level of development. The administration of the region watch suspiciously at this (especially, when the activity does not suit the administration, NGOs are called "fifth column"), the fact which creates the negative image of the third sector of the region. So, the numerous obstacles keep the inhabitants of the region from the civil participation and the development of the organizations and their activities. Often the administration of the region resorts to the various pressures on the organization leaders or on the initiative groups. Usually the active persons are threatened by the dismissal, or the administration puts pressure on the relatives in order to force the person to give up the activity in the activities of the non-governmental sector. But the regional administration supports and encourages the organizations, which collaborate with or promote the policy of the so called "r.m.n." administration. All above mentioned are used by the regime of Tiraspol in the propagandistic scopes in the region itself and out of its borders.

More over, we observe the phenomenon in which the NGOs actions, the programs or the projects have the minimal impact upon the associative sector of the region. It is common knowledge that local secret services ("MGB") hold "the pulse of society under the strict control" and control the activity of every group of persons. Often, the persons, who took part in various trainings or seminars, were visited or were invited in the office "MGB" for discussion.

In such conditions, this is an evident fact that the associative sector of Transnistria cannot play a role in the process of the establishment of the conditions, which characterize the constitutional state and the democratization of the respective region. In this context, we mention the fact that at the same time the population and the organizations from this region have not any possibility to participate in the democratic processes, having place at the rest of the country, but the causes of this state are the following:

- The absence of access to the national sources of mass information;
- The absence of some alternative sources of information and the manipulation, misinformation by the local sources;
- Persecution by the regime of the inconvenient persons;
- The absence of any reaction or the support from the part of the constitutional authority, which evade the involvement in the process of promotion and the protection of human rights in this region;

- The absence of access to institutions and legal instance of the inhabitants of the region (citizens of the Republic of Moldova with full rights);
- Cases of violation of human rights and the human fundamental freedoms are not examined by the State organs;
- Inoperativeness of the peace-keeping format and of the United Commission of Control, which tolerates the cases of violence in mass and the individual human rights.

The nongovernmental organizations and mass media of the Transnistrian region unfortunately cannot develop and cannot realize without difficulty the activities concerning information, education, promotion and protection of human rights. From the other part, they cannot take part in more social activities because of limited number of the extern donors and in the conditions, in which NGOs are very weak, there is not the well definite relation with the 1 and 2 sectors (state and private sector), but in the region there are no local financial resources except that for political scopes.

Though we are conscious of the fact that the evaluation of all NGOs of the region is impossible, we consider that the most serious shortcoming of the present document, based on the 4 analyses of the experts is that in the evaluation took part (contributed) only 100 representatives of the 45 organizations from transnistrian region. For the next period we propose the elaboration of some new methods of poll of NGOs and initiative groups only with the purpose to include more organizations, the experience and opinions of which should be analyzed and planed. However, the experts included all analyses, conclusions and their recommendations made by the participants in the frame of 4 Theme Round Tables. The Promo-LEX Association (the authors of the final document) took into consideration the cases or information, obtained in the process of the activities of the RDCT.

It should be mentioned the fact that some organizations, considered as more advanced in their development and openness, ignored or even refused the participation at the Forum. Promo-LEX leaves to reader's discretion all conclusions and opinions concerning this ambiguous situation for the spirit and the atmosphere of openness, encouragement in the participation and collaboration of the NGOs representatives.

### **General conclusions**

If the vest part of the Republic of Moldova the civil society has reduced capacities (we refer to the efficient constitutional capacities and the vital technical necessities),<sup>1</sup> then in the east of the country in Trannistria, the civil society remains practically at the beginning stage. The above mentioned information as well as the analyses of the experts of the First transnistrian region NGOs Forum, confirms this state. Though the number of NGOs in the region has increased considerably (conform the official data approximately 800 NGOs are registered), a small number of the organizations are active and function.

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<sup>1</sup> Nations in Transit 2006, <http://www.freedomhouse.org>; Denis Cenusă „Consolidation of the civil societies of the Republic of Moldova”

The Transnistrian NGOs representatives training increased last years, due to numerous trainings, seminars, specialized courses and the participation in the various programs for experience exchange or the studio visits. However, the growth of organizations number and the qualitative growth of NGOs on this territory are not registered. This fact is explained very simply: the absence of the financial resources for the support of the associative sector, pressure on the leaders and the activists of NGOs, the absence of some viable Center of Resources, as well as the absence of the necessary resources for the institutional development of NGOs are the causes of the stagnation of the development process of the organizations of the region.

Another motive, which in our opinion, is also very important, is the total lack of the civil culture at the region, but the press does not reflect competent and sufficient information about the role of NGOs, beneficiaries, activities and their results. So, the population does not know anything about the non-governmental sector and the administration promotes and maintains the negative attitude towards the associative sector.

NGOs of Transnistria are at the initial stage and they need the support and the assistance for their institutionalization, development and consolidation. Their situation is unstable both from the financial point of view, and as regards the human resources. There is a perception that the majority of the activists of NGOs do not see the future in the associative sector, orienting to the private or administrative sector. Many of them do not have elementary information about the definition of the non-governmental organizations, their role and importance for the society.

The services, offered by the NGOs, are numerous, but at the same time there is absence of some instruments or mechanisms of their appreciation and evaluation. The majority of the organizations did not elaborate the strategies and plans of activity, did not establish the relationship with administrative structures, with other NGOs and press.

The classical organizations of human rights are absent in the Transnistrian region, i.e. there are no NGOs, which should monitor, promote and protect the classical democratic values. There are neither serious organizations, which should protect in the most serious way, the interests and the rights of the various categories of persons, nor organizations, which are able to demonstrate that their activities are crowned with some effects (successful cases, actions of lobby or advocacy). Also there are no organizations, think-tanks or NGOs capable to participate or to pronounce transparently about the decision-making process, about the elaboration and adaptation of the normative acts of the region, about the process of the analysis and the expertise of the decisions projects of the administrative institutions. Whereas the democratic regimes offer the civil society the wide range of possibilities concerning the collaboration with the administrative institutions and the legislative authority as regards the adaptation of the really democratic laws, than at Transnistria the participation of the nongovernmental sector at this process remains impossible.

So, in spite of the fact that at the international level it was demonstrated that usually those who commit abuses and violate the human rights are the authority representatives (police, civil servants, justice, etc.), the representatives of the regional administration are considered as the defenders of the rights and fundamental freedoms in the transnistrian region. For example, December 10, 2008 in Transnistria the Human Rights International Day was celebrated for the first time, and various representatives of the administration were awarded for the Meritorious Service in the domain of "Protection of Human Rights". There are no organizations in the transnistrian region which have the capacity to monitor the observation of the execution mode of legislation by the administrative organs and institutions (local, district, regional or executive and legislative), to institute proceedings and to launch the campaigns for information of public opinion, etc.

In the Transnistrian region there are no programs concerning the information and education of population on human rights, fundamental freedoms, civil participation, democratic values, civil society, etc. The development of civil society, respect of the human rights and promotion of the democratic values cannot be realized without the corresponding knowledge of these domains. Youth education in the frames of the democratic values becomes the primary condition for the construction of one democratic society, based on respect and tolerance, dialog and understanding. In this context, the role of the nongovernmental organizations in the conducting of activities concerning information and education is very necessary, useful and important.

However, there are some organizations, which pretend to be leaders of the third sector in the region, and aspire or try to dominate in the transnistrian NGOs view. Probably, because of the limited financing, to which the organizations of transnistria have the access, this factor discourages other initiative groups and organizations of the region. More over, this impedes the collaboration with NGOs from other regions of the Republic of Moldova, probably because of the same reasons, or in order not being persecuted by the structures of the local security. In these conditions, without the honest and sincere participation and contribution of the representatives of the existent organizations, the normal development, based on the mutual respect, trust and health competition, having the scope to resolve jointly the beneficiaries and special-purpose groups' problems, cannot occur. Or, the notion of "civil society" provides the voluntary participation, solidarity, honesty and disinterested efforts related to the persons' interaction.

In the past years, the administration of Tiraspol create more and more obstacles, impediments and problems to persons, organizations and initiative groups, who want to work with the partners from the rest of the Republic of Moldova (besides the traditional ones: control points, producers of customs, absence of the direct telephone network, etc.). At the region the preference is given to the partnership with Russia and CIS countries, and this partnership is regulated by the administration of Tiraspol, but other partnerships are subject to suspicion, verification and control. For the „image polishing”, usually, the events, organized by civil society, are used in the propagandistic scopes of the Tiraspol regime by means of mass-media, which is under its control.

In the same time, in conditions, in which the civil society of the region is not sufficiently developed and capable to implement the projects with the palpable results, very often the collaboration of NGOs from the two banks of Nistru does not correspond to the partners' expectations. So, organizations from the vest of country are disappointed on the conditions, in which the partners work, but their colleagues from the Transnistrian region often have the wrong impression about the mode of financing of projects, erroneously considering that NGOs from vest are favored.

However, the main conclusion of the first Regional Forum is that the inhabitants of the region, in general, and the NGO representatives and initiative groups, in particular, want to take part in the activities of the non-governmental sector. After a long period of isolation, the population of the Transnistrian region understands more and more the situation and the perspectives of its development and shows the interest for their introduction in the democratic processes so far at local and regional levels. Namely of these causes it is necessary to intensify our support and assistance of the associative sector of Transnistria.

Ion Manole  
Promo-LEX Association



# Report “The level of development of the transnistrian region NGOs working in the field of youth”

## Introduction

Many of the transnistrian region NGOs are working with youth . At the same time youth it is not always their main target group. This situation is similar for the right bank NGOs and it is caused by the following factors:

- youth is a priority area for the Donor organizations and, respectively, that the chances to obtain grants for youth or youth oriented projects are significant;
- young people easily accept new ideas and is always in search for new activities and impressions and easily engages in activities offered by NGOs.

With this in mind, the objectives of the interview with the representatives of the NGOs participating at the Forum were:

- to identify the level of development of the NGOs working with youth and for youth;
- to identify difficulties that hamper the development of the NGOs working with youth and for youth;

## Legal aspects

Most of the NGOs represented at the Forum, perform their activity in accordance with the Law on Non-Profit Organizations (Tiraspol administration). Some organizations, primarily those from localities controlled by RM constitutional authorities, are working under the RM Law on Public Associations. Not all NGOs operating in the territory controlled by Tiraspol are aware of the possibility of obtaining registration at the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova. Beside that, there are situations that prevent them to use this opportunity, particularly - the lack of the RM citizenship.

## Relations with other NGOs

### Problems encountered:

Both banks NGOs remain divided, as well as those within the transnistrian region. Organizations basically do not share experience, prefer to work by themselves and for themselves. This leads to the fact that they are making the same mistakes and provide low quality services;

Both bank NGOs basically do not know about each other. As well, left bank NGOs do not poses Romanian language. These circumstances create a situation of mistrust and prevent a mutual collaboration for solving real and urgent local problems.

At the same time there also exist positive examples of cooperation. But, in many cases, this cooperation arise from the requirements of donor organizations. Experience has shown that collaboration is often limited to a period of the joint project.

### Collaboration and relations with local authorities. Problems encountered:

- Local authorities are «close-mouthed” towards NGOs. There were cases

when local authorities representatives advised young people not to seek support from NGOs. Another example: limited access in educational institutes for NGOs. It is important to mention the fact that there is a similar limitation on the right bank of Nistru river. An NGO has to obtain an official permission from the Minister of Education for any activities performed in an educational institution. This procedure requires time;

- Denial of the existing problems by the local authorities. For example: the leaders of NGOs working with young people at risk address an educational institution and talk with the school administration, explaining the objectives of their programs, but school administration denies that they have such situations in their school. At the same time, a few minutes later it is possible to identify young people at risk and they confirm to be students of that particular school;
- Selfishness of the authorities. There are cases when the barrier refers to the transfer of personal relationship on the professional relationship (negative personal attitude of the school principal towards the NGO leader). In other cases, local authorities seek to arrogate to itself the results of the activities of NGOs;
- Excessive government interference in the work of NGOs. There are attempts by government entities to use NGOs to publicize their goals and ideals. NGOs contribute to the consolidation of society, it is not always beneficial to the State. During the period of so called «economic blockade» some NGOs receiving foreign grants have been fined with large amounts.

However, alongside with the existing barriers there are also situation of cooperation. Mostly, these situations are characteristic to right bank Nistru river: cooperation of NGOs with the Ministry of Reintegration, with local authorities from Dubasari district and locality Varnita.

### **Relations with donor organizations**

The majority of the NGOs, that participated at the Forum, plan their activity in accordance with the donors' priorities. This is a typical characteristic of the beginners. Most organizations either do not have long-term strategic plans for organizational development, or these plans have a formal character. This does not allow NGOs to take pro-active position in relations with donors.

As well, NGO representatives consider that the financing of local organizations have a disadvantageous character: there are no long-term granting programs (2-3 years); small-scale grants; the financing is disproportional (in case of the partnership program the left bank NGO gets 2-3 times less money than the right bank NGO).

One of the barriers remains the insufficient information of the transnistrian NGOs about the donor organizations priority areas and granting programs.

Transnistrian region NGOs working in localities controlled by Tiraspol basically have no access to funding programs of the Social Investment Fund, IREX, REC.

## **The institutional capacity of the transnistrian region NGOs**

(based on Organizational Assessment Tool indicators (OAT) July 2004 ).

### **Management**

All organizations are registered as stipulated by law, have the Legal Statute and other documents describing the legal basis of their work: objectives, the criteria for membership, members' rights and responsibilities, etc. These documents are well known to the leadership of NGOs and to a much lesser extent to its members, beneficiaries and the general public.

The organizations' Mission and the target group are described in the statutes, and usually are very wide to make it easier to comply with the requirements of various donors.

Many organizations do not have strategic development plans. In many cases the strategic plans are developed only by NGO leaders. Strategic plans do not include fundraising plans for organization activities.

### **Planning**

Planning is largely tied to the goals and objectives specified by the donors and refers to specific period of time stipulated in the project and grant contract.

In many cases, planning is focussed on addressing only the current challenges.

NGO staff involved in organizational planning acknowledge the need for special training in this field, but doesn't always have the required qualification.

### **Monitoring**

In most organizations there is no clear system of monitoring and evaluation of the goals achievement. Best case scenario, monitoring and evaluation is included in ongoing projects. NGO representatives are rarely using objective and easily observable indicators in assessing the quality of services provided and the level of achievement of the goals.

### **Human Resources Policy**

The majority of NGOs do not have full time staff. NGO leaders combine these activities with their basic job or school (students). Many complain about the low level of activism of the local youth and the difficulty of attracting young people to work in NGOs.

### **Training**

NGO members and volunteers enjoy participation at all kind of training programs focused on education. Most of these trainings are implemented by other NGOs and address specific problems of society, such as corruption, illegal migration, freedom of speech. Trainings focused on strategic planning, NGO management and Organizational Development are more rare. These kind of trainings are available in Moldova, but the majority of them are for Romanian language speakers, thus being inaccessible for transnistrian region NGOs. One of the programs that train NGO representatives, is the internship program, carried out by the Center Contact.

### **Budgeting**

The budgets of most organizations are limited to grants for specific projects. Therefore, planning is done in accordance with the opportunities to receive a grant. Planning focused on diversification of the financial resources is almost non-existent. Moreover, there is a perception that non-governmental organizations cannot have permanent sources of funding. Therefore, many organizations do not plan their income.

Some provisions of the local legislation limit the receipt of funds from abroad.

### **Beneficiary Needs Assessment**

In most cases needs assessment is not based on a thorough analysis of problems using a variety of sociological tools. Mostly, NGO leaders identify the needs of the beneficiaries without consulting them or other social actors. The success in identifying the needs is ensured by the fact that NGO leaders are working in the youth field and have empirical knowledge in this field.

The range of the provided services is wide enough and can be roughly divided into three groups:

#### **a) Information services**

- Trainings in different fields (for example: Training on corruption and corruption prevention);
- Thematic library for youth;
- Legal trainings on migration (trainings, seminars, media coverage);
- Establishing youth media (local papers, Radio stations);
- Raising public awareness on youth problems;
- Identifying potential participants for all kind of activities;
- Consulting services for future parents.

#### **b) Socialization services**

- Hotline Consultations;
- Professional orientation services for graduating class students;
- Trainings on professional development;
- Trainings on personal development;
- Social assistance services: living arrangements, meals, workshops for children, other.;
- Volunteering, self development;
- Social support for youth;
- Socialization services for orphans;
- Physical development;
- Free time animations.

#### **c) Promotion and protection of the youth interests and rights**

- Collaboration with local authorities in order to address the problems of a concrete young person;
- Promoting the rights of the «citizen of the world»;
- Work with parents (individually) for the benefit of the child.

Comparative analysis of the volume of services provided by transnistrian NGOs (forum participants), suggests that they are at an early stage of development. At

this stage their activity is focused on information services and on organization of different seminars, trainings and other youth activities. At the same time, local NGOs basically do not collaborate with local state authorities, local businessmen or other NGOs in order to protect the rights of the local youth.

Local inhabitants are insufficiently informed about the services provided to youth by the third sector, thus they rarely appeal to NGOs.

## **Findings**

Participants' competence and their experience leads to the following findings (most of them confirm the findings of the research performed in 2006):

- Organizations are at an early stage of development: the relatively well-developed abilities to identify target groups and to develop projects to address problems that have been identified. Other essential components of development are less advanced;
- Their situation is very unstable (permanent staff fluctuation, financial instability, etc.);
- The range of provided services is large, but there are no mechanisms for objective evaluation of the services quality ;
- The majority of NGOs do not have strategic plans;
- Knowledge of "what a professional organization is" is virtually non-existent, however, an absolute majority feels that an NGO should be professional;
- Communication and collaboration with state authorities is limited, there is an obvious mistrust in each other;
- Local population and authorities mistrusts local NGOs due to the insufficient communication between them.

## **Recommendations for NGOs and Donor organizations**

**For organizations:** to pay more attention to the need to develop all components of the organization.

Particular attention should be given to the following components:

- Establishment and development of partnerships with other NGOs and local authorities;
- Creating a positive image;
- Planning, both strategic and operational, based on the results of an objective evaluation of the performed activities;
- Staff development.

**For donors.** Given the fact that NGOs are at an early stage of development, one of the donor organizations' strategy should provide opportunities for the development of non-governmental sector in the region. Perhaps, the donor organizations could assume not only the traditional functions of the investor, but also the functions of the "trainer": to advice NGOs on institutional development, to assist in planning project activities, particularly those that contribute to a positive image of NGOs and contribute to the consolidation of the achieved results.

Donor organizations, in addition to funding particular projects, should provide support for the development of the NGO staff – especially for the NGO leaders (internship program offered by Contact Center covers only a small part, there

should be more opportunities).

Important components of the project proposals submitted by transnistrian region NGOs should be:

- Project sustainability (long term results);
- Publicizing the project results among local population;
- Activities for NGO human resources development (staff and volunteers); Partnerships with other NGOs;
- Evaluation of the project results, evaluation of the partnerships;

While considering these elements, NGOs should plan adequate resources for these activities.

Thus, the strategy of donor organizations in the transnistrian region involves great risks and creation of the mechanism for managing these risks: development of the special procedures of communication / education.

### **Conclusions**

Holding the Transnistrian region NGO Forum was a good platform for creating conditions for transnistrian region civil society development. Holding the Forum on a regular basis would allow all to all actors (NGOs, donor organizations, authorities) :

- to assess the development / evolution of the third sector;
- to identify the barriers to development of the third sector;
- to establish a dialog focused on identification of the mutual expectations.

The first Forum allows to set priority directions for the development of NGOs working with young people:

- to improve the quality of services through: staff development, improving NGO governance, improving self monitoring and evaluation;
- to develop a positive image of NGOs by strengthening partnerships within the sector and with government agencies;
- implementation of such donor policies that would allow to NGOs to address their institutional capacity development, as well as their beneficiaries needs.

Report developed by Serghei Lisenco

## **Report “The level of development of the transnistrian region NGOs working in the human rights field”**

### **Analysis of the level of development of transnistrian region human rights NGOs**

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Moldova has made significant progress in the last two decades, and NGOs had a significant contribution to this process. Due to the post-conflict situation, in the Transnistrian region in this area situation is totally different and hasn't evolved very much. The level of development of the transnistrian region human rights NGOs remains to be low. Comparing to NGOs working in the social or environmental field, human rights organizations are less developed. Also, it is important to mention the fact that the level of development of transnistrian region NGOs is much weaker than the level of NGOs from the rest of Moldova.

Transnistrian region NGO representatives do not always correctly perceive the role of the NGOs and their impact on the development of the population and , the region in general. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the majority of the population, and representatives of NGOs, still perceive activities related to promotion and protection of human rights as political activities (in the region there are several organizations with political character: "Respublika," " Proryv " former " Obnovlenie "etc.).. Thus, due to the lack of information about the third sector, at this moment, basically there are no transnistrian region NGOs that focus on serious human rights issues. With the exception of a one or two organizations, in the region there are no NGOs that promote and defend classical democratic values - civil and political rights. At the same time, it is important to mention the fact that, the population and civil society representatives interest in these issues is increasing.

Round Table participants manifested ideas and initiatives aimed at creating an atmosphere of trust between different social groups from both sides of the Nistru river. This fact shows that transnistrian region NGOs require support from their colleagues from the right bank of the Nistru river. The collaboration between both banks NGOs would facilitate the exchange of experience. As well, the collaboration would reduce the difference between the level of competence of the human rights NGOs and the general situation in human rights field from both banks of Nistru river.

The statistics show that in transnistrian region 25% (170) organizations are dealing with the promotion of human rights and 18% (128) organizations are dealing with the promotion of child rights. Almost 30% (180) organizations deal with the promotion of social rights and 6% (40) organizations deal with minority rights.(“Transnistrian Non-Commercial Organizations: development level and prospects” Choice of Youth NGO, 2006)

These are organizations that are registered by the administration of the region. At the Forum participated 25 organizations working in human rights field, most of

which are registered in the transnistrian region. Thus, at the round table participated nearly 10% of the total number of organizations working in the human rights field.

### ***Mission, vision, values***

Only a few organizations have formulated their mission statements, including goals and values. In the majority of cases, mission statements are not written on paper, published and accessible to beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Right bank NGOs cover the main areas of activity and collaborate with each other on different human rights issues.

Transnistrian region NGOs have not yet started this kind of cooperation.

### ***Council of administration***

A few organizations have this structure, it functions more as an administrative body including people from the executive office. Within the organizations are not respected the principles of division of responsibilities between government and executive bodies. Right bank NGOs, the most part of them, benefited from various training programs in this area. Some organizations are very well developed and contribute to the third sector development by sharing knowledge and experience and transferring best practice to other beginner NGOs, including transnistrian region ones.

### ***Strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation of the results***

In the best cases, planning is done within the long term projects (over one year) or within the General Assembly of the members and staff. With small exceptions, there are no strategic planning documents.

Programs and results evaluation and monitoring is done through reporting procedures to the donor organization for particular projects. Local NGOs do not develop and publish annual activity and financial reports.

### ***Human Resources Policy***

Human resources policy is not consistent, is very vulnerable and dependent on funding. Training of the staff and members of the organization is sporadic and based on the external programs.

Only a few organizations have permanent volunteers. At the same time, there are local inhabitants that assist local NGOs on a volunteer basis and volunteering becomes more and more popular in the region.

### ***Sources of funding, budgets.***

Sources of funding are similar with those from western part of Moldova - mainly from programs offered by external donors. The difference lies in the fact that, as a rule, funding programs for transnistrian region NGOs are short term. Alternative sources of funding are still inaccessible, some examples of social entrepreneurship and payed services are exceptions.

A positive example represents the funding through and cooperation with right bank NGOs, thus, left bank NGOs can benefit from the positive reputation of the right bank NGOs.

### **Partnership with the NGO sector, private and state sector**

So far, partnership relations between transnistrian region NGOs are weak and underdeveloped. Partnership relations with other organizations, institutions are missing. There have been resisted some attempts in this regard, but in most cases, these partnerships are conditioned by some projects or by the activities performed by the right bank NGOs. As well, local administration discourage these kind of contacts with some particular NGOs and encourages contacts with NGOs approved by the "official policy". Cooperation with NGOs from outside the region is insignificant and limited. In some cases, transnistrian region NGOs, those with a higher level of development, do not tolerate the collaboration with NGOs from other regions of Moldova due to the fear of "competition". Meanwhile, in the region there is no record of transfer of experience from one organization to another. Due to the limited resources for funding, local NGOs that receive financial support do not encourage and facilitate the development of other NGOs in order not to threaten their relative support.

Partnerships with private and state sector are basically missing.

### **Legal aspects**

Legal framework is similar with that from the right bank of Nistru river. Meanwhile, the NGO working environment is different. There have been registered numerous ways to exert pressure on organizations from the authorities and their beneficiaries. Usually, persecution and intimidation have personal and individual character and target those who are active and with critical spirit.

Lately, more and more NGOs from transnistrian region obtain registration certificates issued by the RM authorities. Thus, transnistrian region NGOs can obtain double registration. However, some organizations prefer to keep only one registration because of the additional costs and complicated procedures. Experts in the field consider that, representatives of the majority of NGOs do not know well enough the procedure and documents required for registration, thus they are influenced by the general impressions or rumors. Moreover, some representatives of NGOs from the region argues that it is difficult or even impossible to obtain registration on the right bank due to the lack of RM citizenship.

While some NGOs advocate for registration at the constitutional authorities in Chisinau, other NGOs prefer to have double registration (issued by both bank administrations), a number of NGOs prefer to keep only transnistrian region registration. Thus, the situation at this chapter in Transnistria is as specific as complicated for NGOs, donor organizations and authorities.

### **Advocacy**

Transnistrian region NGOs use only certain methods of promoting the interests: some elements of lobby, informing the decision makers. Such methods as monitoring, strategic litigation, advocacy focused on public institutions and decision making processes, collaboration with media and other methods are missing. Nevertheless, round table participants mentioned some positive examples of advocacy actions.

### **Public image**

Only some organizations are known in the region. Although in the region there are

many problems, lack of independent media, the pressure from the authorities do not allow to local NGOs to manifest themselves more widely and do not permit the full realization of the objectives. The image of the local NGOs is very little known and has no support from the population, including because of the lack of education and awareness of the population. As well, local authorities and media sources controlled by authorities are constantly compromising the image of the uncomfortable NGOs and their leaders.

Therefore local organizations have a negative image.

### **Summary of conclusions**

The level of development of the transnistrian region human rights NGOs remains to be low. Comparing to NGOs working in the social or environmental field, human rights organizations are less developed. As well, the level of development of the left bank NGOs is much inferior to the level of the right bank NGOs. Basically, in the region there are no NGOs that promote and defend classical democratic values - civil and political rights.

### **Recommendations:**

- The development of the transnistrian region human rights NGOs focused on the promotion and protection of the civil and political rights. This can be achieved through expansion of the activities of the existing organizations in Moldova and through capacity-building and cooperation with initiative groups and organizations from the region. Organizations' capacities of governance, planning capacities and resources are very limited. In this regard, there is a lack of institutional support for the organizations' activity and development.

It would be good for the donor organizations to have strategies for institutional support for the organizations. These strategies should include promotion of the knowledge and skills in the field of human rights, the development of the management and organizational capacities, as well as consolidation of the relations with society actors. Transnistrian region NGOs' cooperation with the right bank NGOs and specialized NGOs from other countries (Ukraine, Poland, etc.) is limited. Technologies and specific knowledge in human rights field are not developed. Human rights NGOs only use a few advocacy techniques. Positive examples relate to areas less sensitive for public authorities. The level of awareness of the local population regarding the problems concerning human rights issues is very low.

- There is a need for cooperation programs between specialized NGOs from several countries. Complementary involvement of the human rights organizations from Ukraine, Russia, Poland, etc. will provide major benefits for the work and the quality of the local activities. Most human rights organizations do not have institutionalized procedures for planning, evaluation of activities and organizational transparency. The reasons for that are divers: hostile work environment discourages local NGOs, also there is a lack of the standards for the operation.

- To develop effective advocacy methods specific and applicable in regional conditions and necessary for human rights promotion. Human rights NGOs activity environment is very vulnerable, hostile and has many obstacles. Obstacles refer to registration, threats to personal security of the NGOs members, use of the administrative methods to suppress the activity of the NGOs. Currently, none of the existing mechanisms with the involvement of international bodies do not includes the subject of democratization and human rights. The existing negotiation format doesn't include this component. Commission from the security zone doesn't have this mandate. Specialized international organizations rarely cover topics related to the human rights situation in the transnistrian region. Thus, the demand for such kind of information is limited.
- It is important to develop international support programs for human rights defenders from the transnistrian region. The involvement of the international actors and non-governmental organizations is crucial. Thus, through the exchange of experience, moral support, political statements of principle, international bodies, such as Council of Europe and European Union will involve in providing support for human rights organizations. The existing format for negotiations, as well as other mechanisms have to include democratization and human rights component. Human rights organizations are little known in the Transnistrian region. Organizations' legitimacy is not yet solid and substantial. Support from the media and other actors is also limited.
- The development strategy for human rights organizations should be correlated with the development of media and the citizens information. Organizations and initiative groups focused on human rights promotion in the transnistrian region choose the autonomous method of the non-governmental sector development through non-involvement in the activities of the right bank NGOs. Transnistrian region NGOs and initiative groups have to engage in joint activities alongside with the right bank NGOs. Contacts and cooperation between these organizations is vital for the transnistrian region organizations sustainable development.

Report developed by Serghei Ostaf and Ion Manole

# **Report “The level of development of the transnistrian region NGOs working in the social field”**

## **Introduction**

NGOs, activating in the social sector of the Transnistrian region, in their mass, have the same problems as other NGOs. From the very beginning we should mention, that the social sector is supported by donors better than other sectors, and this is because some NGOs have the long terms of grant liability (more than 2 years). Such organizations are not numerous, but they are the first professional NGOs (at the region practically there are not professional organizations). The social sector of NGOs has the certain support by the local authorities, but not in all settlements of the Transnistrian region. The authorities tell much about the support of such NGOs, but they are not dying to render assistance, motivating by the fact that there are not available financial resources for such assistance. Also they understand that, if they once render the assistance, subsequently they will permanently finance social NGOs from the city and the district budget, that is why they do not aspire to display activity in this direction.

The main tasks of the Thematic Round Table, conducted in the frames of NGOs Forum of the Transnistrian region were the following:

- Examination of the problems and the actual aspects in the NGO activity of the Transnistrian region
- Intensification of the regional NGOs collaboration concerning the effectiveness of the NGO role at the society
- Identification of the possibilities and the perspectives of the further development of the regional NGOs.
- Examination of the place and the role of NGO in the realization of the tasks and the solving of the problems of the social sector.
- Facilitation of communication and dialogue between the NGOs of the Transnistrian region
- Identification of the obstacles and the difficulties in the process of the realization of the proposed by NGOs tasks.

The participants established their priorities and expectations concerning the discussion in the frames of the first stage of the Regional Forum in written form.

## **Legal aspects**

In the course of the Forum, the NGOs representatives mentioned the existing problems during the registration of the organization in the corresponding authorities at both banks of the river. Hereby, in the participants' opinion, NGO registration is long-term process, especially, if the organizations are obliged to obtain the double registration. Usually, the double registration creates the problems of collaboration with the local authorities. For Transnistrian NGO the second registration is the additional problem and it affects negatively at the activity of the NGO itself. The local authorities very negatively treat the organizations, having the double registration, which unfavourably influence at all activities, realizing by NGOs. Such organizations get in the “black list” and the further collaboration with the representatives of the local authorities is very

problematic.

During the discussion concerning the problem of registration, the concrete examples of NGO registration were told, in particular, it was required the presence of the Transnistrian passport, in spite of the fact that the passport of the Moldavian citizenship was available. This measure was introduced in response to the problems of citizen passports recognition of self-proclaimed Transnistria.

The non-recognition of passports has the place at both banks of the river and this is a great obstacle in the activity not only of NGO. On the one hand the corresponding agreement was concluded between Tiraspol and Chisinau, but on the other hand, the local authorities interpret this agreement as they want. It should be mentioned that the registration in the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova for some NGO is impossible because the head of NGO does not have the Moldavian citizenship.

The majority of the NGOs representatives are conscious of the necessity of inter- and extra-sectorial collaboration and cooperation. The participants mentioned that the necessity of the forces consolidation concerning the development of the associative sector, which is one of the most important objectives of the organizations. Also they said that Transnistrian NGOs should jointly elaborate and develop the progressive projects concerning informing, education and the population implication into democratic processes, which finally would contribute to the increase of measures for maintenance the confidence and peace at the region.

In this context, in the frames of the events, the participants stated very clearly the arguments in favor of the collaboration with the organizations from the right bank of the Nistru river. The establishment of the efficient partnership, the experience exchange and the transmission of good practices by NGOs from other zones of the Republic of Moldova to the NGOs of the Transnistrian region is the necessity, which cannot be ignored or postponed. The problem of the partnership establishment and the potential partners identification, at the stage of the organizations development and consolidation, is the most important. The majority of the NGO representatives mentioned that the reduced number of the partners with NGO from the right bank of the Nistru river is expressed by the fact that the partners fear of possible pursuit from the local authorities, and because of this they do not take initiative and do not contact. And with it, the absence of the contacts between the representatives of the associative sector of 2 banks of Nistru, and the absence of the information concerning the opportunities of collaboration present the obstacle at the way of partnership.

The conducting of the joint actions or the work visits is connected with a number of problems. The examples of some of them are: "border" passing, "procedures of customs" and corresponding preparation for these contacts. Also we do not know the cases of the joint work in the frames of one project and the equivalent joint financing of both partners. As a rule, one NGO offers to carry out an action, and further contacts almost break off.

It should go into detail on the financing constituent of all these meetings. Extremely difficult money transfers and the difficulties, connected with this, to a large extent, deprive NGO of the efficient collaboration. Transnistrian NGOs try to

get the financing through the organizations or the banks of the Chisinau city. It is possible and it is necessary to work at NGOs in professional way. But for the effective work it is required a competent accountant, who cannot be found easily, because he must be paid the worth salary.

Unfortunately, all aforesaid leads to the fact that NGOs are not based on the experience of their colleagues, but they try themselves "to re-invent the wheel", which does not positively operate to the advantage of the society. In some cases, the reticence of information about the activity of some NGOs gives rise to the negative rumors about them, which do not do well to third sector.

For the purpose of the improvement the collaboration and in order to make it more effective, it is necessary to coordinate the partners' actions concerning the realization of one project at both bank rivers. It is necessary to finance one voluminous projects in one specified direction of activity and in the obligatory mode to include the participation of NGO of the Transnistrian region.

The donors, often refuse in the realization of the projects at both bank of the river at the same time. The example can serve the absence of the resource center or the representative office of Contact Center, IREX, Promo-LEX, etc in Transnistria. According to our information, the Transnistrian NGOs do not have the possibility to realize the projects, supported by FISM (FSM – Fond of Social Investments) , etc.

It is necessary to conduct more open collaboration with Transnistrian NGOs concerning the realization of the long-term and the perspective grants for the social work with youth, aged people and handicapped persons (physically challenged). Miserable pensions incite handicapped persons to search for additional bread-winner, but there are not real proposals from donors in this sphere.

So, the nongovernmental organizations collaborate with each other, but, in general, this collaboration has the surface or temporal character. There are business contacts, but, unfortunately, the established collaboration does not have the convenient profoundness. For example, NGOs from one region often do not know each other, but those organisations, which have some experience, usually do not do anything to transmit their experience to new organizations. Because of small number of grant programs at the region, there is certain fear of the competition development from other organizations of the region or from the right-bank organizations. Unfortunately, it was proved more than once at forum. Also it was not presented any example of collaboration with NGO from other countries. If such collaboration exists, it is limited by the time frame of the project or by other conditions.

## **Relations with the administrative structures**

The participants defined that the problems of collaboration and cooperations of NGOs with the local authorities can be of two types: a) general (typical for all types of NGO) and b) peculiarities of the social domain.

Relations of NGOs and the administrative structures may be characterized as watchful. The Transnistrian authorities see in this collaboration not the solving of the society problems, but, first of all, - the political constituent. Any example of collaboration faces a number of the problematic moments. NGO has the possibility to conduct some activity for pupils, it should make concordances, which take too

much time, resources, forces and nerves. The concordance of the seminar for pupils on the theme, for example, AIDS prevention or human traffic, should be settled at the level of Regional the Ministry of Education.

In spite of the existing difficulties of contacts, there are positive results of relationship. But for this aim, one should work hard with the representatives of the administrative structures. The authorities are easy to get in touch with NGO, when the latter render the assistance in the solving of the problems of the authorities. The example may serve any actions, timed to festive date (Day of Childrens' Protection. Retirees' Day, etc.). But NGOs have the corresponding financing only of their actions.

In some cases, the administrative structures shift onto NGOs the solving of their problems. In this situation, as a rule, without the corresponding financing, it is very difficult to carry out some events. The result of such collaboration can be very negative , and as the consequence, the representatives of any governmental structure consider NGO as the unreliable partner. In many cases, the solving of various questions regarding NGO activity is built on the personal relations of its leader, and in this case the subjective factor - sympathy or antipathy - plays the decisive role.

The ways of solution of communications gaps is to work with authorities relative to informing and explanation of the activity of third sector at all levels of authorities (executive, legislative, district and regional)

## **Relations with donor organizations**

As a rule, there are partner relations. Unfortunately, not all donors work with left-bank NGO, for example, Fond of Social Investments of Moldova, Center Contact, IREX, REC and other Fonds, having the representative offices throughout the country, do not have any representative office in the Transnistrian region.

Many NGOs do not have plans of their strategic development or these plans are not specified. This refers to young NGOs (and they are the majority), and to those who work amateurishly (without long term financing and staff members). As a rule, these are all NGOs of left bank, independently of terms of existence and the practical experience in this domain.

It should be mentioned that NGOs are not informed about the existing donors and their programs. In this case the main barrier is the language one. Practically, all donors' web-sites do not have the Russian translation. It can be said that almost 100% mailings do not have Russian translation, which extremely complicates the work of the left-bank NGOs. Many active NGOs members should choose between the search of "daily bread" and the work at NGO to the prejudice of NGO. The professional NGOs and the corresponding donors' support are required.

The donors finance the left-bank NGO in deficient regime. If for NGO of the rest of Moldova the certain amount of money is offered, than for the Transnistrian region this amount is lower in several times, either the program does not work in general, or it works through intermediaries.

There are examples of the dictators' relations, but not the partners' ones, but in this case, all depends on the certain person, heading the activity of the certain direction in Moldova. The donors should change their attitude towards the Transnistrian NGO. Among them there are organisations, with which they should

coordinate more. Many NGOs work only in the frames of the certain donors' programs and they occupy with all at once. In the social sphere practically it does not change anything. To the perspective direction can be referred: organization of workplaces or the business for handicapped persons; retirees' involvement to the work at society benefit; feeding of needy persons, work with youth, etc. such types of activity require the long-term or prolonged projects, rooms for work, staff members, etc.

In each settlement it would be possible to create one representative office for the social receptions, which could coordinate or even inform and consult NGO. For example, by the creating the training computer center for the representatives of the budget organisations (medical institutions, teachers and others) in several cities of the Transnistrian region we could speak about the serious progress in the relationship between NGOs and the State authorities.

### **The institutional capacity of the transnistrian region NGOs**

The Organizations have the Articles of Association, and their activity is stipulated by this document. The Articles of Association assume various aspects of activity, and usually they determine a wide range of the social services. It is very convenient, because there is possibility to correspond to donors' certain requirements while participation in the concurs for the grant receiving. This is justified at the initial stage of NGO development, because it gives the possibility to all NGO members to occupy with the development of organization and to write the grants applications for various directions.

When the experience and knowledge in the NGO activity are gained then the organisations occupy with "flexible" planning of their activity, but in general, under the concrete grants or the concrete donor. Such planning "by the hit-and-miss method" does not have the strategic meaning, and correspondently the clear plan for NGO development for 3-5 and more years. This statement does not refer to the professional organisations. The planing in the social sector organisations (NGO, which work in the professional way), generally, is for one or two years. In many cases the result of such planning is the established "traditions" in NGO work, it is meant, the activities, which are conducted permanently (every year, every three months) with little deviation from the certain scenario.

Many organisations practically do not have the system of monitoring. But if they have, it is conducted according to the results of the carried projects for the accounting period, as the certain donor requires. If it is conducted, then only in the frames of the current projects and the corresponding attention is not drawn to the quality of the services, rendered to the beneficiary, because the majority of the ONG staff combine the activity at ONG and the professional activity.

NGOs occupy with the personnel policy only in outline. The personnel training, advanced training is carried out through the participation on the regular courses or seminars. But NGOs do not occupy with the professional training. At the training seminars on the behalf of NGO are sent younger members of organization for the skills and abilities obtaining, but further, all depends on the desire and wish of the organization member for self-education. One of the main obstacles for advanced training is the availability of free time for community services. The

principle of professionalism is not applied in the process of the personnel selection.

Great assistance renders the Center Contact with its training programs in the training of the organization members. The system is quite good, but it is far from perfection. This theme will be examined in detail in the final paragraph. The participants consider that it is necessary to create some structures for NGO assistance on the territory of Transnistria. The budget of many organisations depends on the certain donor and is made from the received grants. Hence the main planning of their activity. The majority of organisations do not occupy with the planning of the funds receipt for the carrying out of their activity. Namely social direction NGO annually obtain additional funds. This may be through the annual charitable actions timed to the certain dates. That is why, we can say these organisations have some notions.

### **Beneficiary needs assessment**

In general, detection of the beneficiaries' needs is not realized, but proceeds from the certain conclusions of the NGOs activists or its leader. In some cases, it is right and it is not required to conduct additional work. This statement is the most right, because there is a small number of NGO, activating in the certain sector, but the circle of activity is very broad. The detection of needs is realized, but only in the frames of the certain project during the further development of the organization. In our region all modern western technologies, existing dozens years, cannot be applied. It is necessary to make correction to the certain region and its needs, but not blindly introduce the existing experience. If there never has been the NGO, occupying with the certain task, then, while the analysis a number of accompanying problems is found out, which cannot be resolved in the frames of one organization. The approach in each specified case should be the combined one.

The population treats NGOs as something unknown, and very often labels them, which damages the NGOs activity.

Population faith comes with the lapse of time, in the most cases only for the direct beneficiaries and on condition that NGO activate openly. In this context, the social NGOs are the model, on their example the population see the utility of the third sector, but in some cases, actively render the assistance. For example, NGO, occupying with the human rights activity, is not something useful for population, but this only until they themselves do not seek help or contact somehow with NGO. In this case, the attitude changes, but the time is required for full faith.

At NGOs of social direction not always the prepared personnel work. For example, if the NGO occupies with the rehabilitation of handicapped persons, then the specialist of this NGO are the professionals in this affair, but not in the development of strategic planning for NGO or the volunteers training. For such NGOs there is not enough the specialists in this domain, and they do not occupy with the development of NGO. As a result, they burden themselves, substituting functions of the State, which should occupy with such work. The absence of NGO such type of activity may be attributed to the specific of the region.

## Conclusions

First of all, third sector of the social direction may essentially change the administration and population attitude towards the NGO. The authority and population may judge about the usefulness of all NGOs through the concrete and appreciable results. For example, the social rehabilitation of the handicapped children in a large extent is more noticeable and more discussed at society than pupils' teaching the legal matters. Without doubts that both activities are important, but the change of attitude towards NGOs is the primary task. Further, it will be possible to speak about the assistance from the all society in whole. We would not touch upon ecology, because the care for health of each person, as society cell, is also very important and it can change the attitude of the society towards NGO.

The absolute majority of organisations have the weak material base. Only great enthusiasts, or persons, who have special necessity (it is profitable for mothers of handicapped children to work at NGO, which resolve some of their problems) work at NGOs.

Passing of NGOs to the professional base is very profitable as for the organization itself, so for the society benefit. It should be conducted the specialized professional preparation for such NGOs.

NGOs are isolated from each other, even if they are situated in one and the same settlement. The partners' relations generally are established only for the realization of the certain project during the grant receiving. The dissociation mostly depends on the absence of information and settled connections.

NGOs should draw more attention to the search of the useful information, but it is necessary the knowledge and the common Internet resources. More than once the attempts for the creation of the common Internet resources were made, but they did not spread widely. This refers only to Transnistria, because the language barrier prevents many left-bank NGO from receiving the actual, qualitative and useful information.

The support of the third sector should be continued by developing, first of all, the social-aimed NGOs. The society should see the results of such development. Such results may be expressed in: a number of handicapped persons, receiving the definite permanent assistance; a number of handicapped persons, having the possibility to study; a number of pensioners, occupying with voluntary work in the settlement; a number of persons, receiving free hot meal, etc.

For NGO development we should not use the west experience without the correction to our region. Here never has not been existed progressive NGO, and all notions, which the population has, turn into the Soviet labor unions.

NGO should have more freedom in the selection of the development programs. First of all, the serious training, and then the essential support during 3-5 years should be realized. It should be kept in mind that many NGO have more or less trained people, but they have not the possibility to receive the financial support for their activity, e.g. they even do not have the rooms, where they can work. Often, it should be begin with the solving of this problem.

It is necessary to draw much attention to the NGO development through the

system of the staff training, for this it should be increased a number of NGO staff members, which leads to the costs increase. By the same token, there are no many professionals at NGO.

The language barrier for the Transnistrian NGO is the essential problem, which intensifies each year. It is required the increase of the Internet access in the region and also the growth of the Russian language in the Internet resources for the gathering of timely information about the problems of society, about donors, about NGOs themselves.

The deserving salaries in NGO can stop the personnel haemorrhage. The payment for this activity should be really worth, because, even working or making some money at NGO, people should go for earnings.

It is necessary to work with local personnel, as with people, knowing their region, having the experience of the practical work and possessing the information at places. The study of the particular experience of the work in other countries for the existing NGO would be welcomed. For all this, it is necessary the experience exchange travel support program and the attract in the region of certain positive work forms with the corresponding financing of the partner project.

Report developed by: Anjela Cojocaru and Oleg Nagornii



## **Report “The level of development of the transnistrian region NGOs working in the environmental field”**

### **Introduction**

Public environmental organisations of Transnistria, the participants of the first stage of the Regional Forum, discussed the existing situation concerning the environment and connected with this problems of population incidence rate. In the most discussed cases, these are problems in the domain of environment and human health protection, at which, in the general opinion, Transnistrian NGO should focus their actions.

It was noticed the absence of the practice of attraction by the local governments of the general public to the processes of the preparation and decisions-making in relation to ecological significant questions, in particular, construction and reconstruction, but the earlier informing about the planning decision is not realized. Right to access to environmental information, according to Aarhus Convention is not provided. There is absence of formats, mechanisms, procedures of partnership and consultations with public. The governmental structures and local governments do not guarantee the obtaining and the reliability of such information.

In opinion of the environmental nongovernmental organisations, presented at Regional Forum of NGOs of Transnistria, these principles not always find the embodiment in today's realities of the State environmental politics of the local governments of the transnistrian region.

Namely, the search of the effective solving of these problems motivates the activity of the environmental nongovernmental organisations of Transnistria, having pro-active civil position.

### **Legal Aspects**

The process of registration, especially at regional and local levels, is difficult problem for NGOs. Practically, the legislation of Moldova does not provide the procedure for NGO registration, beside those, who live in the given settlement. So, all NGOs of the Transnistrian region have the possibility to be registered without any obstacles only at national level. Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova registers NGOs, whose founders live in the Transnistrian region.

On the other part, the Transnistrian administration registers NGOs, whose founders live on the given territory.

### **Collaboration with other NGOs**

Environmental NGOs of the Transnistrian region are open for collaboration and they communicate with NGOs of other direction for the solving of common tasks. Also they collaborate with NGOs of the rest of country, are ready to enlarge the connections and to establish the collaboration with NGOs of other countries. NGOs, activating in the environmental direction, were the first, who began to communicate and to establish the partners' relations with the right-bank colleagues. They succeeded in creating the network of NGOs and initiative groups, and also to resolve some common tasks. The good examples are: “Eco-TIRAS” *International Environmental Association* of Nistru River Keepers and the initiative groups of the Stroenti village and Mihailovca village of the Ribnita district, which

have certain results related to the solving of environmental matters.

### **Relations between NGOs and administrative structures**

Very often the local governments do not support the initiative of the environmental NGOs. As the participants said, the representatives of these authorities have the mistaken opinion about the representatives of the environmental NGOs, quasi they are so active because they pursue the object to occupy the places of the local governments. The authority representatives' fear gives birth and to other problems, so as great problems, connected with the registration of the active groups of citizens and their NGOs, and also the creation of the alternative means of information by the same NGOs.

There is no question of the financial assistance to NGOs, freely created on the citizens' initiative. Only those NGOs, which were created in accordance with the authority's indication, make use of such support.

The connection between authorities and NGOs is not established. More often, the activity of NGO is ignored by those, who can influence the change of situation and is obliged by the law to take all measures for solving of the revealed problems. The representatives of the environmental NGOs mentioned the cases, when they found out the guilty in environment pollution persons, but the authorities did not take any measures. But if the environment pollution had the place because of the economical structures, which the authorities were interested in, these cases were hold back and ere not available for the public environment expertise. The environmental NGOs gave a number of examples, when they had applied to the local Prosecutor's Office, but instead the Prosecutor's Office would support the NGOs actions, they proved these cases had not existed.

### **Problems of environmental NGO**

Among prior problems, demanding special attention, were noticed:

- Insufficient material and technical base of environmental NGOs. The absence of the office rooms and the possibilities for rent, absence of computers, Internet access and other elementary conditions for development promote the isolation of NGOs of Transnistria. Because of the insufficient access to the informational sources NGOs of the region not always know the programs of donors' organisations or they do not the possibility to make a qualitative application with the purpose to resolve the problems of their community. Also they do not have the possibility to establish the effective connections and the partners' relations with NGOs of other regions of the country or foreign countries. This situation cannot favor to normal and effective development of NGO. Because of absence of the corresponding instruments for the measurement of the environmental showings NGOs do not have the possibility permanently to update the information about environment in correspondence with their regulation tasks and to present it to population.
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- Absence of support from the local governments. It was noted that there is necessity of the elaboration of the strategy at the nongovernmental sector in the solving of the environmental safety matters, the further higher of the

NGOs role by means of the elaboration the institutional and legal mechanisms of the participation in the process of decision-making concerning environmental safety matters, which would correspond to several international conventions.

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- The little, but sometimes the absence of the financing for the institutional development of NGOs. If we compare with environmental right-bank NGOs, which posses the equipment, offices and Internet access, other instruments for the measurement of the showings of environment, and thereby they can conduct the actions, connected with the environment, have the access to other sources of environmental information, than at the left bank of the Nistru river only several NGOs have such possibilities.
- The absence of the system for public environmental education. Till now NGOs do not have the real possibilities to influence for some processes, connecting with decision-making on the environmental matters. Also, more often NGOs are not able or do not have elementary possibilities to inform the public about the situation on the harmful substances n air and how they influence the human's health.

## **Management**

The participants connect much important questions of their organisations with the aspects related to NGOs management. Among them the following problems were mentioned:

- The absence of the clearly defined missions and values, which would serve to the correct and clear formulation of the strategic tasks, available and understandable for all NGO members, beneficiaries, partners and to general public.
- The absence of the governing council. NGOs simply do not know how it should be, and they do not know the structure of the democratic NGO. They need the training in the domain of the strategic development.
- The absence of the planning, monitoring and self-appraisal procedures. NGOs simply never have not planned its stability, they just work, when they have the financial project. They need the training related to planing of their activity and the monitoring of their results, collaborators self-appraisal, and the collaborators' appraisal by the executive director or the NGO president.
- The absence of strategic and annual plans
- The absence of monitoring, as the means for the improvement of the programs and services of NGOs; also various instruments, such as poll, interview, observation and others, which permit to gather information about the quality of the presented services, change in needs and necessary improvements, also are not used.
- The absence of the policy of human resources development. There is no policy of human resources development and motivation, training possibilities and alternatives, also there are not job description and internal rules in NGOs.
- The absence of the policy of volunteers training and raising the level of skill of their collaborators. Because of the lack of finances for the raising the

level of skill, such events are not planned, and so NGOs cannot take part in the internal and external training programs. For example, many NGOs have a great desire to study its personnel and volunteers, which can be attracted into their organisations, to more detailed project management.

- The absence of the qualified specialists in the domain of financial management. Only in 4 out of 15 NGOs, presented at the Regional Forum, the financial management is realized by the collaborator, specially trained for these purposes. This situation is connected with the low salaries for the motivation of the good specialists and with the instability of the NGOs themselves.
- The absence of the strategy and the plans for diversification of the financing sources and funds raising. It means the selling services, which would be accredited and if there would be certain consumers. Such NGOs need the consolidation of their fund raising skills.
- The most important stakeholders (beneficiaries, clients, workers, donors, research institutes, other NGOs, private companies, State institutions) are not determined in the most NGOs.
- The absence of the policy for the partnership development, i.e. the use of the joint resources, inter-training, joint problems solving.

### **Relations with donor organizations**

The participants of the forum said about Soros Foundation in Moldova, US Embassy, OSCE Mission to Moldova, Milieucontact International and REC Moldova as the most famous donors' organisations, which financed the environmental projects in Transnistria. Basically, these were the projects, connected with the basin of the Nistru river, ecological agricultural sector, development of the rural and ecological tourism and others. In general, NGOs and the initiative groups realized a number of the projects and continue to search new possibilities, but it is very hard work because of lack of information about the programs of donors' organisations. In better position, 6-7 NGOs which are the members of "*Eco-TIRAS*" *International Environmental Association* of Nistru River Keepers, who practically every year are involved in the realization of the environmental projects of this Association Council. The forum showed that NGOs of this region have the desire and in future to take active part in the solution of the environmental problems, but they need the support from the donors' organisations.

### **Recommended long-term, medium-term and short-term strategic objectives concerning the improvement of the ecological condition in Transnistria and increase of the role of environmental NGOs in the support of safe environment**

#### **For environmental NGO of Transnistria:**

- Assistance to the essential improvement of the state of public health by the means of influence on the improvement of the ecological showings of environment, which would promote to consolidation of the image of the environmental NGOs and growth of the faith and support from many people.
- Assistance in the prior development of the ecologically neutral or less dangerous branches of industry, and namely, services sector, especially

- tourism (green) by means of the implementation of the certain projects.
- Increase of the ecological competence and eco-legal culture among population by means of realisation the certain, well-planned actions, close to beneficiaries' needs.
  - Implementation of the practical realisation of the ecological monitoring of Transnistrian NGOs and the creation of the stable partnership with other interested partners.
  - Elaboration and realization of the programs and projects concerning mass environmental education of population and forming of the system of the permanent universal **ecological education of population** by the environmental NGOs.
  - Establishment of the partnership between the State structures of local governments, schools, medical structures, because only in the partners' relations the existing environmental problems can be resolved effectively and reasonably.

**For environmental NGO of right-bank of the Nistru river:**

- Development of the stable collaboration with left-bank NGOs related to the implementation of the joint projects for the improvement the state of environment of the basin of the Nistru river.
- Implementation of the practice of experience and achievements exchange with the left-bank NGOs.
- Issue of the joint environmental weekly publications concerning the basin of the Nistru river in electronical and printed form, available for general public.

**For local authorities:**

- Implementation of the mechanisms, formats and procedures of consultations with public and NGOs related to the environmental questions.
- Attraction of the environmental NGOs to the preparation of the updated plan of actions concerning the improvement of the ecological condition in Transnistria.
- Elaboration and implementation to the utilization the procedures of the informing and the public involvement in the process of decision-making regarding the questions, having the relation to protection and safety of the environment.
- Attraction of NGOs in the realization of the programs of prevention and warning of population sickness because of the factors of the ambient air pollution by stationary sources and by vehicles.
- Preparation and realization of a number of public hearings on the main environmental matters of Transnistria.
- Attraction of NGOs to the elaboration and implementation of the Program "Potable water".
- Attraction of NGOs to the elaboration and implementation of the Program "City green lungs".
- Attraction of NGOs to the restoration of green and park zones, retention and development of suburban green zones. It is possible the elaboration of the program "Green circle" around the cities.

- Ensuring of the accessibility and the transparency to environmental information of enterprises, about the emissions and dumpings, about their danger.

#### **For donors organisations:**

- Program financing for NGOs, connected with the solving of the matter of access to environmental information and population awareness of the environmental situation.
- Program financing for the preservation of landscape and biological diversity, and also the rehabilitation of natural landscapes in the basin of the Nistru river in the partnership with NGOs, economical structures and authorities from the both banks of the Nistru river.
- Financial assistance related to the implementation and functioning of the population warning notice system of the basin of the Nistru river while the brusque increase of the concentration of the harmful emissions or the unfavourable meteorological conditions.
- Financial assistance of the programs related to the rise of knowledge and skills concerning the management of NGOs and the implementation by NGOs of the given region of the projects for the solving of environmental matters of Transnistria.

#### **Conclusion**

The environmental matters should be warned at the stage of the managerial decisions- making, otherwise, the society is condemned to fight with the causes, but not with the sequences of their appearance, this position should become the base in the activity of the environmental NGO of Transnistria. Namely this position will raise the support, both from the side of general population as from the side of the market of financial funds for the solving of the environmental matters and without doubt it will contribute to improvement of the attitude towards NGO from the part of local governments.

The effective system of the environmental education should be regarded in the capacity of one of the main instruments of the ensuring the stable development of economics and society.

The environmental education in the context of conception of the stable development obtains the status of the system-forming factor of education in general, determines its strategic objective and leading directions.

In the Resolution 44/228 of the General Assembly UN (Rio-de-Janeiro, 1992 ) is written the following: “ To promote environmental education, especially of the younger generation, as well as other measures to increase awareness of the value of the environment” this may promote the Transnistrian youth attraction to the solving of environmental matters, and so, the ensuring of the synergy effect between environmental NGOs and NGOs, whose activity is directed at the solving of the problems, which the younger generation fights with.

The environmental issue is today's global problem. During past ten years it becomes aggravated so that there is none of the society spheres of life, which this issue does not apply to. In the conditions of the growing ecological crisis, the primary importance obtains the permanent environmental education of all groups of population, but especially the youth, because namely they make the future. In

the final analysis, the further fortunes of our planet depend on the level of scholarship and education of the younger education. The active and principal position of the nongovernmental environmental organisations of Transnistria deserves the special support, both from the financial foundations and from other environmental organisations from without.

But the most important is that the local governments should consider NGOs not as the competitor in rendering necessary and useful services to population, but as the reliable partner in the process of ensuring of the quality of these services and higher level of life.

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