

Key strategic recommendations for Agora's interventions
in Bosnia, Georgia, and Moldova

Lessons learned from evaluation of Agora's projects in the countries:

- Participatory budget projects do not seem to be sustainable – the concept is not actively taken over by municipalities.
- Youth focused projects worked especially well where there was a clear connection to the local community and opportunity for young people to carry out concrete actions.

Gaps identified in all countries:

- Strongly donor-driven civil society and little opportunities for consistent work and thus it is difficult to replicate good practices.
- Problematic collaboration with local authorities – it does not ensure sustainability and authorities generally are not very well trusted as they are perceived as part of political establishment.
- Passiveness of population at large, also affecting young people. Stakeholders cite disillusionment with political elites as one of the key reasons. Majority of young people see political involvement as the least valuable.
- Trust in civil society very low among young people – this is also because donors mainly fund CSOs operating from capital cities and less connected with local communities.
- Support to grassroots organizations is scarce.

Recommendations for future actions:

- There is a clear need to create more opportunities for meaningful engagement for youth mainly in the rural regions – ideally bigger villages or smaller towns.
- The future projects should aim at youth, ideally younger teenage years, and aim to provide opportunities for them to act around an issue of interest in their communities. They should also aim at creating a connection and make sense of living in a rural community, developing it and finding solutions to problems faced. Schools may be one way to go about it but it may be better to work with independent youth organisations and structures.
- Agora needs to identify new partner organizations working at local level and ideally youth led. In Bosnia independence from political funding is important. These are often less professional in terms project writing, reporting etc. but have much closer ties with local communities and represent the communities themselves.
- Cooperation with grassroots organisation could provide greater space to identify Agora's added value, mainly in the area of capacity building and transfer of know-how to the partner organisation.
- Topics worth considering for future youth-focused projects include, aside from civic participation themes also: media education, mental health/cyber bullying, creating a space for youth to meet and connect.
- Try to involve existing youth structures that could also benefit from the action and capacity building such as the National youth councils.