

Final report, evaluation of the *Strengthening Fundraising Capacities of NGOs in Central Europe* project

Jeremy Smith, 24 September 2012

Purpose and methodology

The evaluation is broad in scope and summative in purpose. It is intended to draw conclusions, from an external perspective, across the stages of project structure and management; delivery of activities; effectiveness and immediate outcomes; and sustainability. These conclusions are designed to fulfil a three-fold purpose: to meet accountability obligations to the donor (Europe Aid), to generate lessons to inform partners' future programmes and to demonstrate the results of activities to other stakeholders involved in the project.

Methodology

The evaluation draws on an extensive **review of documentation**, including

- core project documentation (project proposal, annual reports to the donor);
- notes of meetings of the Project Steering Team (PST);
- feedback from training events, study visits and fact-finding trips;
- internal and external project web-pages;
- *Hearts and Money Beyond Borders: Fundraising from individuals for development and relief*, the project's main written output.

Documentation review shaped the lines of inquiry pursued in **interviews with project stakeholders and beneficiaries** according to the following categories:

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia	UK	Total
Core partners	1	1	1	4	3	10
Experts ¹	2	1	1	1	0	5
Beneficiaries	4	4	2	5	0	15
Total	7	6	4	10	3	30

The majority of those spoken to from the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia were interviewed in person during a visit to the region from 27 to 31 August. Project stakeholders in Poland and the UK, as well as three individuals from Slovakia and one from Hungary, were interviewed by skype.

This evaluation follows on relatively closely from a Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) exercise conducted by the European Commission itself. This has had the practical effect that some interviewees were obliged to make their second evaluation input within the space of two-and-

¹ That is, those who were involved in Topical Working Groups and / or who served as trainers or consultants.

a-half months. In the case of one country, the national coordinator decided not to solicit interviews for this review from those involved in the Commission process. There is no sense, however, that this has affected the quality of input secured².

Initial headline findings were shared with project staff from Slovakia, Hungary and the UK at an evaluation workshop in Bratislava on 7 September. This draft report reflects the steer and additional input gathered from this workshop.

Project design and coherence

Partner selection

The project consortium involves partner organisations of two types: core partners, which tended to be well-known to the lead partner (Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia, PDCS) whether through membership of a common network, as in the case of Partners Poland Foundation (PPF) or through a regular history of cooperation in projects, as in the case of the Foundation for the Development of Democratic Rights (DemNet) in Hungary and People in Need (PIN) in the Czech Republic. Core partners were responsible for the delivery of the project in their respective countries, with PDCS having the additional role of overall coordination and management.

The second category of associate partners comprised groups – that is, the Polish Fundraising Association (PFA) and the Czech Fundraising Centre (CFC) – which have greater specific fundraising expertise, but less of an organisational track record. Associate partners had a role in the content of the project – specifically its training outputs – but not in its coordination. The British Resource Alliance had the status of a core partner in the project proposal, but in practice assumed a role akin to the two associate partners, albeit that, unlike the CFC and PFA, it did attend PST meetings.

The ineligibility of the PFA and CFC for the role of core partners avoided PDCS having to make a choice between organisations which it knew well and which it knew to be reliable and interested in the topic, but which had little fundraising experience, and those with more such specific experience. The effect also was to privilege the development aspect to the project rather than fundraising in the selection of core partners.

Associate partners and the Resource Alliance played a supporting role of technical assistance. While the Resource Alliance has played the role outlined for it in the project proposal – as one core partner puts it, *“when we needed advice, information, contacts, they provided it and they did their role well”* – there is nonetheless a sense of an opportunity having been missed to have involved it more. The Resource Alliance's role was limited to that of an intermediary, sourcing experts without acting as experts themselves in, for example, the Topical Working

² While the two evaluations differ somewhat in scope and methodology, with the Results-Oriented Monitoring process taking a more mechanistic approach linked to the project's logframe, it is arguable that there would have been value in separating out the two reviews more in their purpose and timing.

Groups³.

If the Resource Alliance was involved at an organisational level, but less so in terms of individual expertise, the CFC and the PFA engaged less as organisations and more as individual experts. Again, there is no issue of any lack of clarity about their role. For the representative of one associate partner, the effect was that *"it would have been better if our role was more official [i.e. at an organisational level], though there were no real consequences"* of it not being.

For the groups chosen as core partners, it is apparent that the project falls fairly within the area of operation of PDCS, PPF and DemNet in their focus on civil society organisational development. In terms of fundraising itself, these core partners had command of demand through their knowledge of the NG(D)O sector in their countries, but not of supply: they knew what the problems were, but not how to communicate some aspects of the solutions. For this, the expertise of associate partners and the Resource Alliance was relied upon. While the project consortium could have been constructed in other ways – other combinations of core and associate partners may also have worked – this way of doing it meant that the project was founded on a clear articulation of needs and avoided the trap of being supply-driven.

Among core partners, PIN represents something of an exception, having a well-developed fundraising programme. Alone among the core partners, PIN can speak to supply as well as demand. In looking hard for the benefits to itself from the project – *"PIN was very clear to get what it needs from the project"* – and pushing for the introduction of more advanced elements to project activities, PIN reflects the more developed level of fundraising in the Czech Republic as a whole.

Variations in levels of existing skills and experience among core partners – and, behind that, in the fundraising market and political context in each country – have on occasion acted as a force pulling the partners in different directions. But while this may have led to greater time than anticipated being needed for reaching agreement on some issues, such as the design of the regional training set, the differences between core partners and the opportunity to learn from other organisations' efforts to tackle similar problems appear, overall, to have brought more benefits than costs.

Project rationale and design

The rationale for the project is rooted in concern at the dependence of NGDOs on institutional grants. This dependence creates inefficiencies for NGDOs because governmental programs *"tend to be underfunded or overburdened by complicated bureaucratic conditions"*, it makes NGDOs vulnerable to shifts in government priorities or cutbacks in funds, it ties them to co-financing requirements and leaves them with limited, unearmarked funds⁴. At the same time,

³ Along these lines, the March 2011 Project Steering Team meeting noted that *"Resource Alliance could have [a] more active role in the first year for having a possibility to learn as well (not only to provide)"*; page 3.

⁴ An analysis elaborated in *Hearts and Money Beyond Borders: Fundraising from individuals for development and*

the relative ease of securing grants has acted as a disincentive to developing fundraising from private sources. Where NGOs do have individual donors, these are typically underdeveloped as sources of support. In most NGOs in the region, fundraising techniques are basic, systems for donor development are limited and fundraising is a marginal element to organisational strategies. 'Environmental' factors – laws, government policies and the procedures of banks – hinder NGOs' ability to construct cost-effective individual donor programmes.

Project beneficiaries offer a strong endorsement of this rationale, with many citing a lack of fundraising skills, the scarcity of dedicated fundraising posts, the low status of fundraising and the lack of courage in many organisations to invest in, and try out, fundraising from individuals. There is agreement too that *"an overload of European Commission [and government] money means there is no incentive to seek individual income... [T]he reflex of NGOs is still to focus on government and European grants"*. Beneficiaries consider the project to be timely in that organisations across the region are coming to realise the effects of a lack of core (non-project, non-earmarked) funds. The proof of the direction which NG(D)O fundraising is taking is that in at least some organisations, new posts are being created to develop private fundraising (e.g. ADRA and Glopolis in the Czech Republic) or new responsibilities added to develop individual fundraising alongside grant fundraising (e.g. the Education for Democracy Foundation in Poland and the Kurt Lewin Foundation in Hungary).

In this context, the project aims to create *"more advanced"* NGOs, that is, to pull more organisations up to a standard represented by those which are *"making an effort to diversify their sources of funding and are systematically turning to individual donors in well-thought out ways"*⁵. The four Visegrád states provided the geographic logic and limits to the project, although groups from other countries were invited to the concluding conference in May 2012.

The overall objective of the project is *"to build cooperation and facilitate exchange of experience among NGOs, their national platforms and fundraising professionals in Central Europe, to contribute to their mutual learning and strengthening of their fundraising capacities to mobilise greater financial support from private resources for development and humanitarian causes"*⁶. As such, the project has three key levels or dimensions:

- building the skills of individuals currently or potentially involved in fundraising through training and follow-up consulting / mentoring, collation and dissemination of good practice examples and creating space for ongoing exchange of experience.
- making organisations more receptive to fundraising from individuals through assertion of the value of a diversified funding strategy, raising awareness of trends in income sources and promotion of fundraising as a legitimate profession, one worthy of greater status and investment.

relief; page 16.

⁵ *Hearts and Money Beyond Borders: Fundraising from individuals for development and relief*; page 16.

⁶ Concept note, *Strengthening Fundraising Capacities of NGOs in Central Europe*, page 7.

- influencing the environment for fundraising by (a) pressing governments, banks and other relevant stakeholders to amend policy and practice to facilitate fundraising from individuals; and (b) addressing issues of trust in NGOs by the promotion of better NGO practice in terms of transparency and accountability to donors and – added half-way through the project – the beneficiaries of NGOs' interventions.

These dimensions are heavily interconnected, with specific project outputs cross-cutting them. Even taking this into account, there is a risk of being disproportionately drawn to the first, most conceptually straightforward level of individual skills, a risk which core project staff are acutely aware of. As one asserts, *“we do not want to train individuals to be good fundraisers. The problems are more at the systemic level... We are much more concerned about the organisational and environmental levels”*. In developing case studies of effective implementation of fundraising from individuals in Central Europe, in training people not in fundraising skills in the abstract, but in how to develop and apply fundraising plans suited to, and implementable in, their own organisations and in focusing consultations with NGOs on an organisational approach to fundraising, the project operates to a sophisticated view of capacity-building that avoids slipping into over-emphasis on the *“easiest”* level relating to individual skills.

While comparable emphasis is given by core staff to the third, environmental dimension as is given to the second, organisational dimension, the project proposal is somewhat loose in regard of the former. Expected results in relation to government policy cite an intent to have *“informed National & Community institutions dealing with development / humanitarian aid about fundraising best practices and Transparency Guidelines and involved [them] in the discussion about their role in strengthening flow from private resources”*⁷. There may be an element of including engagement of governments in the project because the funder expects it to be there. In these terms and towards governments themselves – to meet the challenge of 'what are you doing beyond our money?' – the project is conceived in quite a defensive way. Where a specific indicator of progress in this regard is given – to have government officials attend the final conference – this is now acknowledged to have been infeasible, given the apparent disinterest of officials. With the context for approaching government more or less difficult in each country, the project has struggled to pin down what it can and should try to win from governments to make fundraising easier⁸.

In terms of trust in NGOs, the project follows a logic of improving NGO practice in transparency and accountability to both prevent further instances of bad practice and more positively contribute to improving the reputation of NGOs as worthy of donations. As such, work in this area operates to a different time-scale to the cultivation of individual skills and organisational

⁷ Grant application, *Strengthening Fundraising Capacities of NGOs in Central Europe*, page 18.

⁸ The representative of one partner considers that *“there is nothing specific to advocate for”* from government. At best, the project aims to keep officials informed until such point as their budgets for NGOs increase, a scenario which is currently unlikely.

receptiveness. The three dimensions to the project are not discrete: organisations embarking on fundraising from individuals should have been encouraged to do so in a way that induces trust and confidence among donors. Nonetheless, there is an imbalance: the project relies on progress in the first two dimensions not being undermined by continued obstacles in the third and on newly enthused and enabled NGOs not hitting a wall in terms of unfavourable government policy, banking practice or public perceptions of NGOs, at a cost to their confidence and likely commitment to sustaining individual fundraising programmes.

Many respondents to this evaluation talk of a vicious circle holding NGOs back from engaging in fundraising from individuals: organisations lack the skills, funds and courage to start fundraising, so they never generate the skills, funds and courage to allow them to deliver fundraising. The project cannot help that the environmental dimensions to this are harder and slower and is, in effect, working on the basis that there would be a sufficient return on fundraising investment in spite of ongoing environmental obstacles and that those targeted by this project can see fundraising from individuals succeeding, generating positive feedback loops in organisations, without awaiting breakthroughs in policy, laws or public trust.

Phased approach

The project works to a phased approach of building a knowledge base in the first phase, more or less equivalent to the first year, to be disseminated through training events and other outputs in phase / year two. As one core partner describes it, phase one was designed “*to identify problems, build know-how, identify how to design the later activities and scope what the sources of information and skills are... which are then delivered in the regional training set and master-classes*”.

Phase one was aimed at an audience of experts – “*advanced participants who can become multipliers*”⁹ – while phase two reached a broader audience. Phase one activities were regional, under an assumption that plotting current practice would be hindered by competition among NGOs if done at a national level. Phase two activities were both regional and national, with the regional training set designed for a mixed group with a broad range of experiences, while national activities allowed greater scope for partners to address challenges specific to their own countries.

To the question as to how far phase one underpinned phase two, some of those involved in the first year do feel that “*there were very significant differences among the four states which had to be understood and acknowledged [and] the background of experts was very diverse, so it took time to work that through*”. It is the case that phase one saw the identification of needs which were made the subject of specific activities in phase two, as is the case with the master-class on major donors: here the phased approach worked exactly as intended. Individuals involved who went on to deliver national training and consulting also talk of feeling much better prepared for having undergone the various study visits and fact-finding trips in phase

⁹ Interim Narrative Report, end of year one, page 16.

one.

These are valuable benefits, but ones which do not themselves seem to form a sufficient justification for the level of human and financial investment made in phase one. Rather than its direct effects in informing phase two – which arguably could have been achieved through a shorter process of scoping and needs assessment – the more important impact of phase one is perhaps the indirect one of encouraging the formation of relationships among expert practitioners. When pressed on the links between phases one and two, one lead partner “cannot imagine year two without year one, but cannot explicate this easily. Perhaps it is the creation of a community of people focused on the same issue?”¹⁰. Another phase one participant concurs that “there were other benefits from the Working Groups than the case studies – the shared journey of Working Group members, which enriched us as experts and allowed us to make progress in these topics and apply ourselves in our own organisations”.

This 'community of people focused on the same issue' is not equally bought into by all phase one participants: some saw their role to produce a case study and nothing more, while others have sustained links and remained engaged outside of their own interests. Phase one may also have acted therefore as a selection process to identify those people committed to fundraising in the region who can be expected to support ongoing work.

Project scope: fundraising from individuals and from companies?

The project proposal describes the lack of corporate fundraising as part of the problem facing NGOs in Central Europe¹¹, but does not elaborate specific activities to build capacities in this sphere. Corporate fundraising was “deliberately omitted from the beginning of the project because preparedness of companies to support development topics is extremely limited – it would require separate long-term programmes working with companies to change this attitude”. The argument is also made that NGOs need to build a public constituency for other reasons of greater legitimacy and that fundraising can be made an integral part of this.

While many agree that “corporate fundraising is not a growth area for NGOs as companies will not fund overseas work”, it is apparent that there is demand for training and support in this area from at least some NGOs. At least one participant at the regional training set was exclusively interested in corporate fundraising (though still glad to receive a grounding in principles and practice of other forms of fundraising). And, presumably as a barometer of partners' assessment of local needs, corporate fundraising has been an element of national activities in the Czech Republic and Poland; in the case of the former, a round-table on this issue was the best attended of all such events.

¹⁰ *Hearts and Money Beyond Borders* is of course a concrete output linking the two phases.

¹¹ “A few NGOs have attempted to engage corporations in development cooperation, but local companies do not yet feel they have a stake in supporting international causes; the corporate social responsibility applied in developing countries has not yet been incorporated by CE companies into their strategies. In this respect there is a huge work that has to be done to sensitize businesses in the region”; Grant application, *Strengthening Fundraising Capacities of NGOs in Central Europe*, page 16.

There is no sense that the project's coherence has been affected by the inclusion of some elements of corporate fundraising. The issue is more whether there was a slight initial misreading of demand. It may be that some NGOs see corporate fundraising as more akin to institutional grants than fundraising from individuals – with the possibility of a more instant return and fewer ongoing development costs. In Hungary, NGOs are said to have been keen at the outset of the project to learn more about corporate fundraising, but to have refocused on individual giving once they understood more about it. But it may still be necessary across the project countries to take a further check of how wide interest in corporate fundraising is and what is driving it.

Project scope: NGDOs or NGOs?

For the lead partner, *“the logic was to do something on fundraising and something on development, so we brought the two together”*. But it was quickly apparent that it was not tenable to limit involvement to what is a relatively small number of NGDOs.¹² If the project's scale meant that it had to look beyond NGDOs, its goals relating to the environment for fundraising arguably depended on it doing so, in terms of cooperating with NGOs from other sectors to strengthen the voice being raised.

At a certain level, obstacles to fundraising are shared by NGOs, whether they are NGDOs or not. As the representative of one partner puts it, *“if there were tools already for NGO fundraising and only NGDOs lagged behind, the project would have been different, but all are at the same level”*. From the side of participants from non-NGDOs, this logic stands up: while people from these organisations may have preferred more examples from their own sector, the basic methodologies being presented are taken as being of broad relevance and application. People not from NGDOs have coped with the number of NGDO examples and drawn lessons of use to their own work¹³.

NGDOs do feel that there are particular issues in 'selling' overseas development to potential donors. One partner considers that the specific dimensions of fundraising for development *“were perhaps lost sight of as scope and reach were broadened”*. It may be that some participants struggled to see the applicability of examples from other sectors when these were raised in national or regional events ('that wouldn't work in a development organisation'). But there is no strong articulation of the view that there was insufficient tailoring to NGDOs or that the broadening out of the project beneficiary pool has limited the value of outputs to NGDOs in particular. The consensus is that broadening the project audience beyond NGDOs was necessary and was without major impact on the development aspect to the project's purpose.

¹²

- Project reports note a lack of NGDO fundraisers and a lack of case studies from NGDOs: *“A risk was that we will not identify enough examples of a good practice in the region to provide so many case studies. Partially this proved to be relevant assumption – majority of NGDOs in the region do not have fundraising from private sources developed beyond basic stage. On the other hand we have identified several really strong examples that might serve as good inspiration. In some case studies we opted for examples coming from different fields than development, because we have identified a potentially great learning impact on NGDOs”*; Interim Narrative Report, end of year one, page 16.

¹³

- If, for non-NGDO fundraisers, the choice was of a training on fundraising with a development slant, or no training, then this is bound to incline them to be tolerant of the volume of development references.

One lesson may be that there is a need for ongoing events and discussion fora specifically for NGOs, alongside activities with a broader reach.

Project management

Partners consider the project to have been very well coordinated and managed, variously describing it as “*running like clockwork*”, “*very smooth*” and “*the most efficient project [which I have been involved in]*”¹⁴. Regular PST meetings seem to have functioned as intended¹⁵. There was some concern that more time was given to PST meetings than necessary, pointing to uncertainty as to what ought to be discussed and what could be decided upon by the project coordinator; that these discussions proved fruitful and that the PST structure is considered by partners to have worked well suggests that the balance was about right.

Overall, PDCS has taken a *dirigiste* approach to project management, in which partners were well-drilled and clear on their roles within an overall framework closely controlled from the centre. If there is any criticism of project management, it is that “*perhaps PDCS took on too much themselves*”, but there is no sense that this converted into a lack of space for discussion. One partner talks of there having been “*a good balance between leading and listening and adjusting the project according to partner feedback*”. Having grown out of, and been tested during, cooperation on other projects, relationships among the partners are characterised by strong mutual trust. This has facilitated discussion and decision-making when controversies have arisen.

Clear parameters for reporting were set at the project's outset, with a strategy of demanding monthly financial reports used as a means to get everyone to the same, high standard. Early PST meetings show that some partners took time to get used to the frequency and format of reports. This effort is acknowledged to have been worthwhile: one partner endorses the approach employed by noting that “*reporting demands were quite intense, but served to make us well-ordered... It was a good idea [and] good to have this discipline*”.

The Resource Alliance seems to have struggled a little bit more to familiarise itself with reporting obligations. Without the same history of cooperation that the other partners have with PDCS and with less experience with European Commission grants, the Resource Alliance needed greater support to get to grips with reporting systems, a process somewhat hindered by distance and language¹⁶.

Project management has been tested by three key instances needing effective coordination and decision-making:

¹⁴ The ROM review reached a similar conclusion, scoring the project 'A' for coordination. That this review recommended that additional activities be proposed to use up unspent funds is itself a sign of the trust that the funder has in PDCS and its partners.

¹⁵ Composed of the national coordinators, the PST had the role to “*oversee work of the partnership and partners to ensure coherence, flow of information, and organisational and administrative support.*” Grant application, *Strengthening Fundraising Capacities of NGOs in Central Europe*, page 31.

¹⁶ In the sense that the two individuals involved were both using English as a second (or third?) language.

a, the production of *Hearts and Money*

The project proposal indicates that the outputs of the Topical Working Groups were to be collated into a 'Comprehensive Publication'. Initial schedules had this publication ready by mid-2011. Already at the October 2010 PST meeting, it was apparent that this schedule may not be kept to, given the need for "*a firmer approach to the experts and communication of disappointment of such practices [of not keeping to deadlines]*"¹⁷. By June 2011, it was acknowledged that the time needed to produce the publication had been "*severely underestimated*"¹⁸.

The project responded to these challenge by bringing forward a seminar planned for year two to January 2011 and re-shaping its purpose to addressing uncertainty about the role of the Working Groups and the aim of the Publication¹⁹. But addressing this (and other) issues was affected, at least temporarily, by the change in project coordinator in February 2011.

There is an argument that how the Working Groups were conceived and their members chosen increased the difficulties in meeting deadlines. The Working Groups comprised experts from each state, a deliberate choice which reflected a desire to encourage understanding and acknowledgement of regional differences and one which pointed towards a delegated process of expert selection²⁰. It is arguable, however, that this reduced the project's ability to ensure more or less equivalence of experience and knowledge among members of each Group. It also created the problem that Working Group Coordinators were working with people that they had not recruited themselves, but who had been recruited by, and who were formally accountable to, other partners. For one Group Coordinator, the effect was to have "*no authority to make [Group members] deliver*".

Neither of these factors stand out as decisive causes of the delay in the publication, however. It is not obvious that an alternative mechanism for partner selection would have worked better, both because it is unlikely that close knowledge of fundraising experts potentially available was held centrally and simply because "*in reality, it was difficult to find such people*", that is, a group of people drawn from across the region with essentially similar skills. And if there were problems stemming from how Group members were chosen, it is reported by one Group member that "*when the agenda was sorted out, things speeded up*", which situates the problem more in there having been an initial period of uncertainty of purpose rather than there being any necessary impediment in having Coordinators with limited formal authority.

As such, the structures and procedures employed may in some ways have been part of the problem, but without an alternative approach appearing obvious. The process was messy, but

¹⁷ Memo from Project Steering Team Meeting, Warsaw, October 2010, page 3.

¹⁸ Interim Narrative Report, end of year two, page 2.

¹⁹ Interim Narrative Report, end of year one, page 3.

²⁰ The regional basis to the selection process was also designed to lessen the risk that NGOs would be unwilling to share experiences with their national 'rivals'. The level of openness and cooperation in national activities suggests that the assumption of a competitive attitude among NGOs from the same country was overstated.

it was probably always bound to be. The issue is less that it took so long, more that it was expected to take so little time²¹.

Delays in sourcing material from the Groups was compounded by underestimation of the time needed for editing the case study outputs into a coherent whole. Combining the functions of editor and project coordinator in a single person impacted on overall coordination, with some activities delayed as the central grip on the project loosened, especially in the second half of 2011 when the coordination of inputs to the book took the major part of the project coordinator's work.

It is possible that this also impacted on the ability to consider alternative formats for the publication. Some beneficiaries argue that organisations should avoid producing a single, large output towards the end of the project period: this project did not intend to, but has ended up doing precisely this. But it is difficult to see how the project could, half-way through, have decided upon different formats – such as a series of shorter, thematic reports or guides – and released some material earlier. Nor is it easy to see how things could have been done more quickly, with one partner noting that it would have been “*hard to push experts further without losing something in the process in terms of relationships and future cooperation*”.

The delay in finalising *Hearts and Money* meant that “*the second part of the project (capacity-building and dissemination) started in parallel to the process writing and it had to be adjusted*”²². While individual trainers and consultants could still draw upon phase one learnings in delivering phase two activities, there were impacts on the promotion of the book and on the ability of trainers and consultants to portray the book as the first point of reference for fundraisers embarking on new fundraising techniques. That national activities were delayed in the Czech Republic is a sign that it would have been preferable to have had the book ready for these events. But partners don't tend to see the delay as having had significant impact. The book – in its English version – was ready by the time of the master-classes and conference in May 2012 while its long shelf-life offsets the costs of it not being finished earlier. There may be lessons in terms of the ideal format of outputs and the production process, but these gaps in project design seem to have been as well-handled as it could have been.

b, clarifying the scope and purpose of the Regional Training Set

The PST is said to have generated “*very opposed views*” on the elaboration of the regional training set, which the project proposal had conceived as a series of three three-day events. Partners from Hungary and Poland advocated for the trainings to be pitched at an introductory level and to have a clear focus on fundraising for development in terms of content. From the side of PIN, there was a greater desire to draw on examples from other sectors and an assertion of the need to include more advanced elements to be relevant and useful to Czech NGOs.

²¹ One expert contributor notes that another book for which she has written a chapter has been delayed for nearly three times as long as *Hearts and Money*.

²² Interim Narrative Report, end of year two, page 2.

Discussions among partners concluded with the decision to separate out an output – three one-day 'master-class' events – aimed at a more expert audience. That Czech NGOs still found value in the core training events – perhaps by sending more junior staff – and that organisations from the other three countries benefited from the master-classes suggests the original problem to have been somewhat mis-founded, at least at the level of a reductionist analysis that all Czech fundraisers are experts and all fundraisers in the other three states are beginners. By recognising that a proportion of people in each country, albeit larger in number in the Czech Republic, needed more advanced training, a solution was generated which made the overall training set more coherent. As one partner puts it, *"splitting the training [into introductory and more advanced components] was a good response to collective needs"*. And the project was right to avoid producing an experts' event only for Czech NGOs: as well as losing the element of fostering connections and learning across the four states, this would have been an overly simple reading of audiences.

c, budget underspend and project extension

The project has found itself struggling to spend all its budget, especially in regard of per diems for phase one events; for at least one partner, per diem levels were contrary to their own internal rules. In addition, some services have been acquired below budget or for free as the project has *"not want[ed] to spoil the overall philanthropic environment"* by paying for what was given willingly for free²³. These issues reflect that *"the original budget was shaky"*, a case of too much effort having been made to fit all partners into a single budgetary box, with too little recognition shown for variations in costs between the project countries.

The project has dealt with these problems in a pragmatic way. Some of the underspent funds were reallocated to allow for a third master-class, to support additional participants' attendance at the conference and to increase fees for speakers to attract more interesting speakers²⁴. At the national level, partners have been shy of seeking a project extension to allow for using up the outstanding funds: in part, this reflects that the financial pressures which some are under would have exposed them to cash-flow and / or co-financing problems if they were to proceed with new activities. But there is also a message of not doing activities for their own sake: as one partner describes the thinking on the underspend and on a possible extension to the project, which is, on the surface, counter-intuitive, *"we could have done a few more national activities, but to do so would not have been decisive to sustainability, so there was no need to invent ways to use [the funds] up"*.

As an example of project management, the process to reach this decision is reported to have been *"open and smooth"*. The decision itself points to the maturity of the relationship between the partners and a sense of confidence in what the project had anyway achieved.

²³ Interim Narrative Report, end of year two, page 18.

²⁴ Memo from Project Steering Team Meeting, Bratislava, March 2012, page 5.

Activities and outputs

Knowledge-gathering and -sharing

The project opened with an unplanned internal survey of fundraising capacities. Acting as “*an important starting point to understand better the specific situation of involved countries*”²⁵, the survey served to verify the project's rationale and underlying assumptions and provide a baseline input to the Topical Working Groups.

Convened around four, collectively-agreed topics – 'Fundraising for humanitarian vs. development aid'; 'Transparency, trustworthiness and effectiveness'; 'Supporting mechanisms / strategies for private funds mobilization'; and 'Raising private funds in digital and networked society' – the Working Group structure was chosen on the basis of “*rooting the project in small circles of dedicated and interested experts*”²⁶. The Working Groups were enabled to meet to discuss their topic during Study Visits – usually hosted by the Group's Coordinator – and to harness outside expertise from Fact-finding Trips to Prague and London.

These Study Visits and Fact-finding Trips are generally perceived to have been useful and informative. Evaluation forms note some issues with the format of some parts of the meetings, with a recurring concern that there were too many presentations and not enough time for discussion. But the logic behind the Study Visits does seem to have held up: these meetings did advance the process of developing the case studies at a collective and an individual level: one participant on a Study Visit in Warsaw, for example, records that “*after the presentation by Polish Humanitarian Action, I found the idea for my case study*”²⁷.

The Fact-finding Trip to Prague appears to have had a morale-boosting, bonding effect relatively early in the project. One participant reports being able “*to get in-depth into issues in an interactive, relaxed setting... [we] instantly made connections*”. As further proof of concept, another participant “*talked with organisations and came up with brilliant ideas for fundraising in our countries [as well as ideas for] joint working to make fundraising easier, for example with text donations*”.

The range in prior skills and experience of delegates did mean, however, that concerns were raised that the Prague Fact-finding Trip did not cater for the specific problems of small NGOs. The issue of the applicability of lessons from Fact-finding Trips is more acute in the case of the London meeting. For one partner, “*only some were advanced enough [in their prior level of knowledge] to have benefited... [so] the group was unbalanced*”. Those with most expertise were best able to absorb what they learned in London and more inclined to aspire to the examples it offered. The comments that the London Trip was “*the best part of the project*”, “*the most valuable experience... very inspirational*” and “*amazing..., very useful to get inside UK organisations and inspiring to see the UK giving culture*” are all from individuals who were

²⁵ Interim Narrative Report, end of year one, page 4.

²⁶ Grant application, *Strengthening Fundraising Capacities of NGOs in Central Europe*, page 29.

²⁷ Evaluation Summary, Study visit in Warsaw and Cracow, October 4-7, 2010; page 2.

demonstrably expert in fundraising beforehand. Two such individuals specifically appreciated the visit to a UK direct dialogue coordinating entity to observe how venues are distributed and ethical codes used – one has based their practice back home on this example – which seems a case of an activity likely to appeal only to those with a sophisticated fundraising programme already in place.

Others struggled to translate learnings from the Trips to their own day-to-day work. For one participant to both Trips, *“the Czech Republic is 10-15 years' ahead of [us]. But the UK is 100 years' ahead, so there is nothing applicable in the short-term. UK example get dismissed by NGOs [in my country], while Czech examples get them listening”*²⁸. There may have been an option of sending to London only those with the greatest expertise, but this would have involved an awkward second selection process and would presumably have had a destabilising effect. Although some comments on the London Trip are expressed in quite forthright terms, the overall impression is still positive: some may have got more out of it, but all got something from it.

Resource-intensity

The cost-effectiveness of the various Visits and Trips – as well as experts' other costs – has not been analysed to any depth, but there is a perception among some partners that *“the Topical Working Group process was over-budgeted in comparison to the end result”* or in comparison to the return on investment presumed by comparison to accrue from national activities. This relates to the issues of how far this knowledge-gathering process informed the training and other information-dissemination activities of the second phase and what value is to be given to 'soft' outcomes of relationship development and building a community of like-minded, enthused individuals. If the value of the investment in phase one is as much in building a community of experts, then this is a value which is still accruing, so the cost-benefit equation should become more favourable over time if these links are sustained.

It is hard to judge the counter-factual – what the results would have been from a lower investment in phase one. Some of the lessons in terms of selection and coordination of experts do suggest a reduction in costs. While the end of the project and reduced levels of resources oblige the partners to focus now on consolidation and on activities within the region, future initiatives of this scale could be expected to work to lower budgets for facilitating exchange and knowledge-gathering.

Hearts and Money Beyond Borders

The publication draws strong praise from across the project countries, with many asserting that it fills a clear niche and has no serious competitors as a book on fundraising written by and for a Central European audience. Different stakeholders variously describe the book as *“one of a kind in Central Europe... it will take many years before there is something better”*;

²⁸ See also the comment that *“it was a bit intimidating. I am afraid that my organisation won't be able to implement it”* and the feedback from an interview that the London Trip was *“More intimidating than inspiring – ‘we cannot match that’. I got a lot more from the visits within Central Europe”*.

and “ground-breaking and distinct... It captures the current state of fundraising in the region and is an unmatched product for providing real examples, only a couple of steps ahead [of NGOs' current practice]”.

Other expert comment is more critical, seeing variations in style among case studies and, for some, variations in the quality of case studies, as a consequence of how the book was developed: for one project observer, “the variable background and levels of knowledge of Working Group members made for variable quality of output... I was happy with only part of [Hearts and Money]”.

Among beneficiaries, the typical response is to acknowledge the value of the publication in theory, but to admit to not have read much of it yet. This is not a problem if the assumption that they would refer to it at point of developing strategies or specific initiatives holds up.

It is interesting to note that from Poland there is the suggestion that “it would be useful to convert it into a handbook for fundraising” and that in Hungary something like this has been attempted: the Hungarian version is not simply a translation, but an adaptation of the English one, pitched more at beginners, with explanatory text added as footnotes. As above, there is also the view that the book “could have been divided into two or three digestible versions”; the project's four clear, discrete Topics could have lent themselves well to specific outputs.

In that there was nothing similar on the market, a Comprehensive Publication of this type seems to have been justified. Composed of 'bite-sized' case studies, the book's format means that its size should not be off-putting. But the more general lesson may be to try to isolate shorter, focused outputs, including to allow for further tailoring to national context. In this case, reserving resources for local language versions has been essential and is lauded as such. The comment of one project trainee that “having the book in Czech makes a huge difference – people can read English, but will really study and refer to the Czech version” is mirrored in the opinions of others from across the region.

Transparency Guidelines

Under a logic that lack of trust in NGOs limits individual giving, the project has an expected result of 'Increased transparency, trustworthiness of NGOs before public and public institutions'. A Topical Working Group was devoted to this issue, concluding in the agreement of *Transparency Towards Donors: Guidelines for Discussion*. While these Guidelines focus on transparency and accountability towards donors, an additional text on *Ethical Fundraising Towards the Beneficiaries* was developed and included in *Hearts and Money*, reflecting a belief that “we put so much focus on donors in terms of ethics [but] nothing is said about beneficiaries [here meant in the sense of beneficiaries from development interventions]”.

The process to develop *Transparency Towards Donors* is said to have been quite difficult, presumably as a reflection of the variance in project stakeholders' understanding of the

importance of transparency. The final output is considered "*imperfect, but better than nothing. We have created a base text which people can use*".

If, in the case of *Transparency Towards Donors*, it is the most experienced fundraisers who are its chief advocates, this group tends to be most sceptical of the chapter on responsibilities towards development beneficiaries. Experienced fundraisers are keen to assert the importance of story-telling and emotion as key to inspiring people to donate. Others whose background is development first and fundraising second tend to hold to a more cautious – more 'ethical' – view in the 'use' made of individual people's histories as the material of fundraising. The sense is of a debate still in progress, which the text in *Hearts and Money* does not represent the conclusion of.

In developing its outputs in these areas, the project has been keen to avoid giving the impression that it sought to police the sector. It is possible that this sensitivity has led to a focus on producing the outputs themselves more than on their promotion and take-up. One expert fundraiser, for example, "*knows of [the Guidelines and text on ethics], but had not realised their relevance [and] was not aware that they could help the debate*". This respondent acknowledges some responsibility himself for this omission, but also feels that the partner in his country "*has not pushed them to to the fore*". In some countries, transparency and accountability has been made the subject of seminars or round-tables, while efforts have been made, as in Slovakia, to engage NGDO Platforms. But partners would seem to accept that, as one puts it, "*we have not much use made of them yet. We have just published them online, talked of them in some trainings and put them in our consulting strategy, but they need more promoting*".

Cultivate Your Fundraising training events

The core training events of Budapest and Warsaw draw a generally positive reaction. One trainee judges that "*the trainings were comprehensive. It was good to see how fundraising should be done properly*". Some compare the events favourably to those of other training providers on the grounds that those of this project were "*less theoretical, more personal and more oriented to real problems than those of others*"²⁹.

The underlying logic of exposing current and potential fundraisers to the experience of others in the region is validated³⁰. One beneficiary, for example, "*learned a lot from seeing how others faced the same tests*".

The 'elevator pitch' device was noted by several participants as a useful tool in helping them present their organisation, what it does and why it should be funded, in a concise way. For most participants, the sessions with an individual high donor and companies' CSR

²⁹ This comment was made in relation to Slovakia in particular. It seems fair to say though that beneficiaries in other countries would agree that it applies to their country too.

³⁰ For example, the comment from an evaluation form after the Budapest event that "*meeting other fundraisers, other NGOs, other background – this helped to think outside the box which is quite difficult otherwise*".

representatives were their first occasion to hear things 'from the other side'; accordingly, several participants use phrases such as "eye-opening" to describe these sessions. There is endorsement of the tactic of obliging participants to formulate a fundraising plan as a condition of undertaking the training: one trainee considers that "*this project helped me to develop a fundraising strategy both because of the ideas it gave me and the stimulus of it being an obligation*".

There is an argument that "*what was missing in the regional training set was the everyday work*" – that is, the 'nitty-gritty' of implementation – but the individual raising this concern does record that "*this came in the master-classes [and was] the last piece in the jigsaw*". This represents an endorsement of the overall package of training outputs, but may also be as much an issue of follow-up as of the training events themselves.

Critically, one participant argues that "*it was a key strength of the training that they linked fundraising strategies to overall organisational strategies*". That it did not always prove possible for trainees to win organisational support for their ideas – as elaborated in the section on outcomes – was not then for the want of trying.

Some issues of format were raised in the events' evaluation forms – more so at the first session in Budapest, which suggests that some were addressed in the second event in Warsaw – in terms of creating space for raising and discussing participants' own experiences and in getting the balance right between presentation and discussion. It is felt though that the two events complemented each other well, the second building on the theoretical foundations of the first and taking participants into greater levels of detail and concrete practice.

As noted in several participants' evaluation forms and, for example, in the comment that there were "*too many UK examples*", there was some concern about the applicability of some examples from outside the region (a point of relevance to *Hearts and Money*, as well as the London Fact-finding Trip, as noted above). Across all these outputs, attitudes to UK or US (or any non-Central European) examples are a reflection of participants' prior level of confidence, 'courage' and aspiration.

There is positive feedback of the balance in skills, experience and style of the two trainers, with one focused more on theory, the other on practice, one with expertise from the region and the other able to talk to practices in settings with longer fundraising traditions. There is acknowledgement on the side of partners that "*it was hard for the trainers to pitch it right, since the participants were very diverse*". That the selection process was not consistent across all countries is one of the factors at play here. The group may have also been too large. It seems that participants took some time to warm to each other and trust the process they were undergoing, but by the end of the first session, there was greater openness and willingness to share experience, so that "*in the end, [the mix of participants] was ok, though more by accident than design*".

Reflecting the project's ambitions, one NGO representative makes the point that people should not have gone to the training events only for their own benefit, but as the representatives of others and with a responsibility to feedback to those others. National activities did seek to meet this broader dissemination function, although this could have been an additional means to that end.

Consulting between and after the regional training set events has been a useful and valued complement to the core training itself. Consultants with an intimate knowledge of national context helped groups to take their nascent plans to the next level of detail. Consultants also sought to address organisational impediments through meetings with Boards and management at which the case was made for investment in fundraising from individuals. The consultants employed by the project variously *"understood the challenges of fundraising in my country"*, *"talked of real examples, advising what is likely to work in my organisation"* and *"proposed some tools and made it easier for us to develop the strategy"*. Consultants themselves feel that their input often had a positive effect, not out of any lack of modesty, but because they feel that their outside eye allowed them to see some fairly obvious opportunities and efficiencies.

Master-class training events

Master-classes completed the menu of regional training outputs offered by the project. A review of evaluation forms indicates that all three events – on legacies, major donors and online fundraising – were highly appreciated, with that on major donors perhaps drawing the most praise³¹. An interviewee elaborated that before this workshop, *"I did not understand the major donor part of fundraising, but now I have seen how important it is and my organisation will focus more on it"*.

Focusing a session on legacies is considered to have been a brave step, since this is *"a huge topic to handle... no one is doing it yet"*. Importantly then, one trainee feels that *"by the end [of the event] it was possible to see how it might be done, so it was something of a breakthrough"*.

Master-classes are themselves also accused of having too many non-Central European examples, though at this level, there are presumably few such examples to have used. The comment that *"if you know something about fundraising, you can benefit from the master-classes even if they were not well-g geared to Central Europe, but the less experienced cannot make the translation"* – is actually more about whether all master-class participants were really the most expert and whether those graduating from the Budapest and Warsaw events to

³¹ – The online fundraising master-class was considered by some to be a little theoretical and presentation-heavy but nonetheless at least *"a good summary and overview of online tools and ideas"* and at best *"excellent content"*. The legacies masterclass was judged *"very practical, challenging, illustrative and useful; [there were] really good tips on how to start"*. The major donors' master-class seems to have got the balance between learning and practice, lecturing and group work right – witness the praise for *"nice exercises at last"* – and draws positive comments for being, for example, *"very useful for me personally and for my organisation"*. All quotes taken from evaluation forms completed immediately after each master-class.

the master-classes were ready. For some, master-class participation will have been a case of *"being thrown in at the deep end"*, while others were more ready and able to 'swim'. This may have affected how the sessions were pitched and how much some participants got out of them.

International conference

The conference aimed to *"recap on the project implementation, performed activities and produced outputs as well as outcomes reached [and] create a forum to meet and discuss outcomes of the project"*³². The audience for the event was three-fold: fundraisers from partners and beneficiary organisations; management of the same organisations; and *"key stakeholders and policy-makers from across the region and the EC institutions"*. In regard of the last category, the Head of the European Commission in Slovakia did attend, but this part of the purpose of the conference fell away in the wake of difficulties to capture the attention of Ministry officials.

NGO leadership formed the conference's primary audience and made its focus the 'why' of individual fundraising, not the 'how' of the training events. Coming right after the three master-classes may have made this primary audience less distinct through the inclusion on the participants' list of more fundraising practitioners, even taking into account that 'fundraisers' and 'management' are not always discrete categories.

For those who had attended the master-classes, the conference may have been something of an anti-climax. For one partner, the conference *"felt like another event, another meeting where speakers were needed. It would have been better to have had more space [between the master-classes and the conference], but near the project end, it was quite intense and there was lots to finish off"*. Whether through a pressure to complete project delivery in time or from being seduced by the logistical convenience of having the conference and the master-classes one after the other, the effect was to reduce the level of appreciation which at least those who had been on the master-classes feel for the conference.

That said, the conference is appreciated as an opportunity for networking and a further source of new thinking³³. It does not draw the same levels of enthusiasm as other activities, however. One attendee is typical in describing it as having been *"useful, in a way"*.

National activities

The project imagined that fundraising seminars would serve to broaden out those able to hear of project outputs and learnings while round-tables were designed to encourage networking and coordination of efforts to influence the environment for fundraising. In practice, round-tables of this form went ahead only in Hungary, as it was here that the absence of a

³² Concept note, *Strengthening Fundraising Capacities of NGOs in Central Europe*, page 8.

³³ Evaluation forms show that participants valued the conference for *"new contacts, ideas, networking, examples from the region, inspirational case studies, meeting colleagues from the region, inspiring lectures and experiences"*, because *"some participants will make extremely good partners for us in the future"* and because it *"brought much enthusiasm and inspiration to start new era in our organisation"*.

fundraising coalition is most acutely felt. Existing and emerging structures in the other countries reduced this element of the purpose of national activities, while heavy demand – activities were pitched at NGOs, not only NGOs – also acted as a pressure towards holding more seminars.

Training seminars in Hungary are felt to have been a good introduction to fundraising from individuals and *“a sort of course not otherwise available. At the level of general principles it gave us a base. It was definitely useful for people who are starting. At least now I know what we could do [if we did embark on fundraising from individuals]”*.³⁴ One seminar was used to begin to make the case for a fundraising association before this became the subject of round-tables. DemNet was clear on the need for such an association, seeing its value as proven in the other V4 countries, and designed the round-tables to bring others to the same understanding.

Activities in Poland followed a logical sequence: a two-day general training on fundraising followed by seminars on specific techniques and on issues affecting the climate for fundraising, such as regulations around public collections currently under official review. These events were heavily over-subscribed and are valued by one participant for *“expanding on national dimensions and examples which were not present in the [regional] trainings”*.

Activities in Slovakia – also very popular – have focused on organisational and environmental issues, such as situating fundraising within overall organisational strategies and cultivating a culture of giving. There is some feedback that some events could have aimed a little higher in terms of content, but also appreciation of the opportunity to hear of others' experiences in fundraising.

In the Czech Republic, national seminars have been tied to meetings of the CFC's Fundraising Clubs, with training session followed by structured discussion of particular issues. These events are judged to have been a huge step forward for being *“the first time that [Czech NG(D)Os] have sat together and shared information on fundraising techniques”*. Employing the structure of the Clubs avoids the events appearing as one-off interventions and points to continuity from converting the energy from the project to an ongoing structure.

Project website

The project's website has both an external and an internal section, with the latter designed to act as *“a forum for exchange of stakeholders' views”*³⁵. In practice, the website's exchange function has been little used: some did share ideas with their peers from the *Cultivate Your Fundraising* course at the point of finalising their own fundraising plans, but most see the website's value more in acting as a repository of project materials. In at least one project country, it is claimed that *“fundraising is not at a level where people would want to share on a web forum”*.

• ³⁴ This interviewee elaborated that *“there are more courses on how to write a grant application. Only this project focuses on individual fundraising”*.

³⁵ Grant application, *Strengthening Fundraising Capacities of NGOs in Central Europe*, page 19.

The external side to the site is also, for some, under-developed. One partner argues for more explicitly orientating the website to an external audience and more actively promoting it as a resource to fundraisers across the region. One Hungarian beneficiary calls for the website to have a calendar of events across the region of interest to current and potential fundraisers. The point may not be to make it into the website for a Central European fundraising association, but to provide information to, and act as a conduit between, the structures and groups which exist in the four countries and which have been mobilised by this project.

Outcomes

Individual skills and capacities

Beneficiaries have acquired knowledge and concrete skills from interaction with the project, including in terms of *"learning how to ask for funds"*, *"not being shy to ask for money"*, changing how individual donors – and in at least one case, companies – are approached and *"realising the importance of seeing things from the donors' perspective [which is] a key new learning"*³⁶.

Beneficiaries talk of the value of having drafted a fundraising strategy as something which *"cannot be underestimated – it is a first step, but a crucial one"*. Individual beneficiaries have made concrete changes in approach – to focus on consolidation, to deepen trust with donors, to make projects more attractive to them and to build up a database in the case of one Slovak NGO, and to *"re-brush our donor database [and] start a major donor programme"* in the case of a Czech group which also *"learned from the Study Visits and Fact-finding Trips in terms of telemarketing and email communications"*. In another case from Slovakia, a group has sought to improve how it explains the value of its work and begun to move towards a more integrated approach to programming, public relations and fundraising which is *"a long-term process, but thanks to the project, we've developed a vision"*, even if there are not yet concrete results to show.

There is a strong sense of people having gained a more rounded view of fundraising and of becoming more discriminating in the choice of techniques likely to work in their countries for their organisations' given level of resources. One Czech beneficiary talks of training events having helped her *"to see that some things are possible which I had imagined were not [and] to realise which avenues not to pursue"*. Similarly, a Slovak beneficiary sees his organisation as now having *"learned what our weaknesses are, realised what we do not know how to do and in some areas also realised that we are not as bad as we thought"*.

These quote point to the value of the project in engendering greater confidence among NGO fundraisers. In interviews and in training events' own evaluations, trainees come across as having been motivated and emboldened to develop new plans and argue for them internally³⁷.

³⁶ A trainee at the Budapest meeting offers a very positive summary of the value of the project's impact on knowledge: *"I knew some of it, now I really know ALL I need to know"*; evaluation form, Budapest training event.

³⁷ See for example the comment that the Budapest training provided *"a combination of theory and concrete advice /*

One Hungarian beneficiary describes how *"the project gives you motivation, faith in fundraising and the legitimacy that fundraising is a profession"*. The project has equipped individuals to make a better case to their peers and managers to have their plans accepted.

It is important to note too that beneficiaries recognise their own responsibility for follow-up and do not rely only on further interventions. One Slovak fundraiser would take advantage of other training if it was there, but does not feel this would be decisive since *"it's really up to me being able to organise my time to free space for fundraising"*, while a peer in Poland accepts that *"the responsibility to follow-up what we have done within the project is on us and the problem is rather more lack of time/capacity than lack of support"*.

Organisational receptiveness

The project has encouraged organisations to become more open to the possibilities of fundraising from individuals. Through consultant input, at least one beneficiary feels that her organisation has come to understand that fundraising from individuals is not a quick-fix. The project has created awareness of a problem – over-reliance on institutional grants – and offered a solution in individual fundraising which more organisations are seeing the need for.

The Slovak NGDO Platform is *"thinking more deeply about fundraising"* – as witnessed in itself having solicited specialist outside advice – something which the local partner attributes to *"this project [having] created pressure, raised awareness of [individual] fundraising's potential and trends in grant-making"*. In Slovakia more generally, thinking among NGOs is said to be shifting, with more groups inclined to appoint dedicated fundraisers and coming to realise what the core tools and techniques are. And where organisations do not yet have specialist fundraisers, there is often nonetheless a trend to broaden engagement with fundraising learning from the original participants in the project – usually finance people – to what is in effect a 'second generation' of interested individuals within organisations.

Despite these positive indications, there is still further to go in terms of the necessary mental shift to trust individual fundraising, to believe that it will work and to have the courage and confidence to take the plunge. There is both resistance to commencing fundraising from individuals and a risk of taking a naïve view of what such fundraising can achieve and when³⁸. Organisations may appoint a fundraiser and place unreasonable demands on their ability to generate large-scale income quickly. In one Czech NGO with a dedicated fundraiser, for example, *"the key problem is management pressure to deliver quickly"*. That this turns out to be impossible can cause organisations to 'lose their bottle' and retreat to institutional funding.

information that makes me feel like I can do something right away. We've had the idea to raise funds from private sources for a long time and I think this could / will help to break through the fear / reluctance / ignorance and makes us start it now instead of continuing to put it off til later", the lesson from Warsaw of *"always making the planning first and courage to go on [with] our good ways of fundraising"*; and the impression of a participant at the legacies master-class that *"I have some knowledge and some ideas, I'm still bit afraid but much less"*.

³⁸ In one interesting case from Slovakia, resistance to fundraising resided less in the Director and more in a risk-averse fundraiser. Sending the fundraiser on project training events was a managerial strategy to increase knowledge and confidence to take a direction of which the Director was already convinced.

In some organisations then, the project hits a wall of organisational intransigence, a situation summarised in a quote from an attendee at the Warsaw Cultivate Your Fundraising event that “[there were] *no benefits for my organisation as they don't want to start strategic fundraising; for me, [there were] a lot, I became a better fundraiser*”. Even in one project partner, which it would be expected to be a fully signed-up advocate of fundraising from individuals, senior management “*are not willing to change nor to invest in fundraising*”.

The difficulties of winning organisations over to fundraising from individuals have at least three elements: the need is not yet acute³⁹; there is a lack of unrestricted funds to invest in fundraising (of precisely the sort that would increase unrestricted funds); and winning over internal stakeholders amounts to “*persuading people who do not know what fundraising is that fundraising is important*”. There is a broad consensus that the first element will, in effect, resolve itself as more organisations accept the necessity of more diverse funding strategies: as one beneficiary puts it, “*it's not a question of knowledge, but of time and of the environment for fundraising*”.

In attempting to address both the second and third elements, the project has, through consulting and at the conference, targeted managers to increase recognition of, and investment in, fundraising. But one consultant judges that commitment to implementation is mixed, with “*only some ready and happy to invest*”. How to get out of dependence on institutional grants was discussed in training events, but, for one participant, without there being sufficient, practical ideas as to how to get started in fundraising from individuals. There is an argument that, despite the best intentions, the project has got the balance between individual and organisation capacities wrong, being drawn to the former because it is conceptually and practically easier to target. But this may amount to reading back into the project's design and delivery from the degree of progress made: because progress at the organisational level has been patchy and less clear-cut than at the individual level does not by itself mean that there was not enough effort made at the organisational level⁴⁰.

To make a breakthrough in more organisations, the project relies on overall funding trends continuing and on having “*thrown mines which will blow up later on*”.⁴¹ The ultimate measure of the success of the project is not how many organisations have embraced fundraising from individuals at this point, but how many share the view of one Polish organisation that “*it has motivated us to think about fundraising and look for new ideas. Change is a long-term process, but we have started on that path*”. The challenge becomes how the process of making organisations take a strategic view of fundraising from individuals can be speeded, as well as how progress made to date can be consolidated.

³⁹ In one case in Poland, a group was making first preparatory steps into fundraising when it secured several large grants and so chose to abandon this path.

– ⁴⁰ One partner comments that “*from this project we learned a lot more of this issue [of balance between the individual and organisational dimensions] After the first training, most participants flagged the issue of organisational receptiveness, so the second looked at this, but there is further to go... a key lesson from this project*”. The inference is more that progress is harder at the organisational level than there having been too much focus on individual skills.

– ⁴¹ Or, to mix the metaphor, on having planted seeds which will only bear fruit later.

National networks

The creation or reinforcing of networks at national and regional level is a key goal of the project in itself and one central to sustainability⁴². To this end, the project has created champions among those involved both at the expert level and among some beneficiaries. Where the latter occupy important roles within NG(D)O coalitions, they act as multipliers for project messages, persuading others of the need for fundraising from individuals and encouraging consumption of project outputs and involvement in ongoing networks.

A Slovak Fundraising Centre and a Coalition for the Promotion of Individual Giving have emerged, the former established by the original coordinator of this project. The project has affected at least the timing of this initiative through helping to create demand for a specific fundraising support-provider. The project has also encouraged cooperation among NGOs, serving to make alliances like the Coalition for the Promotion of Individual Giving more vibrant and sustained. The sense of competition noted as a risk in the project proposal may have been felt most acutely in Slovakia, but now PDCS points to greater sharing of information of fundraising trials among NGOs, as well as the joint work undertaken by the Coalition for the Promotion of Individual Giving. There is no common view as to the project's role in the formation of this Coalition⁴³: most Slovak commentators see this process as having been independent of the project, but some, including from the Czech Republic, see Study Visits and the Prague Fact-finding Trip as having been key moments for Slovak fundraisers to have observed – and been inspired by – the example of the Czech Coalition for Easy Giving.

The project proposal had floated the idea of “*establishing a coordination centre similar to Disasters Emergency Committee in UK in order to effectively manage fundraising efforts in unexpected disaster situations*”⁴⁴. This idea has been considered by the Slovak NGDO Platform; although its conclusion was that such a mechanism is a little ahead of its time, that this discussion happened at all is “*a side-effect of the project*”. The Platform may yet look to employ some form of coordination mechanism at the time of a humanitarian emergency, a case of learning through doing, rather than seeking to negotiate among its members for a new structure in the abstract.

In the Czech Republic, it has become “*more usual now for groups to meet and exchange*”. Even if this cannot be directly attributed to the project, it acts as a pressure in the same direction. Other more established structures – the CFC and the Coalition for Easy Giving – exist to promote project outputs and, in the case of the latter, lead in the role of advocacy towards banks. Where the project has had an effect is in encouraging NGDOs to connect into regular

– ⁴² The project has the expected result of 'Sustained intense cooperation between participating organizations and practitioners'.

– ⁴³ The Coalition's aims to “*develop a favourable environment for individual giving in Slovakia... to remove barriers that complicate the giving process and to serve as a platform for mutual cooperation and sharing of experiences between the members in the field of fundraising from individual donors*” could almost have been written with follow-up of this project in mind; <http://www.darcovstvo.sk/en/introduction/>

⁴⁴ Grant application, *Strengthening Fundraising Capacities of NGDOs in Central Europe*, page 18.

NGO structures: as one Czech commentator sees it, “NGDOs used to be in their own world, but now MSF and ADRA have joined the [CFC's] Clubs because of the project”. As part of this, the project has played a catalytic role has been in mobilising the Forum for Development Cooperation to hold round-tables on fundraising and to create a sub-committee to continue discussion and exchange. These structures and the “very high interest among NGOs” confirm the strength of the trend towards fundraising from individuals, a trend which this project has been part of the response to.

In Poland, the lack of fundraising experience of PPF may initially have represented a barrier to participation of others, which did not consider it to have sufficient knowledge to legitimately present itself as head of such a project. PPF overcame this barrier and has established itself as a reputable player in the field of fundraising. An effect of the project has been a change in its profile and status with other NGOs, so that by the end of the project, PPF “has become known for fundraising”.

Aided by expert input from representatives of the PFA, DemNet has been the engine behind the process of establishing *Adományszervezők Országos Közössége Egyesület* (ADOK, the Hungarian Fundraising Association) with “a vision of helping to establish and strengthen professional fundraising as a credible and accepted occupation in Hungary, the existence of which will in turn enhance the culture of charitable giving”⁴⁵. Here the project has helped create a structure for exchange and collective advocacy where none previously existed.

Regional networks

Project documentation details examples of skill-sharing and exchange across the project countries including the case of a Hungarian group advising a Polish group in online communication and a Czech group helping DemNet to advise another Hungarian group on setting up a web-shop.⁴⁶ It is arguable that Czech NGOs have less to learn from groups in other countries and consequently put more into the project than they get from it. But Czech groups do benefit from exposure to UK and other 'western' examples, while “lessons learnt from the 1% income tax transfer scheme in HU feed the debate on the creation of a similar mechanism in CZ”⁴⁷. It may be that it is PIN itself more than most Czech NGOs which has less to learn from smaller NGOs in the other three states: “cases of groups earning €5,000 [from a fundraising initiative] are at a different level to PIN, but are relevant to most Czech NGOs... [But even for PIN] there are new ties with groups in Slovakia and Poland”, though less with groups in Hungary.

At the individual level, networks seem stronger between experts than between beneficiaries. Among the latter, the sense of a common purpose is less and networks are at best dormant: some links have been made at training events and people do feel that they would draw upon

⁴⁵ <http://adok.org.hu/en/>

⁴⁶ Interim Narrative Report, end of year two, page 8.

⁴⁷ Monitoring Report, MR-144644.02, June 2012, page 3.

them as and when needs demand.

Among fundraising experts, networks are viewed as much as an end in themselves as a means to an end of better fundraising for individuals' own organisations. This is borne out in the sharing of resources and informal exchange among those employed as trainers and consultants in the project. As one practitioner sees it, *"before there was some networking before at the annual conference in The Netherlands, but now it is happening in Central Europe itself"*. At the expert level, the project has *"created the beginnings of a Central European Fundraisers' Association"*, a goal also floated at the Bratislava conference. Noting that *"No formalisation of the network of fundraising practitioners is foreseen at the regional level"*, the European Commission's own assessment expressed concern that *"there is no exit strategy to ensure that exchange of know-how and practices in fundraising at the regional level continues after project completion. The network of fundraising practitioners created by the project has an informal character and works only on the basis of ad hoc individual contacts"*⁴⁸. If this is taken as an encouragement to formalise a regional network, there is scepticism among partners about making this a goal, at least while there is further to go to cement national networks.

At one level, the project cannot encourage momentum towards regional networking and pre-determine what form these should take. The value of networks is in the activity and synergy that they enable, not in the structure they take. The nascent network in Central Europe is having the positive effects of synchronising events – if in 2011, Polish and Slovak fundraising conferences overlapped, *"this would not happen now"* – and raising awareness of the resources and examples existing within the region and beyond. Among partners there is a strong degree of confidence that these new relationships will be sustained⁴⁹ and that demand for regional networks within the V4 – and reaching beyond to those other countries represented at the conference – is intensifying. But ongoing scrutiny would seem to be essential to ensure that networks were not dependent on project funding, but prove able to survive its conclusion.

Transparency and accountability

The overall impression is of a start having only just been made in terms of pushing for changes in practice in transparency and accountability. In some cases, NGOs argue against the need for additional advice or texts on transparency and accountability on the grounds that they have other sources of guidelines and codes, usually international networks of which they are part. Other NGOs are said to be unaware of the importance of transparency; while they may acknowledge it as a principle, some NGOs do not connect it to fundraising, that is, transparency as a facet of credibility and legitimacy, underwriting effective fundraising. Or transparency is relegated beneath other issues, a case of people gravitating towards opportunities for practical training more than discussion of ethics⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ Monitoring Report, MR-144644.01, June 2012, pages 2 and 4.

⁴⁹ One partner offers as proof of the *"very positive networking results of the project"* the development of joint funding applications with organisations with which contact was made through the project. The irony here is that a project designed to wean groups off institutional grants has enabled organisations to form new partnerships in applying for more such grants.

⁵⁰ An illustration of this is that the conference workshops on ethics and transparency were the least popular

Those who have attended a national or regional event involving discussion of transparency and accountability have gained in understanding. One Slovak participant of events at both national and regional levels reports that his organisation has “*started some thinking... it needs time, but [the project] gave us impetus to change*”⁵¹. A Czech organisation had no transparency or ethics rules, but after a national seminar has decided to craft some – also in light of the strong message in this direction from the consultant with whom it had worked – and “*will definitely refer to the [project's] Guidelines when developing our own code*”. And in Hungary, one beneficiary talks of his view of fundraising having been transformed by the addition of the elements of transparency and accountability which “*were pushed from the very first training*”.

To date, though “*the main impact of the project on transparency and ethics is personal*”, that is in advancing individuals' own thinking. As one Hungarian beneficiary puts it, “*the Guidelines are easy to apply in principle, but the key is Boards' willingness to be transparent*”. While some organisations have taken all or part of the message on board and the project's outputs may also have been useful in the process of formation of ADOK, more time is needed for change to filter more deeply into the mindsets of more organisations. In Slovakia, for example, the project partner admits that “*the texts do not have direct outcomes yet*”, with a plan of advocacy towards the NGDO Platform still in progress and with the Guidelines in need of “*more digestion and more dialogue*” among Slovak NG(D)Os. This is an area where the coherence of project activities and their likelihood of success particularly depends on further follow-up work.

Influencing the environment for fundraising

There has been little progress in achieving interest in the project from government officials with a view to policy change favourable to the environment for fundraising⁵². There is a logic that states should appreciate the project because it should allow them to reduce the grants which they themselves make available to NGOs. A counter-view from the Czech Republic is that officials enjoy the level of influence that funding NGOs gives them, consciously or unconsciously, over the activities and positions that such NGOs. But the more pertinent point perhaps is that “*fundraising is an exotic issue for public officials*” and that engagement can only ever occur around concrete issues of possible changes in laws and policies.

In Poland, officials are considered “*very difficult to engage*”, though further efforts will be made in September with the launching of the Polish version of *Hearts and Money*. The suggestion is that PPF feels obliged under this project to engage with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while regulations affecting NGOs' fundraising activities are the responsibility of other Ministries. As a result, efforts by PPF to influence a debate on a law on public collections are an activity of importance to, but not funded by, this project.

⁵¹ Another group “*came to the idea that changes are necessary and we cannot say excuses but use our time for being effective*”; evaluation form, Bratislava conference.

⁵² The Results Oriented Monitoring assessment also recently concluded that “*Though the project was welcomed by development agencies in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which contributed to its co-financing, public institutions in V4 countries show little interest in the project results*”; Monitoring Report, MR-144644.01, page 4.

In Hungary, the possibilities of government engagement are sufficiently limited for this aspect of the project to be considered *“not relevant”*; advocacy is accordingly not a prominent part of ADOK's strategy. A slightly more positive view is that some engagement is possible at a low level, but only after ADOK has had the time to build up relationships with officials.

In Slovakia, partners are clear that pressure on the environment for fundraising *“cannot be rushed just because there was money available”*. Advocacy is proceeding through mobilization of the NGDO Platform and the work of the Coalition for the Promotion of Individual Giving. PDCS staff talk of this process as one of enabling advocacy to happen *“more naturally”* than if the pace was forced during the project period itself.

In the Czech Republic, the Coalition for Easy Giving has lobbied banks to changes rules to make individual giving easier and intends to step up engagement of government and mobile phone operators. In this, as in other regards, the context in the Czech Republic is more favourable than in the other three states: there is both less need for influencing the legal and policy environment for fundraising and more possibility for winning results where such needs do exist.

Sustainability

The project has sought to avoid over-supply and has demonstrated an unwillingness to *“spend project money in an unsustainable way that destroys the market”*. But it is considered by one partner to be *“at the edge of what we can afford in terms of what is offered for free”*, where 'afford' is meant in the sense of impact on the market from services and materials having been provided for free. Partners recognise that *“the project is more sustainable if organisations come looking for services”*.

In spite of these good intentions, a jolt in levels of engagement is inevitable as the project comes to an end and partners adapt their plans and outputs to a lower levels of resources. The crux now is whether demand will fall once the project ends and trainings are no longer offered for free. The test of the strength of genuine demand is whether – and how much – organisations will pay for services.

In this, partners are confident that *“more organisations see the need for individual fundraising and are coming to invest in it”*. For one Slovak fundraiser, that more NGDOs are open to fundraising is *“the main success in terms of sustainability”*. The view from the Czech Republic is also that *“awareness of the need for individual fundraising is increasing and more are trying it out... the direction is irreversible”*. While the pressure to explore fundraising from individuals is stronger than when the project was first drafted, Central Europe remains a largely untapped market, so those NGOs which do embark on fundraising – and do so in the right way – should find the results rewarding and should set an example to others, creating a snowball effect.

Important frictions prevent rapid 'snowballing', however. Organisations lack the courage and, in that they can continue to secure institutional grants, the incentive to invest in fundraising. Widespread engagement in fundraising from individuals will take time, the gradual building of a community of experience which emboldens others to follow suit. For some organisations, the project serves to build skills for when the cost-benefit equation of individual fundraising *vis à vis* institutional grants is more favourable. This puts an emphasis on keeping the project's messages and imparted knowledge alive and on continuing to make the case for individual fundraising as something which is necessary and effective.

Other organisations, coalitions and network structures are essential to building on the project and providing a structure for ongoing exchange. In Slovakia, the Fundraising Centre can help to fulfil NGOs' needs in terms of basic training and resources and its Clubs provide a forum for regular exchange. The Slovak NGDO Platform has come to realise that professional fundraising, transparency and accountability are important to its members; for the Platform and for the Coalition for the Promotion of Individual Giving, the issue is more the level of capacity which can be brought to bear. The commitment is certainly there – for one involved in both the Platform and the Coalition, *"the issues raised by the project will not be forgotten because we see the need"* – but the onus would seem to be on PDCS to play an ongoing role of encouragement and support to both the Coalition and the Platform.

In the Czech Republic, the CFC's Clubs can be a key structure for continuity. The Forum for Development Cooperation is *"very aware of the demand among its members for more on fundraising"* and appears to be committed to carrying on the project's work. In Poland, the PFA is establishing itself as an expert service-provider, while the PPF has accumulated greater legitimacy. Like PIN in the Czech Republic, Polish Humanitarian Action represents something of a 'market leader' whose experience needs to be drawn upon on an ongoing basis.

In Hungary, ADOK offers the potential to convene fundraisers, lever expertise and resources and backstop NGOs' entry into fundraising from individuals. It should complement the more generic role of NIOK⁵³, an established network connected into government circles and serving a verification role of online and phone giving. Again, there is a capacity issue with ADOK currently dependent on DemNet input. The test is still to come: whether the logic is borne out that once ADOK proves its worth and builds momentum, it can evolve into a self-sustaining structure. The very newness of ADOK as the key structure for sustainability creates greater uncertainty in Hungary and demands not only that DemNet stays the course in the support it provides, but perhaps also suggests that other core partners continue to ensure that materials and experiences are available to ADOK so that it does not need to reinvent the wheel.

If in Hungary, DemNet's role to nurture ADOK is clear and there is said to be good complementarity between the latter's focus on individuals and the former's focus on organisations, how the other core partners should define their niche in relation to those of

⁵³ *Nonprofit Információs és Oktató Központ Alapítvány*, (NIOK, Nonprofit Information and Training Centre).

other structures and associations is less obvious. In Slovakia, PDCS intends to continue to provide fundraising training in competition with the Slovak Fundraising Centre, but has still to find the right business model. There is value in partners themselves sustaining their own expertise and keeping up to date with new techniques, but it may be appropriate to create a little space between the respective outputs of project partners and specialist fundraising support organisations. It may be that partners can focus on responding to the comment from one Hungarian beneficiary that *"training needs to have a broader scope than fundraising. It would be good to have training for leaders – not to teach them fundraising, but how to work with fundraisers and that fundraising works and is cost-effective... My boss does not refute my arguments but does not engage"*. This is not vastly different from what the project has set out to do, but points towards an emphasis on the status of fundraising in overall organisational strategies, on getting organisations to see the importance of fundraising and on developing leadership skills in fostering and overseeing fundraising for sustainable organisational development. Although the gaps in what other structures do will vary in each country, this may also suggest that project partners' role could tend towards facilitation – of networks and coalitions and of access to resources – more than fundraising-specific interventions.

Recommendations

Context analysis and needs assessment

The benefits of this project will continue to accumulate after its formal conclusion. There is a responsibility on partners to continue to monitor trends in funding, to keep up-to-date in terms of NGOs' needs and to adapt follow-up activities accordingly, including also in relation to the plans and outputs of other entities.

Recommendations:

1. continue to monitor and disseminate information on trends in NGO funding. As part of this, consider the production of a short briefing analysing the relative costs of grant fundraising and individual fundraising to confront the argument that the cost-benefit equation automatically favours the former.
2. from feedback of organisations known to be seeking to engage in corporate fundraising and of those partners which have delivered national activities in this area, take a spot-check as to how 'real' demand for training in corporate fundraising is across the V4.
3. consider the possibility of conducting a further snapshot of progress – in terms of engagement in fundraising from individuals, strength of national and regional networks and key 'environmental' trends – one year on from the project's end to test for sustainability and to gauge whether follow-up activities have been well-directed.

Ongoing outreach

There is further to go to enable more organisations to break the vicious circle which holds them back from engaging in fundraising from individuals. There is a need for further, specific advice as to the practical steps to make a start and for more case studies of organisations overcoming these implementation challenges. Unblocking the resistance of NGO leadership

warrants specific follow-up attention.

Recommendations:

4. compile additional case studies zooming in on the stage of starting out in fundraising from individuals⁵⁴. These case studies should include some drawn from this cohort so that an additional effect is to add to the evidence base of both the results of this project and the needs which remain.
5. drawing on these case studies, consider elaborating – or encouraging others to elaborate – some sort of short 'how to' guides targeted at organisations intent on commencing fundraising, but unsure of the practicalities involved.
6. specifically target NGO leadership in further efforts to disseminate the project's key messages. As part of this, the core partners should
 - make themselves available as advisers to NGO strategy development processes to make the case for more diverse funding strategies;
 - use leaders to reach leaders, that is, encouraging Directors of NGOs which undertake fundraising from individuals to 'preach' to their peers at key NGO fora or one-to-one.
7. sustain efforts to catalyse NG(D)Os to take transparency and accountability more seriously, making this an integral part of ongoing activities.

Support to project beneficiaries

In articulating what would most assist them in applying the lessons which they have acquired from the project, beneficiaries tend to highlight the importance of mentoring and other forms of one-to-one support which are by nature relatively expensive and hard to resource outside of the project. One beneficiary speaks for many in arguing that she *"would still want further advice, not necessarily training, but consulting... something specific to my own organisation"*⁵⁵. Project consultants are committed to further assistance on an informal or ad hoc basis⁵⁶, but while mentoring may be more useful than training, there may not be enough mentors to meet all needs. The challenge is to provide greater surety that ongoing support needs can be met.

Recommendations:

8. use fundraising Clubs as a means for peer-to-peer support to organisations facing obstacles to developing or delivering fundraising. If Clubs do not fulfil this 'surgery' role, consider the institution of an additional mechanism to allow for this form of support.
9. explore the possibility of a buddy system within and across the project countries where

⁵⁴ A specific example suggested for a case study is the Real Pearl Foundation [<http://igazgyongy-alapitvany.hu/>], an organisation working with disadvantaged children in Hungary which had lost a government grant. It was 'forced' to do individual fundraising and has found it to work much better than the group itself expected.

⁵⁵ Other expressions of this need include a fundraiser from Poland who *"would like to try to meet the consultant 2 or 3 times when we start to implement the strategy, not a big thing, but a few things to check up"* and one from the Czech Republic for whom *"what is most needed now is hands-on experience and support. I am fine in terms of theory now... I just need to crack on and try things out, then review and refine them with [an expert]"*.

⁵⁶ That a fundraising expert from one country has received requests for advice from fundraisers in other countries is both proof of the creation of a network of support and a sign of the contingency of ongoing support on personal whims and capacities, given one expert's not unreasonable comment that *"I help if I have a personal interest in the NGO's issue, but most of the time I have to refuse"*.

more experienced fundraisers are paired off with one or two others new to fundraising.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ This would reduce the pressure and dependence on a small number of experts. Partnering across countries may make more sense at a higher level of fundraising practice, but that would be for the partners and the participating groups to determine.

Annex: list of interviewees

Name	Organisation	Country
Frantisek Cihlar	ADRA	Czech Republic
Kristina Ciprova	Forum for Development Cooperation (ex)	Czech Republic
Tereza Inková	People in Need	Czech Republic
Jan Kroupa	Czech Fundraising Centre	Czech Republic
Christine Maritzova	Glopolis	Czech Republic
Jitka Nesrstová	Greenpeace	Czech Republic
Tomáš Vyhnálek	People in Need	Czech Republic
Ágnes Csordás	Taita Foundation	Hungary
Brigitta Jaksa	(consultant to) DemNet	Hungary
Hunor Király	DemNet	Hungary
Gábor Kitai	Board of ADOK	Hungary
Zsófia Makadi	Kurt Lewin Foundation (ex)	Hungary
Bencének Pál Szabolcs	ADOK	Hungary
Anna Kertyczak	Education for Democracy Foundation	Poland
Filip Leonarski	Polish Scouting Association	Poland
Andrzej Pietrucha	Polish Fundraising Association	Poland
Katarzyna Tekień	Partners Poland Foundation	Poland
Samuel Arbe	Partners for Democratic Change	Slovakia
Marián Čaučík	eRko	Slovakia
Peter Gušťačík	Partners for Democratic Change	Slovakia
Klára Holá	SAVIO	Slovakia
Jana Karelová	People in Peril	Slovakia
Eduard Marček	Centre for Fundraising	Slovakia
Ján Mihálik	Partners for Democratic Change	Slovakia
Alžbeta Mračková	CARDO	Slovakia
Matúš Plavecký	People in Peril	Slovakia
Braňo Tichý	Partners for Democratic Change	Slovakia
Dawa Dem, Erika Moisl, Perry Seymour	Resource Alliance	UK