



# SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

## EXPERIENCE IN IMPLEMENTING THE APPROACH WITH AND WITHOUT A REGIONAL FACILITATOR

Alliance of Public Health ICF continues to actively help Ukrainians, responding to their needs with a wide range of humanitarian initiatives. Starting in 2022 with significant financial and technical support from Christian Aid and the Swedish Church, the CLI (Community Led Initiatives) approach is being implemented in Ukraine. It is an activity that is initiated and guided by groups of people at the local and regional level in order to actively support, protect and restore environmental, household and social qualities. The CLI concept covers the entire territory of Ukraine (except for the occupied territories) and contains all types of group financial assistance: mini-grants up to 5 thousand dollars and medium and large grants worth more than 5 thousand dollars. The CLI emphasizes the role of "communities" as transformative actors and drivers of social change aimed at solving specific problems in response to a specific threat/crisis.

One of the CLI methods actively implemented by the Alliance is the "Support for Community Initiatives" (SCLR - Survivor and community-led crisis response) approach. It presupposes involvement of initiative groups of affected

communities and communes in solving the main problems and meeting the urgent needs caused by the war. Between May 2022 and June 2025, the Alliance, through various humanitarian projects, together with its partners – regional NGOs, supported 923 public initiatives in 22 regions of the country, providing mini-grants totaling more than 2.5 million pounds. As a result of the implementation of mini-projects, these public initiatives have reached more than 800,000 affected Ukrainians with a variety of assistance. Grant money is used to repair premises, equip bomb shelters, playgrounds, premises for the work of after-school hobby clubs, purchase the necessary equipment, and so on. Also, various educational, correctional and rehabilitation activities are carried out.

In order to familiarize representatives of non-governmental organizations who want to provide mini-grants with the SCLR approach, to assess the advantages and disadvantages of the approach with and without regional facilitators and to get a clear understanding of how to best build a work-flow, we are disseminating the information about the Alliance's many years of experience.

## HERE'S A COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE CLASSICAL APPROACH WITH AND WITHOUT THE INVOLVEMENT OF A FACILITATOR

	APPROACH INVOLVING FACILITATORS	APPROACH WITHOUT FACILITATORS
Formation and/or search for initiative groups / potential participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The facilitator is responsible for finding/creating initiative groups involving community activists;</li> <li>• The facilitator helps IG (initiative group) identify priorities that exist in the community, holds meetings with the community, government representatives;</li> <li>• Helps finding an NGO that can accept grant funds to their account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential participants are attracted by Alliance specialists or NGO grant-givers through various information mechanisms – targeted mailing to e-mail, posts in social networks, at the websites, and so on.</li> <li>• Specialists of the Alliance or NGO grant-provider give advice to initiative groups on issues related to the competition, applications, mini-projects, etc.</li> </ul>
Stage "Announcement of the competition" Preparation of competitive applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The facilitator helps writing the tender application, budget, and other documents submitted for the competition;</li> <li>• Accompanies IG (initiative groups) and NGOs at the stage of submission to the competition;</li> <li>• Support and advice to IG that intend to participate in the open competition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialists of the Alliance or NGO grant-provider give advice to initiative groups on issues related to the competition, applications, mini-projects, etc.</li> </ul>
Stage "Selection of winners"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formation of the Regional Selection Commission;</li> <li>• Performing the function of secretary at the Regional Selection Commission;</li> <li>• Presentation of applications from community initiative groups during the work of the National Selection Commission and answers to questions from Commission members regarding the content of applications</li> <li>• Preparation of the protocol of the Regional Selection Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialists of the Alliance or NGO grant provider form the Selection Commission and organize its work. The winners are selected by the Commission members in accordance with the selection criteria</li> </ul>
Stage "Signing of grant agreements" and stage "Transfer of funds"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents are signed with the NGO (now this happens online through the Vchasno service)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents are signed with the NGO (now this happens online through the Vchasno service)</li> </ul>
Stage "Projects implementation"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The facilitator provides constant support and control of initiative groups at all stages of project implementation</li> </ul>	<p>Specialists of the Alliance or NGO grant provider carry out the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold the first (founding) meeting with all the winners, where they provide all the information on the implementation of projects;</li> <li>• Support of initiative groups at all stages of project implementation</li> </ul>
Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct the monitoring visits, working meetings and experimental training for IG representatives;</li> <li>• Provide assistance in organizing and supporting donor visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct the monitoring visits, working meetings; organize and conduct donor visits and provide support</li> </ul>
Stage "Final reporting"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support in the preparation of reporting documents, photos for reporting;</li> <li>• Collecting "best practices" and experience working with community initiative groups;</li> <li>• Report on the results of the facilitator's work;</li> <li>• Participation in the final meeting, where the implemented project will be presented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support in the preparation of reporting documents, photos for reporting;</li> <li>• Verification of program and financial reports, as well as case studies;</li> <li>• Collecting "best practices" and experience working with community initiative groups;</li> <li>• Collection and verification of reports based on the results of facilitators' work;</li> <li>• Holding a final meeting, where all initiatives that were implemented with the help of mini-grants are presented</li> </ul>



So, you decided to implement the SCLR approach without involving a regional curator (i.e. facilitator), where should you start?

An open competition for mini-grants "Survivor and community-led crisis response (SCLR) in Ukraine"/ "support for community-led initiatives" is announced. And an announcement with detailed information is posted on the official website of the grant-giving Organization (for example, on the Alliance's website: <https://aph.org.ua/uk/tendery/programni-konkursy/>) and on independent national platforms used by NGOs, such as "Gurt", "Civic Space", etc., in social networks. At the same time, work is underway to inform and attract potential participants – for example, the Alliance makes e-mailings to partner organizations that have applied for participation in humanitarian competitions since 2022.

Additionally, the Alliance's partners are informed during working meetings, where the SCLR approach is presented and successful initiatives that have been implemented are described.

In addition, it is possible to use partner communication networks, regional and local media, and so on to spread information.

Everyone who meets the selection conditions and usually receives a large number of competitive applications can take part in the competition. During the stage when competitive applications are accepted, if participants have any questions, they can write to the email address indicated in the announcement and receive the necessary information from the Alliance's program or financial specialists.

## Competition Committee and determination of winners

After the deadline for submitting applications specified in the announcement, the selection of winners who will receive targeted charitable assistance begins. To review the received applications and select the winners, a National Selection Commission is formed. It consists of at least 5 people (there must be an odd number of Commission members). The Commission consists of independent and external experts, but cannot include interested parties who are in contact with the Competition participants, in order to avoid conflicts of interest. The winners are determined by evaluating competitive applications based on 5 criteria:

- **Relevance of the issue.** The issue to solve is urgent and relevant for community representatives and/or residents of villages, towns, cities, etc.
- **Deadline for solving the issue.** The issue described in the application should be solved within 1.5-2 months, and the implementation time frame should be realistic and achievable. However, if necessary, the Selection Commission may decide to increase the implementation period (up to a maximum of 4 months), provided that such a decision is agreed upon within the validity period of the humanitarian project.
- **Social impact.** The majority of community representatives and/or residents of villages, towns, cities, etc. should benefit from solving the issue proposed in the application.

- **Prospects for solving the issue.** The application must contain a clear plan for solving the issue with specific deadlines and responsible persons, a realistic and detailed budget that corresponds to the implementation plan.

- **Motivation of the community initiative group.** The team should be interested in solving the issue and be able to implement the proposed idea in a short time.

Applications from initiative groups that score the highest number of points according to all criteria will be considered winners and will receive funding.

**IMPORTANT!** Each NGO grant-provider should develop its own objective criteria for evaluating and selecting applications, describe them clearly and in detail, and inform the initiative groups that will participate in the Competition.

After determining the winners, the results of the Competition are reported to all participants: both the winners and those who will not receive funding under this Competition. The amount of funding and the number of supported applications may be reduced or increased depending on the recommendations of the Selection Commission and the budget's capabilities.

## Working with winners

Communication of the Alliance with the winners of the Competition is conducted by program, financial and communication specialists.

Even at the selection stage, when the National Selection Commission has determined the winners, the Alliance's specialists contact them and work begins on finalizing the application or/and budget, and the recommendations provided by the Selection Commission are agreed upon. Also, it is mandatory to hold a constituent working meeting, which explains in detail all the procedures for granting and

controlling the use of grant funds; emphasizes the terms of project implementation, which are prescribed in the agreements; discusses the specifics of the project implementation and its mandatory coverage for the community; provides forms and reporting requirements and discusses all existing issues, provides contacts of the project team. After finalizing the application or/and budget, a cooperation agreement is signed. This can be done in two ways: physically (with the participation of signatories) or online (using electronic document exchange platforms). When the agreement is signed, funds are transferred to the current account.

## Project implementation and final reporting

Financial and program specialists of the Alliance fully support these initiative groups and / or NGOs at all stages of the mini-project implementation (2-3 months). For the most part, communication takes place online: by phone, in instant messengers, or by email. Also, the Alliance's specialists constantly monitor the implementation of the project and provide assistance if necessary.

Project monitoring is the regular tracking of key components of a project at all stages of its implementation. Routine project monitoring includes:

- thorough analysis of the project's work plan implementation;
- tracking key indicators, trends, and project implementation difficulties and finding ways to eliminate them;
- tracking specific results of mini-projects implementation;
- analysis of financial costs and procurement procedures, etc.

The mini-grant provider assumes responsibility for the openness and transparency of all procedures under which purchases are made, services are implemented, and also coordinates procurement procedures with its grantees and works in compliance with these procedures in accordance with the legislation of Ukraine.

After the project implementation is completed, the reporting stage begins in accordance with the terms specified in the agreement. Financial, program and communication specialists of the Alliance check the implementation in accordance with the planned activities, look at the availability of a case study and coverage of the project implementation stages in social networks/communities. Both recipients of mini-grants and the organization that provides grants must strictly adhere to the reporting deadlines. All reports are prepared in accordance with the submitted application, the signed agreement and the requirements of the donor.

## Role of NGOs and interaction with initiative groups

According to the current legislation of Ukraine, a grant-giving organization cannot work with unregistered IG or with individuals. Thus, it is necessary to involve a public organization in the implementation of the project, which will take responsibility, accept funding and be responsible for reporting.

**An organization that wants to implement the SCLR approach, i.e. conduct open competitions and provide mini-grants, should:**

- be a registered non-governmental organization that can accept funding;
- be able to provide mini-grants in accordance with its charter and procedures;
- have experience in providing funding to other beneficiaries (NGOs or sole proprietors);
- have information about restrictions in Ukraine on the provision of funds to unregistered IG or individuals;
- track changes in the legislation of Ukraine and trends in the provision of grant funds to individuals and legal entities.

Accordingly, a non-governmental organization has several functions: to take responsibility for grant funds; to help IG implement the project and report. In other words, a non-governmental organization is an active and full participant in the project implementation at all stages. This mechanism is the same in projects that work with and without a facilitator. IG representatives should also be responsible for implementing the mini-project together with NGOs. They should participate at all

stages together with NGO specialists. For example, if a tender is conducted by an NGO, then IG representatives should take an active part in this process. They report what they need; they look at what exactly will be purchased, participate in the evaluation of bidders' proposals, and so on. Therefore, it is very important that non-governmental organizations work closely with initiative groups, because this is a development process for both sides.

Another important function of NGOs is to involve different groups of beneficiaries in the implementation of the initiative: representatives of different age categories, genders, social classes, people with different levels of mobility.

### This will ensure:

- a variety of views and solutions, which will allow to create more complex and diverse projects;
- better support for the project in the community, as decisions are made taking into account the needs of all stakeholders;
- reduce the risk of exclusion of vulnerable groups, which promotes social cohesion and minimizes conflicts or misunderstandings.

Thus, the participation of various beneficiary groups in the planning, implementation and monitoring of initiatives helps not only to solve issues more effectively, but also strengthens the potential of the community for further independent development.

## Difficulties and advantages of this approach

One of the difficulties of this approach is that specialists of the Alliance or grant-providing organization are responsible for communication and all processes that occur during the project implementation. There is a need for more meetings with representatives of initiative groups and more thorough mentoring, consultations, training, etc.

Also, the Alliance specialists or NGO grant providers need to establish trusting relationships and effective communication with representatives of initiative groups in order to solve all current problems quickly and effectively.

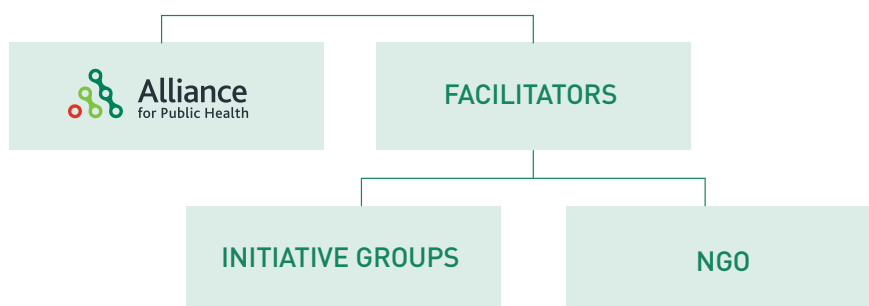


# SCLR APPROACH INVOLVING REGIONAL FACILITATORS

The classic SCLR approach involves participation of a regional facilitator in the project team. It is a person who communicates with initiative groups and takes on the bulk of work with them in a particular region. The number of facilitators depends on the number of regions where mini-projects will be implemented.

Within the framework of this approach, everything starts with identifying the needs, regions of activity and announcing an open competition for the position of facilitators. The announcement specifies in detail the terms of reference, that is, everything that the facilitator will do. Everyone is allowed to participate in the Competition: both representatives of regional NGOs and other specialists who are well aware of the situation in their region and have skills in working with communities or/and groups of people.

After the required number of facilitators is selected, appropriate training is provided for them. The purpose of this training is to gain practical skills in proper communication and further work with communities and local authorities; setting priorities and resolving conflicts; writing competitive applications and budgets; moderation and support of IG, etc. During the three years of implementing the SCLR approach, the Alliance has already formed a list of facilitators who have proven themselves in their fields. According to the regions that will participate in the project, the necessary facilitators are involved. Each of them works in their own region, but if the facilitator knows the neighboring region really well, they can also work there to reach as many initiative groups as possible. Additional training is provided periodically for facilitators to fully comply with the Alliance's standards.



## Responsibilities of the facilitator

The work of the facilitator begins with the search for Initiative people and activists in the community who want to unite for a common goal and get funding for the implementation of their idea. Facilitators travel to communities and talk to residents on the ground, identify activists and people who want to get unite into the IG. Further, the facilitator helps to identify all the current issues that exist in the community, and highlight the main priorities. S\he also organizes a meeting with the heads of communities or other representatives of the territorial authorities, in order to understand how much the needs and issues announced by the residents of the community correspond to the reality. At the same time, there is a search for non-governmental organizations that will be able to accept grant funds to their account and are able to work under appropriate conditions.

### The facilitator deals with:

- search for local activists/initiative groups who want to implement mini-projects to help their own communities;
- if there are no such IGs in the community, then s\he is engaged in their formation "from scratch";
- analysis and study of current / urgent humanitarian needs and problems of communities together with representatives of the IG;
- search for an NGO that can accept grant funds to its account and is able to work under appropriate conditions;
- support and advice to IG companies that intend to take part in an open Competition for a mini-grant;
- assistance to IG / communities in writing the application, budget and other documents submitted for the Competition;
- preparation and support of regional Selection Commissions to determine the winners who will receive funding for the implementation of the mini-grant;
- presentation of applications of initiative groups of communities during the work of the National Selection Commission and answers to questions of the Commission members regarding the content of applications;
- constant support and monitoring of initiative groups at all stages of project implementation;
- assistance in establishing cooperation and coordination of IG with existing domestic and/or international assistance centers, including IDP support centers, local self-government bodies, territorial communities, volunteer initiatives, etc.;
- holding working meetings with initiative groups (preparation and formation of applications, implementation, feedback on the implementation of the initiative);
- conducting experimental training for representatives of IG and communities;
- support in the preparation of reporting documents, photos for reporting;
- a collection of "best practices" and experience working with community initiative groups.

**Experimental training** - is an analysis of the implementation of mini-projects in practice, during which it is discussed what has already been done, what problems arise, what can be improved and future plans. For this

purpose, facilitators travel to communities, organize meetings, and conduct heated and interesting discussions.

## Regional Commissions

If necessary, another function is added to the facilitators – training and assistance in conducting Regional Commissions for the selection of winners of open Competitions. The facilitator needs to find members of Regional Commissions who are independent and not interested in promoting a particular application in order to avoid conflicts of interest. The Regional Commission, as well as the National Commission, should consist of five members. The Commission may include independent, external experts, for example, on humanitarian or social issues, as well as representatives of communities and beneficiaries. However, the Selection Commission cannot include representatives of initiative groups or interested parties who are involved in the competition participants. The facilitator may not influence the decisions of the Commission in any way, but assumes

exclusively the role of the secretary of the Regional Commission to help document the process.

Consideration of regional applications should be carried out quickly (within 1-3 days). The Commission determines the potential winners of the contest by receiving the highest number of points according to all evaluation criteria. Further, all competitive applications, together with applications that have become winners at the regional level, are sent to the National Commission of the Alliance for consideration. The National Commission of the Alliance considers all applications that have entered the open competition, and applications that are determined by the Regional Commission as winners. And, in its turn, confirms the winners.

## Project implementation

After the winners are announced, the implementation of projects begins, which are accompanied by the facilitator on an ongoing basis. Facilitators are the driving force and helpers for initiative groups, as well as a kind of intermediary between the Alliance and communities. They make trips to communities, conduct monitoring visits, experimental training and work meetings, answer questions over the phone, and so on.

Facilitators accompany initiative groups throughout

the project: they help organize donor visits and accompany them. They control the communication part so that the process of implementing initiatives is public (coverage on websites, social networks of NGOs and communities). They help with reporting and participate in the final meeting from the Alliance, where all initiatives that were implemented with the help of mini-grants are presented. Also, they fill out a report on the results of their work. This is the finalization of their work.

## Difficulties and advantages of this approach

In order to delve more deeply into communities, especially rural ones, it is necessary to attract a regional facilitator who will be a "local" resident, "be in the field" at the moment when necessary. The involvement of facilitators at all stages helps the communities themselves a lot, as it trains and supports them at all stages of their work. From the very beginning of the project, facilitators work in communities: they get acquainted with the management, residents, initiative groups, help form regional Selection Commissions, become secretaries

of these Commissions, and help the Alliance with all document flow.

The difficulties lie in the fact that program and financial specialists working for the organization that announced the competition must monitor both the facilitators and the non-governmental organization and initiative groups. In other words, the burden on the specialists of the organization that will implement this approach increases.

*«Since the beginning of the war, I have been working in humanitarian projects, and now I am working on the implementation of mini grants. What inspires me in this work? - Of course, people who surround me, people who need help. When you realize that you can help and already have some experience in this, you want to share it and inspire others», - says Kateryna Horbyk, facilitator in the Poltava region. - «I understand that it is thanks to projects like these that support mini grants that small communities that have already despaired and are not waiting for help are being developed.» It's very cool that we have the opportunity to help so much!».*

## **Galina Karpova**

deputy chairman of the NGO "I believe in the power of kindness"  
Odessa region

When the war broke out, a team of 16 activists was formed in the Shabivska territorial community, which consists of 14 settlements, who began to travel around the villages and help people. When we learned from local residents about their current issues, I had the idea to find opportunities to help them. I learned that there are opportunities to use grant funds to make repairs, equip premises and receive financial assistance for the development of specific initiatives in the community. But, we had no experience at all and had no idea where to start. I initiated this whole process, searched for information on the Internet, samples of competitive applications, what is generally needed to apply for the competition. It was very difficult, because we didn't know how to do anything and our first applications were not accepted anywhere. I continued to believe that our initiative would still be implemented, so I started asking local NGOs for help.

We won our first mini-grant. It was from the Alliance. It was funds for setting up a shelter in a kindergarten. We cried as a team. We could not believe we did it. I remember how difficult it was for us then, especially the reporting stage. We made so many mistakes, we have redone it so many times. The first project that we implemented was without a facilitator. It was a nightmare! It is very scary to talk to donors, although everyone says that "they will come to the rescue". To be honest, it is scary to contact them with questions, I did not want to bother them again and again. We still had no experience, we were afraid that we might say something wrong or ask something wrong. But then we had a project with a facilitator Anastasia. She was enormously

helpful. We welcomed her into our inner circle, like a member of our team. We were calling and writing to her constantly, asking for all sorts of questions and just asking for advice. It is much easier and calmer to work with the facilitator. And the results are much better, because you no longer do it blindly, but under the clear guidance of a mentor. The facilitator explained to us that mistakes are normal, that everyone makes mistakes and that we can contact her 24/7 with absolutely all questions. And this calms us down and gives us self-confidence.

Since 2022, we have implemented about 10 mini-projects and grown into a non-profit public organization. Just in July, we completed the implementation of the mini-project and, although there was no facilitator in it, we still always called Anastasia with questions, problems and just to consult. And she is always in touch with us. She continues to help us, even though this is no longer her job. It seems to me that at first, both IG and civic organizations need people – facilitators who are there to help, directly or just calm down and advise on the best way. Yes, fund managers are kind, but there is a theoretic barrier here. You understand that they have many organizations like ours and you don't want to bother them again and again. And the facilitator seems to be almost a close person. You communicate 24/7 communication with him/her. Also, the presence of a facilitator is very disciplining for local authorities. When you contact the mayor and say that a facilitator is coming to us, he immediately gets involved and begins to actively help, organize all the processes. That is, they feel responsible.

## **Victoria Bashmakova**

head of the NGO "Common Cause of Poltava region"  
Poltava

We started our career as an initiative group and very quickly grew into a public organization. On April 3, 2022, a humanitarian center was opened and humanitarian aid was provided to IDPs throughout the year, and in December 2022 we received the legal status of a non-profit public organization. Since 2022, we have been actively participating in mini-grant competitions from the Alliance and other organizations, and we have experience working with and without a facilitator.

When there is a facilitator, I feel supported: communication time is reduced and the necessary questions are solved much faster, you get answers almost immediately, which helps a lot in your work. If you don't under-

stand something, you can contact a facilitator more often, because it's not a scary process. When there is no facilitator and you need to solve something quickly, or you just have doubts and need advice, you feel a certain barrier to contact the specialists of the grant provider organization. They have their own work and you do not want to disturb the person again. Facilitator's support is especially important at the stage of implementing the initiative and final reporting. When a project is already implemented, there are a lot of working moments when the support and assistance of the facilitator is extremely important. It is much easier for me to work with the facilitator, because the work is done as quickly and efficiently as possible.

## Ruslana Korinna

chair of the charity foundation "Hearts of the indestructible"  
Kharkiv region

To participate in the mini-grant competition and implement our idea, we created an initiative group of community residents and our volunteers. We worked with the Alliance on two projects: the first one was to set up a playground, the second one was to equip the gym. We have experience working with and without a facilitator.

The first project that we implemented was with the participation of a facilitator. And I have to tell you that without the facilitator, we would not have been able to cope. If you are a beginner and are implementing a project for the first time, then the role of the facilitator is enormous. This person takes you "by the hand" and guides you through the project. The facilitator helps a lot, because there is informal communication and you can avoid dry, formal correspondence with the grant

provider. Every day you get some tips, quick answers to all your questions and it's very cool! No matter how much experience you have, but when there is a person who can help quickly, correctly, especially if this person is friendly and you establish human contact with him/her – this is super. The role of the facilitator is very important! Now we are implementing other projects where there is no facilitator, but we continue to contact our facilitator from the Alliance for advice and to ask any questions. After working together on the project, we remained in good, friendly relations with Alexandra, a facilitator from the Alliance. It's cool when there is a person in your field of activity who you can ask for advice even outside of projects. She still helps us a lot with her advice and her experience.

## Natalia Oleksenko

member of the NGO "Bogodukhivska agency for local development and integration", representative of the Department of economic development and investment of the Solonitsevska settlement community of the Kharkiv region

This is the first project implemented by this NGO. Before that, they had many years of experience (since 2016) in writing grant applications for initiative groups, then independently implemented projects. Currently, they are implementing 7 initiatives with a facilitator and 1 mini-project without a facilitator on the territory of the community.

Having a facilitator is a very good component of the project. We search for grant competitions on national platforms, apply, and then the difficulty arises. We have the first meeting, where they tell us a lot of information and give contacts for correspondence with managers from the organization of grant providers. Of course, through correspondence, you will not explain everything that you can say in live communication. And this format of cooperation takes a very long time and gives little benefit. There is a theoretic barrier between the performers of mini-projects and grant-givers. We often don't know how to explain exactly what we need, or we just sometimes need advice on how to do it best. But you understand that in such cases it is better not to write letters at all and not to bother people again. And at this stage, a lot of IG give up their initiative, because they

lose faith in their abilities, because they expect that they do not receive the support that they need.

Therefore, when there is a facilitator – a living person whom you can call and tell everything, to whom you turn absolutely with all the questions, because s/he is one of us – there is an incentive to work harder and come up with something new. The facilitator comes to the community, people see that they are being listened to and that their issues are relevant to someone and begin to actively participate in the work, unite more for a common goal. This approach gives you a sense of confidence and inspiration to work. It is thanks to the presence of a facilitator that we managed to earn as many as 15 applications, 8 of which are currently being implemented.

Our facilitator has created a telegram group for us, we are in touch 24/7. She comes to us when it is necessary. Therefore, we are very grateful for such a component of the project as the presence of a facilitator, as well as for the fact that the Alliance has selected people who are open to communication and speak a simple, easy language with us and are able to inspire people to work.



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO INTRODUCE SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY INITIATIVES THAT CAN CHOOSE ONE APPROACH OR ANOTHER: WHAT TO PAY ATTENTION TO

Recommendations for those who want to implement support for community initiatives that may choose one approach or another: what to look for:

- Vision and experience - how do you plan to work with remote communities, do you have experience working with initiative groups "from scratch" and do you have specialists who can become regional facilitators?
- Budget - if you have potential facilitators, then it is better to choose the classic approach and find a budget for paying for the work and training of facilitators. This will make your work easier, because there will be people "in the fields" who will be able to accompany the entire process from zero to results.

## Approach without a facilitator

If you don't have people to attract and there are budget constraints, try implementing projects without involving a regional facilitator. In this case, you need to focus on:

- budget - it will be smaller, because only the amount for providing mini-grants is considered;
- all communication with initiative groups is handled by the organization. Therefore, you should have program and financial specialists or consultants who can be involved to support non-governmental organizations that will implement mini-projects together with the IG.

## Approach with a facilitator

This is closer cooperation with communities, which gives good results, but first you need to train facilitators. Therefore, in addition to the amount for providing mini-grants, it is necessary to consider funds to support the fees of facilitators, monitoring visits and training of facilitators (even if the training is online, there should be a fee for trainers).

Most of the communication with IG goes to the facilitators, but there should also be program and financial specialists who will monitor the facilitators, IG and NGOs that have taken over the funding balance. But over time, if you have a pool of permanent facilitators, you can reduce the burden on the organization by delegating more responsibility to the facilitators.