

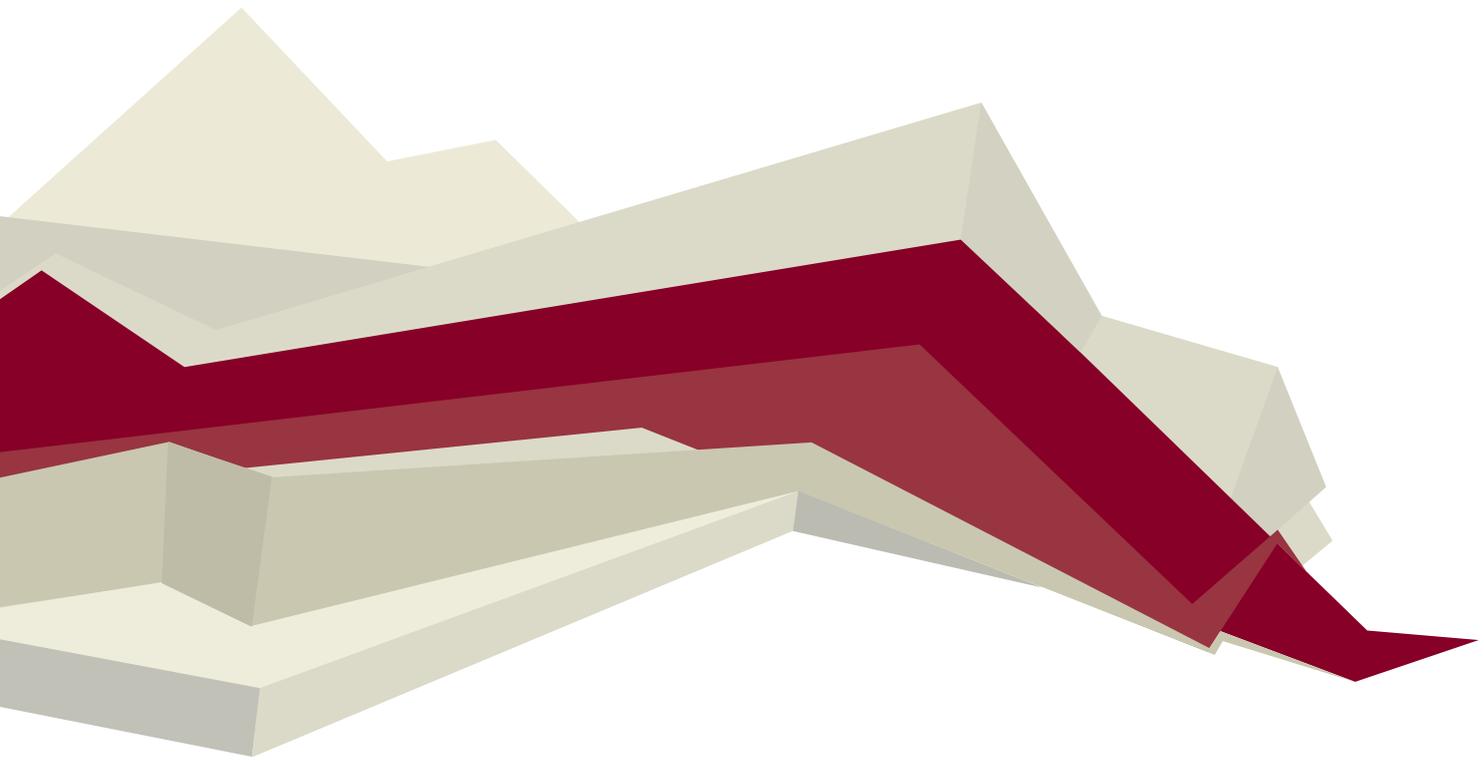


GUIDE TO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN MOLDOVA



Partners for Democratic Change is an international organization committed to building sustainable local capacity to advance civil society and a culture of change and conflict management worldwide. Within CPP, Partners provides technical expertise to CPP staff and beneficiaries.

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COMMON ACRONYMS

CIG: Citizen Initiative Group

CPP: Citizen Participation Program

CSO: Civil Society Organization

GONGO: Government-Operated Non-Governmental Organization

LPA: Local Public Administration

IREX: International Research and Exchanges Board

RFA: Request for Application

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Moldova has painfully transitioned to democracy. After 51 years of centralized government, the shift has been slow at the local level, particularly as many citizens and local authorities remain mired in the legacy of the past, indifferent to political participation and largely missing the knowledge needed to set their democracy in motion. Facing these challenges, USAID's Citizen Participation Program (CPP) successfully expanded citizen engagement in community development and democratic reform throughout Moldova. The program built the capacity of 200 citizen initiative groups (CIGs) and 91 civil society organizations (CSOs) in 190 villages and towns to mobilize citizens, organize for change, and push for greater local accountability.

This retrospective guide is intended as a practitioner's toolkit for people working on similar programs in the future, in Moldova, other countries of the former Soviet Union, and beyond. It analyzes the three "most significant" changes of the project (as identified by program participants and staff) and how these changes were achieved. The guide also includes relevant best practices in citizen participation from comparable programs implemented in the Balkans, Latin America, and the Middle East.

The program's best practices are divided into three categories:

1. project design, tools, and methodology;
2. project implementation; and
3. sustainability,

and include the following:

- Highly structured program design;
- Flexible and relevant tools and training;
- Support by regional hubs;
- Continuous improvement;
- Emphasis on individual initiative;
- Community investment;
- Skill building;
- Experiential learning;
- Project sustainability;
- Progressive community development; and
- Emphasis on partnerships and inclusiveness.

Lessons learned, which describe the techniques used by CPP staff to overcome program challenges, fall into three categories, structural, attitudinal, and technical, and include:

- Empowerment through decentralization;
- Encouraging participation through outreach and education;
- Using facilitation to foster critical thinking and build social capital; and
- Utilizing a feedback loop to continually improve program methodology.

Successful local-level initiatives can become national role models and living laboratories on how to strengthen citizen participation, accountability, and local leadership. This guide concludes with recommendations for future citizen participation and local government strengthening programs in Moldova. Recommendations for future citizen participation programs include:

- Consider effective CPP strategies, including: highly structured process, democratic principles in implementation, supportive environment, and flexible skill-building;
- Provide program participants the opportunity to generate their own projects to encourage pragmatic thinking around solutions;
- Creating CIGs is often preferable to working through existing organizations;

- Select vehicles for citizen mobilization carefully;
- Foster more linkages between CIGs and the Local Public Administration; and
- Support CIGs' impact by fostering greater inter-connections with other CIGs and with local and regional government.

Recommendations for future local government strengthening programs include:

- Institutionalize functioning channels for citizen input and participation;
- Build skills in public administration to increase professionalism and transparency; and
- Advance advocacy and/or legislation to improve transparency and inclusiveness.

1. Methodology

The information in this guide was collected and analyzed using a methodology based on the Most Significant Change technique, a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation. The lead consultant and project staff conducted 47 structured qualitative interviews with key project participants and staff looking for specific stories that illustrated what each interviewee believed were the “most significant changes” achieved through CPP; why he or she believed that change was significant; and how CPP achieved that change. Using a systematic process, a committee of CPP staff and the outside consultant selected the results and stories that were judged to be most significant given the overall goals of the program. Interviewees included CIG leaders, CIG members, mayors, public officials, CSO leaders, CSO staff, and staff members of CPP. For a complete list of interviews conducted, please reference the appendix at the end of the guide.

2. CPP Overview, Strategic Approach, and Background

2.1. Overview

USAID's Citizen Participation Program was a five year program, launched in 2004, to expand citizen participation in community development and democratic reform throughout Moldova. It built the capacity of citizen groups and NGOs to mobilize their communities, advocate for change, and push for greater local government accountability. CPP contributed to USAID's Strategic Objective (SO2.3) of making “democratic institutions more effective, responsive and accountable.” In particular it contributed to the Strategic Objective's Intermediate Result (IR2.3.2) of having the “capacity of civil society organizations to represent and serve citizens strengthened.” CPP was implemented by the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), who has worked in Moldova since 1996. Training programs and other technical assistance was provided by Partners for Democratic Change. The program's in-country staff was based out of a central project headquarters in Chisinau, supported by six regional hubs located throughout Moldova.

CPP's goals included:

1. Citizens and community groups mobilize to identify, prioritize and strategize solutions to community problems;
2. Community leaders and activists emerge and mobilize community resources (human and financial capital);
3. Citizen Initiative Groups improve their own communities; and
4. Communities know and use practical democratic concepts and tools.

2.2. CPP principles

Three principles guided CPP: inclusiveness, transparency, and democratic decision-making. These principles suffused the program's design, implementation, and management. In the view of IREX staff as well as the majority of interviewees, adherence to these principles was critical to the program's success in increasing citizen participation and adoption of democratic practices.

2.3. Program history

The successes realized in this program have come as part of a long learning process. In 2006, the program's organizational structure, strategy, and activities were significantly redesigned to provide greater support to program participants in the field. At the program's outset, all CPP programming was designed and run out of the central Chisinau office. Outside of Chisinau, CPP worked through Moldovan civil society organizations (CSOs) that functioned as administrative support centers to the project. These CSOs provided accounting services, processed travel requests, and monitored regional media, but had little interaction with program participants. Each of these regional offices also hosted an IREX employee that provided logistical support, but did not interact on a regular basis with program participants. This arrangement led to a situation where program participants lacked the close support and supervision later deemed important to transforming behaviors that improved citizen participation.



In 2006, the program was restructured to build new "Citizen Initiative Groups (CIGs)"- informal but democratically chosen committees of local citizen-leaders for each target project at the municipal level. The function of the program hubs was restructured from supporting the central office to supporting the CIGs in every element of program implementation—including program planning, technical needs, training, and meeting facilitation. Program activities were also restructured to emphasize experiential learning, giving participants more opportunities to practice the new skills and tools introduced through training. Previously, the program had offered extensive training, but there were fewer opportunities for participants to apply and adapt the skills to their local context.

2.4. Structure and scope

The program was structured into two sections: the Citizen Initiative Group (CIG) Component and the CSO Engagement Component. After the program was restructured, most resources were channeled into building effective CIGs, with a lesser degree of direct support for CSOs. Therefore, this guide focuses predominantly on results from the CIG Component, but also discusses salient results from the CSO Engagement Component.

CPP worked in 190 communities throughout Moldova, 14% of the country's total number of villages and towns. The program directly trained 10,000 Moldovan citizens in core democratic tools and skills.

All of the CIGs and CSOs that received small grants through CPP activities participated in training in management and leadership, project design, efficient communication and presentation, civic activities organization, advocacy, project implementation, and conflict management.

Target Groups

CPP engaged citizen activists, social networks, and CSOs that addressed social issues and/or served regional constituencies. These target groups were primarily based in Moldovan villages and towns and did not include the more sophisticated CSOs operating in Chisinau.

- **CIG component:** CPP opted to create CIGs since CSOs skilled in civic participation in Moldovan villages and towns were often non-existent. These CIGs were designed to provide an environment for citizens to foster civic participation and practice democratic skills. CPP had tried engaging registered Moldovan CSOs at the program’s outset through an open proposal solicitation process, but stopped working with these CSOs when most of the interested organizations were government-operated non-governmental organizations (GONGOs), set up primarily for the purpose of qualifying for outside aid. In addition to the inherent conflict of interest, their participation was ill-suited to advancing programmatic goals, as their *raison d’être* was more procedural than programmatic.
- **CSO Component:** In this component, CPP worked through existing issue-based CSOs. With their experience working on social issues, such as human-trafficking and health, CPP targeted these organizations to strengthen their programs by building their capacity to incorporate greater citizen participation and cross-sectoral linkages.

CIG Component

CPP used a highly structured methodology for building and engaging CIGs, which included three phases (see diagram below) centered around building democratic skills experientially through implementation of a community improvement project. In the first phase, the community prioritized their needs and came up with an idea for a project that would meet that need. The second phase focused on detailed project planning in preparation for the small grant. During the third phase, funds for the small grant were released and the community improvement project was implemented with close monitoring and support from a team of IREX staff located at one of the six CPP hubs across Moldova. Hub staff conducted most of the training during phase III, the implementation phase. In total, 200 small grants were disbursed through the CIG Component of the project. These grants directly impacted 104,800 citizens and indirectly impacted 900,000 citizens.

CIG COMMUNITY MEETINGS TIMELINE



The meetings highlighted on this timeline (which made up the core programmatic activities) gave program participants the opportunity to learn about citizen participation by practicing democratic skills and tools. Through these meetings, citizens learned how to apply the democratic principles of transparency, inclusiveness, and democratic decision-making by contributing to open community meetings, self-identifying problems, voting for representatives, advocating with local government officials, observing open procurement meetings, and participating in project review meetings. This experiential skill-building was supplemented by the training modules listed above to support CIG members as they developed and refined critical democratic skills, such as effective communication and advocacy. A description of each meeting follows:

1. **Mapping Meeting:** CPP staff worked with community members to create a map that identified all of the key community institutions and stakeholders, so that they could be invited to the project's Consensus Meeting. The process ensured that all of the stakeholders and diverse social groups (including those from varying income levels, age groups, geographic areas, religions, and ethnicities) would be represented.
2. **Consensus Meeting:** During this important meeting, CPP staff engaged community stakeholders (50-75 participants) to prioritize community problems, select a project to address this problem, and elect a CIG (12-14 members).
3. **Concept Application Development Meeting:** With guidance from CPP staff, CIG and Local Public Administration members prepared and submitted concept papers for the community improvement project selected at the consensus meeting.



4. **Orientation Meeting:** Once the Concept Paper was approved by the IREX/ CPP Selection Committee, CIG members and the Local Public Administration (LPA) participated in this meeting to learn about IREX's expectations for final applications, learn how to develop an action plan, and review the approvals and agreements (such as building permits) that needed to be collected in order to implement the project.

5. **Project Activity Meeting:** CIG members and the LPA developed plans for project implementation and long-term sustainability.

6. **Project Review Meeting:** Each CIG presented its project plan to the community and the LPA. Community stakeholders reviewed the project for transparency and accountability before submission to the IREX/ CPP Review Committee (50-75 participants).
7. **Procurement Meetings:** This activity consisted of two meetings, the Tender Informational Meeting, which informed sub-grantees about CPP policies and procedures related to procurement and the Open Public Tender Meeting, where procurement bids were presented and selected (50-75 participants).
8. **Mid-Project Review Meeting:** Through a participatory process, community members and the CIG evaluated and reviewed the quality of work completed, financial expenditures, and the implementation plan (50-75 participants).
9. **Final Project Review Meeting:** Through a participatory process, community members and the CIG evaluated and reviewed the quality of the completed project, financial expenditures, and the implementation plan (50-75 participants). Following this meeting was the Opening Ceremony, where 50-75 community members gathered to recognize the community for their contribution and the project's completion.

CSO Engagement Component

The second component of the program engaged CSOs (including NGOs as well as associations not formally registered) through a more traditional request for applications (RFA) process. CSOs submitted proposals in response to RFAs on specific topics, such as anti-trafficking, elections, and youth leadership, as well as open initiatives. Unlike many Moldovan civil society strengthening programs, CPP offered training and ongoing mentorship from regional hubs targeted towards increasing applicant CSOs' competence and integrity as well as fostering greater inclusiveness, cross-sectoral engagement, and community mobilization in their programs. In addition to the training sessions listed above, CSO-specific training topics include compliance, procurement, and accounting. By the program's end, 91 CSOs had received and implemented small grants.

2.5. CPP strategies

The following key strategies emerged during the course of CPP to ensure that communities were receiving the maximum impact from the grants, both in terms of the concrete value of the projects and the impact on local democratic practices and culture.

1. **Support local projects with well-trained hub staff:** Hub facilitation teams provided direct support to CIGs and CSOs to ensure their success. As the CIGs were not trained grant-makers, a major function of the hub staff was to offer them grant-making support and help them identify barriers to success and to develop appropriate solutions. Staffed by a hub coordinator, a social facilitator, a technical facilitator, and a regional associate, their varied skill sets enabled them to support and monitor the work of CIGs and CSOs during every step of the program process. Hubs provided support in facilitation, procurement matters, environmental impact assessments, technical feasibility reviews, conflict management, proposal writing, translation, and accounting. The social facilitator was a highly skilled facilitator trained to conduct inclusive, participatory meetings and who understood the advocacy process. The technical facilitator was a trained engineer or construction professional that helped simplify the project development process for the CIGs. Most interviewees related that the close support of the regional hub staff was crucial in enabling them to understand and comply with the strict project goals and requirements.
2. **Frequent “democratic interactions” with communities and CIGs:** In the CIG Component, the CPP methodology built in frequent collaboration between CIGs and their communities. Each participating community held nine meetings at which the CIG and LPA assembled, and five community meetings at which 50-75 community stakeholders gathered together to take important decisions or receive updates from the CIG. These frequent “democratic interactions,” as the meetings were dubbed by the CPP team, provided real opportunities for participants to practice the democratic tools (such as voting, participatory monitoring, and transparent procurement) they learned from CPP through hands-on support and the training sessions.

A closer look: the consensus meeting. *The consensus meeting, the first ‘democratic interaction,’ was critical for programmatic success, as it introduced key democratic concepts and set a positive precedent for future program activities. Prior to each meeting, CPP staff mapped all of the local stakeholders to ensure that all community perspectives were represented during the meeting. During the consensus meeting, CPP staff led key community stakeholders (including the LPA) through a process where they prioritized the most pressing problems in their communities through a preferential voting process, then decided on potential projects that would address the top issues. This process included debate on the potential projects, where participants needed to analyze their choices carefully. A potential project was selected and community stakeholders, including the LPA, were asked to publically commit resources to the project (in addition to the USAID subgrant of \$20,000), in order to increase accountability. Following project selection, CPP staff sought qualified volunteers as potential CIG members, and community members voted upon who should become part of the initiative group. The CIG would later put together the formal concept application for IREX funding. Even if a community’s project was not selected to be funded, the community was left with a prioritized list of issues to address that the community has agreed upon.*

At the outset, CPP hub staff guided citizens through meetings where they voted on community issues, nominated citizen leaders, and build new partnerships, among other activities (see below description of consensus meeting). Later, when CIG members were familiar with CPP, participants played a more active role in the democratic interactions. For example, they practiced their new skills in conflict management and communication by collaborating with community members voicing their opinions during the open tender meetings and participatory monitoring sessions. In doing so, they moved away from the unilateral decision-making (that had previously typified decisions on public spending), towards a more collaborative approach where stakeholders discussed issues and solutions as equal partners.

3. *Select groups and projects that contribute to the goals of CPP:* When selecting which projects to fund, CPP staff favored projects with CSOs or CIGs that demonstrated commitment to the democratic principles of CPP and projects that improved or added value to the community.
4. *Intensive Multi-Tiered Support & Monitoring:* CPP staff adopted a management model that emphasized continuous improvement through monitoring, evaluation and creating new interventions and strategies when necessary. Quarterly meetings were held among project staff to strengthen the feedback loop and refine the project methodology. IREX built in a four-tiered support and monitoring system that spanned from the CIGs to the regional hubs to the CPP office in Chisinau to IREX's Washington DC office.

In the CIG Component, IREX designed a program structure that monitored subgrants and procurement closely through a series of clearly defined steps with predetermined criteria. These criteria varied at each project stage, and included requirements such as cost-share, a sustainability plan, transparent accounting, and an environmental impact mitigation plan. During the implementation phase, there was bi-weekly monitoring of progress. The program structure was designed to engage the CIG members as the first layer of the project's monitoring system. In a broader sense, the greater community participated as consumers of transparency, and were briefed on project progress during five separate occasions and given the opportunity to offer feedback and ask probing questions.

2.6. Snapshot of impact

CIG Component

CPP has been successful at causing a paradigm shift in the way citizens view their role and that of their local public administration in the Moldovan political system. Participants, who were accustomed to a centralized autocratic and paternalistic form of government, changed their perceptions and now understand the importance of active citizens in a democratic system.



More concretely, the program empowered participants with the practical skills and tools needed to deepen local democratic practices as they carried out their community improvement projects. These tools and skills ranged from practical meeting facilitation skills to transparent procurement procedures to how to conduct a preferential voting process. These tools have been adopted by project participants and are being integrated into local processes to increase accountability and reduce conflict.

From the 47 interviews conducted during the compilation of this Guide, there was a near-universal agreement among citizens that relationships with their local public authority had improved. They now see their Local Public Administration (LPA) as more legitimate, which democracy scholars argue is a key factor in democratic consolidation. As channels of communication between citizens and LPAs were opened, citizens were able to express their concerns while also learning the perspectives and concerns of the public officials. The LPA, in turn, also recognized the value of an engaged citizenry in facilitating their work.

Over 90% of the 200 CIGs that were created remained active after the program and are pursuing new projects to resolve community issues. Approximately 50 CIGs have registered as NGOs. In contrast to many of the GONGOs established by LPAs for the purpose of qualifying for international donor funds, these NGOs have been built from the grassroots—they promote citizen participation and are led by committed citizens organizing to improve their local communities.

This program built a whole new generation of local leaders who are leading new community improvement projects and becoming engaged in civic affairs. Six have been elected as mayors and 117 as local councilors.

As evidence of the program's transformative effect, CPP communities have been recognized at the national level. In October 2008, six communities that had participated in CPP swept the top prizes in an awards ceremony sponsored by the Council of Europe for Best Practices in Local Government in Moldova <http://www.local.md/en/pbp/>. An additional 51 CPP communities received recognition.

CSO Engagement Component

The program increased the impact of CSOs by emphasizing closer partnerships with public institutions and other CSOs as well as engagement of volunteers. As a result, CSOs were able to broaden the number of beneficiaries they reached. These partnerships also helped increase the CSOs' sustainability by increasing their stature and visibility among the community and deepening cooperative relationships that will continue into the future.

2.7. The Moldovan Context

Moldova was incorporated into the Soviet Union at the end of World War II and became independent in 1991. While the Moldovan economy relies primarily on agriculture, light industry, and foreign remittances, the country has experienced GDP growth rates averaging 5.5% since 2000. Moldova has a population of nearly three million, including citizens of Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Roma, and Gagauzian origin, with approximately 25% of citizens working abroad. Internal disputes linger concerning the separatist Transnistria region, and the country relies on energy imported from neighboring regions. The democratically elected government is dominated by the Communist-majority Parliamentary government, and democratic reforms have been slow to take hold.

Freedom House's 2008 Nations in Transit Report on Moldova stated that there is great variance across municipalities in levels of transparency and accountability among local public administrations (LPAs) as well in cooperation between NGOs and LPAs. This inconsistency has been the trend in recent years. Local governance is also complicated by chronic budget shortfalls, unqualified personnel, and the fact that a large portion of local budgetary funds are allocated by the central government. With regards to openness by the LPA, Freedom House reported that, "legislation does not require mandatory public hearings; thus they are not held at regular intervals but rather are concentrated at pre-electoral periods."

3. Best Practices

The CPP Toolkit

Tools

- Assessment of Citizens' Needs
- Voting Systems
- Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
- Public Presentation of Community Success
- Prioritizing Community Problems
- Inter-Community Participation
- Inclusiveness of all Community Members (age, gender, etc.)
- LPA Mobilization
- Developing Community and Project Sustainability
- Transparent Tender Processes

Skills

- Management and Leadership
- Project Design
- Partnership Development
- Long-Term and Short-Term Strategic Planning
- Risk Management
- Effective Communication and Presentation
- Civic Activity Organization
- Advocacy
- Project Implementation
- Conflict management

“Best practices” are transferable techniques, methods, processes, or activities that are effective at delivering a particular outcome across different contexts. The following list of CPP practices that were considered successful and potentially replicable in other citizen participation programs were arrived at through detailed discussion with CPP staff after analyzing all of the interviews and stories collected for this Guide. All pertain to the CIG Component except for the last point, which pertains to the CSO Engagement Component

Project design, tools, methodology

- **Highly Structured Program Design:** The clear progression of meetings and activities laid out for the CIGs was imperative to their ultimate success. Operating in a system with low democratic skill levels and low trust, the structured environment of CPP pushed participants to develop their skills and learn new tools through experience, even though many were skeptical at the project outset. Each of the nine structured project meetings was designed to build upon one another. Within each meeting, the activities were also carefully structured to reinforce the program principles. For example, during the consensus meetings, the structured process required attendees to vote on CIG leaders to represent their interests. This process combined voter education with decision-making and helped attendees understand the importance of making informed choices. Having gone through this experience, several CIG members reported later that citizens took a more analytical approach to making electoral decisions.

- **Flexible and Relevant Tools and Training:** The skills and tools taught through the training and activities were carefully chosen to be relevant to the local context, logical within CPP’s approach, but also adaptable to new scenarios. Hub staff were empowered to customize trainings to each specific audience, so that trainees were able to quickly assimilate and apply the democratic processes and tools learned. For example, when a CIG had little knowledge of procurement, hub staff allotted sufficient time to provide the technical support and training needed to enable that CIG to be in compliance with procurement regulations and run open and transparent tender meetings.

International Best Practice: *The Critical Importance of Building Capacity in Practical Skills as a Tool to Build Trust and Sustainability. While citizen participation programs often center on the relationships between local governments and citizens, building practical skills is another method of increasing citizens’ trust. Socios Peru, a Peruvian NGO, recently implemented a program that brought together citizens and local government to address local development challenges in the Andean highlands, an area with low levels of education and endemic corruption. The organization focused considerable resources on building the basic professional skills of local government staff, in areas such as budgeting, accounting, project management, and planning. While the project goal was to increase citizen-government collaboration, government officials needed these basic skills in order to manage projects transparently and therefore earn the trust necessary to collaborate with local citizens.*

- **Support by Regional Hubs.** The support provided by the regional hub offices was a major contributing factor to CPP success. Their role was to provide close shepherding and “hand-holding” to project participants, but never to dictate what course of action the teams should take. They were especially helpful in complementing the trainings and providing support on the technical requirements of the program, such as proposal preparation and preparation for tender meetings.

Since the staff of the hub offices were the public face of CPP to the project participants, having strong personnel that were deeply committed to the program’s principles was important. Oleg Bursuc, the CPP staff member who managed the hub coordinators recounted, “we discovered that citizens usually don’t trust what you say, but what you are and believe. If we don’t trust in change, then citizens won’t either.”

- **Continuous Improvement.** The management of CPP reflected democratic principles of transparency and inclusiveness. After the program was restructured in 2006, CPP leadership introduced the “continuous improvement” management theory to program staff, which stipulates that most processes can be continually improved through study and refinement. To implement this change, all CPP staff from across Moldova gathered quarterly in collaborative sessions to share best practices and barriers to success and discuss how to continuously improve the program. As a result, program components, such as meeting methodologies, were constantly evolving and being improved as “living methodologies” during quarterly meetings. By participating in this process, CPP staff were able to customize the program to address specific Moldovan challenges. They observed firsthand how transparency and inclusiveness led to improved outcomes. This process built internal staff buy-in into programmatic principles and processes, which led to a greater commitment to the program on their part.

Project implementation

- **Emphasis on Individual Initiative:** While CPP promoted democratic values, it always remained neutral on project topics. Project participants felt that the program staff respected their decisions and took the decision-making seriously. The project activities were designed to empower participants through training, democratic interaction meetings, and specific tools to analyze, act, and share experiences. When participants faced challenges, the staff did not try to resolve these challenges; rather, they encouraged citizens to use their new skills and tools to overcome their roadblock.
- **Community Investment:** Almost half of the interviewees stated that participant investments of time and money increased citizen commitment and interest in the project. Eugenia Rosca, the former mayor of Inesti Village, remarked that the citizens “are invested in it financially, so they are more responsible.” On average, CIGs collected 49% of the total project budget in donations of community members, as well as local and rayon public authorities, in-kind works and donations of local business ventures. All CIG members worked on a purely voluntary basis and many projects marshaled other volunteers for support to complete tasks that their budget did not cover. After the CPP projects closed, interviewees reported that citizens continued to volunteer and provide donations.
- **Skill Building:** CPP emphasized the development of both technical and “soft” skills critical to local democratic development that fostered local ownership and sustainability. Possession of these skills, such as transparent procurement, consensus building, and advocacy, is critical to achieving transparency and inclusive governance. Learning these skills played an important role in building citizens’ confidence and sense of agency to initiate new projects after the CPP-funded projects had closed. Many participants stated that the technical

skills, such as proposal writing and budget preparation, enabled them to apply for funds to support new projects after CPP. Equally important was CPP's emphasis on "soft" skills, such as conflict management and communication, which provided citizens with the tools to engage their communities effectively and facilitate broad participation. These skills, some of which are difficult to learn, were effectively taught through an experiential learning process (described below).



- **Experiential Learning:** Rather than focus on theory, CPP staff emphasized experiential learning for participants as an effective method in teaching them democratic processes and tools. Instead of telling CIG members what they should be doing, hub staff led them through the structured series of community meetings, where participants mobilized to identify and address community problems, with supplementary support and training from hub staff. Hub teams helped them analyze their situation and decide for themselves what the next steps should be as they progressed. The participants did the work (i.e. planning, advocating, purchasing, monitoring), and over time they realized that they could indeed successfully learn the skills and implement the projects despite their initial doubts. This learning process was extremely important in the Moldovan context because CPP

staff faced many challenges with discouraged citizens not believing the program could be effective in Moldova. Through the experiential process, participants learned on their own that they were capable of realizing their project fully and leading future projects.

Sustainability

- **Project Sustainability:** IREX required that each USAID-funded citizen initiative project should have a viable sustainability plan. In most cases, this required a commitment by the LPA for upkeep, maintenance, and other ongoing costs. While many development projects require sustainability plans, interviewees repeatedly mentioned that CPP's approach functioned well and was a very positive element of the program. Participants contrasted IREX's approach with that of other donors, noting that CPP's sustainability plans were taken more seriously and were thus more realistic and were better implemented than others.

In Elizaveta village, located in Balti municipality, school Principal Valeriy Marcautanu has implemented a participatory management model based upon his CPP experience. To share this model, he conducted a workshop for all of the principals, assistant principals, and education department staff from Balti, which has impacted 25 schools. The principal also recently organized a seminar for teachers on how to use interactive learning methods based upon the program's experiential learning.

- **Long-Term Community Development:** CPP's end goal was to deepen local democratic culture and practices in a sustainable way, as evidenced by project participants' willingness to continue working on community development issues after the close of their small grant projects, and to apply the skills and tools learned in CPP to other local issues. Over 180 CIGs have initiated new projects since the close of their USAID grants. Their

activities have had a snowballing effect as they have expanded their work.

- **Emphasis on Social Partnerships and Inclusiveness:** With regard to the CSO Engagement Component, CPP used the RFA process to encourage CSOs to build partnerships and promote inter- and intra-community collaboration. This ultimately led to improved sustainability as many CSOs continued close cooperation with these partners after the end of their USAID-funded projects.

International Best Practice: *Increasing CSO – Local Government Cooperation. Partners for Democratic Change and its Albanian Center were successful in increasing local government accountability and transparency in the municipal budgeting process through an innovative program that trained CSOs and municipal officials together in participatory decision-making skills. This approach not only built the capacity*

of civil society to advocate for its priorities during the budgeting process, but also strengthened channels of communication between CSOs and government. This program has increased the participation of CSOs in the budgeting process. After participating in the trainings, approximately 60% of trainee CSOs participated in municipal council meetings in order to have input into their local budget. As a result, corruption has decreased and municipal-level policy has become more accountable to citizen's needs.

4. Lessons Learned

Lessons learned are often extremely useful for practitioners, since they relate to the challenges or problems encountered and the techniques used to overcome them. While some aspects of CPP's lessons learned are highly specific to the Moldovan context and to the program's structure, CPP staff and interviewees felt that there were four important lessons that could enable future programs to avoid the same pitfalls and build upon CPP's success.

Lesson learned #1: Focus resources to directly support citizens

Challenge: In the program's original design, CPP was highly centralized, with several partner NGOs located throughout Moldova that each hosted a CPP representative staff member to provide administrative support. However, for programmatic help, program participants had little interaction with hub staff and needed to travel to the central office in Chisinau. As a result, there was not sufficient support at the local level in certain aspects of project implementation.

Solutions: This challenge was overcome by the program's restructuring, which shifted most resources to new Citizen Initiative Groups that were created specifically to promote citizen participation and democratic principles. This approach was supported by empowering the CPP regional hubs with strong local staff that possessed the skills to lead the CIGs and were directly accountable to IREX.



International Lesson Learned: How to Avoid Government Co-optation.

In 2007, the Centro de Colaboracion Civica (CCC), a Mexican NGO, implemented a program to reduce environmental conflict and deepen democratic development. CCC faced the challenge of working with government stakeholders in Mexico, who have authoritarian tendencies and traditionally seek to co-opt organizations to realize short-term political gains. To overcome this difficulty, CCC innovated upon traditional conflict management methodology (which emphasizes inclusion of all stakeholders). CCC designed the collaborative process between stakeholders to create space for private sector and NGO stakeholders to define their own identities and short-term and long-term objectives prior to negotiating with government by limiting the participation of government stakeholders during initial meetings. As a result, these stakeholders were empowered to negotiate with the government on more equal footing.

Lesson Learned #2: Encouraging participation through outreach and education

Challenge: Some citizen stakeholders were reticent to engage in the citizen initiative process and promote their project successes. This resistance was based on several reasons, including the fact that Moldova has been the recipient of much of international funding since its political transition, and much of this funding comes with far fewer strings attached than CPP. Additionally, several interviewees reported that many adult participants over the age of 22 were resistant to change and still stuck in the communist mentality that the state should resolve all of one's problems. They saw additional funding

to the LPA as the solution. Reticence was also observed in citizens who did participate in meetings but had a very difficult time promoting programmatic success. Culturally, citizens were shy and found it difficult to promote the impact they had.

In some cases, the LPA felt threatened by the project, thinking that an active CIG would undermine their authority and responsibility. As a result, they sometimes tried to manipulate citizens or resisted participation.

Solutions:

Citizens: CPP management hired strong regional hub staff who inspired trust and were very competent in program management. When necessary, hub staff were provided with training in social skills such as leadership, networking, advocacy, partnership, conflict management, training and facilitation. These skills enabled them to support the CIG to drive the projects forward. Another effective technique to engage doubtful citizens was the sharing of examples from neighboring communities that concretely illustrated how success occurred.

To help participants who shied away from publicity, the hub taught them the value of press coverage and working with journalists. The hub also provided training in speaking directly, openly, and promoting oneself. When working with youth, the hub encouraged students to write articles. Participants also gained experience promoting their work through the program methodology, which included frequent public events that required public speaking and presentation skills, such as the opening ceremony.

LPA: For LPAs that were feeling threatened, hub staff arranged for private meetings at which they could explain the value of an active and motivated citizenry and how they could actually serve as a resource for them. Following one of CPP's quarterly staff meetings, a decision was made to change the program methodology to invite the LPA to more project meetings. This change was very successful in increasing their participation. In cases of conflict, the hub was able to draw upon its mediation skills to keep the LPA involved in the process. CPP also established certain rules to help the citizens and LPA learn about their roles and how they intersected with CPP's democratic principles (i.e. LPA members could not serve on CIGs or tender teams).

International Lesson Learned: Encourage Participation on Sensitive Issues by Engaging Youth.

When trying to engage citizens around politically sensitive issues, focusing on youth can be an effective technique to motivate older adults to participate in the political process. Their open-minded approach is often less entrenched and calcified than that of their elders, and their involvement encourages a focus on the future. Partners for Democratic Change used this approach in Lebanon, where it built a network of youth leaders across confessional lines to advocate for reforms to increase the transparency of the electoral system. The program was very successful in increasing the level of discussion and information exchange between sectarian communities that had previously seen this issue purely along partisan political lines.

Lesson Learned #3: Use facilitation to foster critical thinking and build social capital

Challenge: Even after receiving training, citizens in CPP communities lacked confidence in their skills to implement their small grant projects, such as: basic project planning and management, grant management, proposal writing, and document preparation for CPP and the government (such as legal documents for building permits). They also faced serious physical constraints, such as a lack of computers. They often turned to the hubs for help with these issues, expecting to be given solutions.

Solutions: Hub staff primarily used facilitation techniques to help participants resolve their challenges and take greater initiative. Rather than just giving participants the answers to their questions, they tried to lead the CIG members to think through their options by asking questions like, 'what do you think you

should do first?’ To help groups analyze their situation, facilitators used visual aids like the fishbone model of cause and effect.

The hub also worked with them to identify community resources, such as a local accountant or a computer in the mayor’s office that they could use with permission. The lack of skills and resources was treated as an opportunity to encourage CIG members to create a network of contacts with other people in the community who could work together to solve a specific issue. The deepening of this social capital built programmatic sustainability as CIG members discovered that they could solve most problems with community resources and relationships, a lesson which they have applied to new projects at many program sites.

Lesson Learned #4: Use feedback loops to continually improve program methodology

Challenge: Citizens found the structured methodologies used for some program activities challenging, particularly after they were first adopted in 2006. These challenges were identified by the hub teams through discussions with program participants. For example, soon after the program’s restructuring, program participants told hub team members that the voting process through which community members prioritized community issues (during the consensus meeting) was not truly representative due to the disproportionate influence yielded by the LPA.

Solutions: CPP staff continually worked to refine its methodology and training over time, particularly during its quarterly meetings. Additionally, CPP trainers closely tailored their training sessions to the needs of each CIG group so that examples and questions would be directly relevant to their needs.

By refining its methodology, CPP was able to improve the effectiveness of program activities and reduce barriers to participation. To address the challenges in the above example, CPP staff decided to move away from the voting system they had been using at the time (voting openly

by majority), since it resulted in many citizens voting the same way the LPA did, sometimes against their true preference. CPP staff then tried using a form of preferential voting, where voters prioritized their top two choices with colored stickers. By giving participants more choice, citizens not affiliated with the LPA became more independent in prioritizing their community problems and the role of the LPA shifted from one of decision-maker to partner. As a result, citizens, the private sector, and the LPA began to work together as equal partners and value the opinions of one another. Over time, CPP staff also successfully introduced this voting system to other CPP program activities.

“We changed our decision-making model in the program. At the beginning, the decisions were made by me. I was like a ‘big boss.’ After this, we started becoming more participatory by having follow-up meetings where we would look at challenges, find solutions. We (all CPP staff) changed our pyramid of decision-making. Now we have quarterly work sessions where we discuss how to address challenges and change methodologies. These meetings became a motor of decision making for CPP. Our beneficiaries didn’t just change. We changed.”

– Oleg Bursuc, Training Coordinator



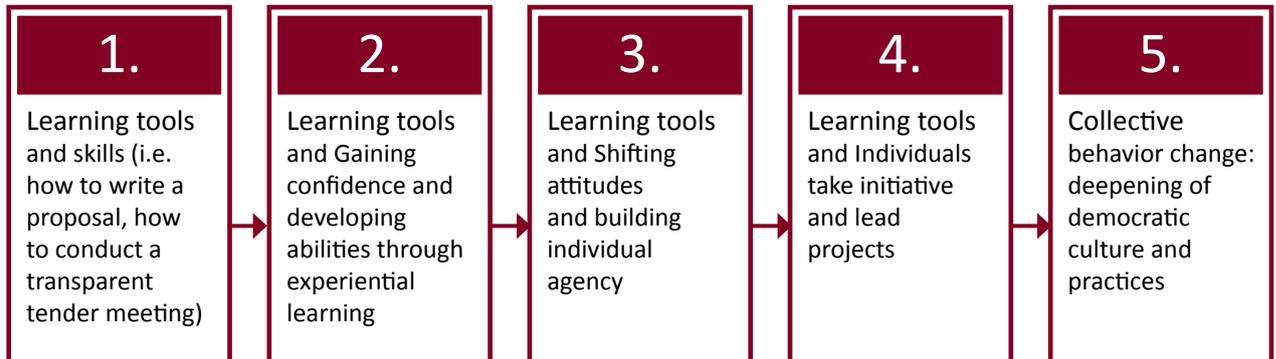
5. Program Results and Illustrative Case Studies

Following the Most Significant Change methodology, CPP staff and the consultant analyzed all of the narratives collected from program participants, and selected three of the identified changes as being the “most significant” in terms of how often or how strongly interviewees mentioned them, and CPPs overall objectives. The first change, which pertains to the CIG Component, was that CPP participants experienced a paradigm shift in the way they viewed their roles and responsibilities as citizens vis-à-vis their local government and community. This shift led to an increase in participants’



individual initiative. The second change, which also pertains to the CIG Component, was that program participants deepened their democratic practices at the local level by using democratic skills and principles in all their interactions, essentially developing a culture of democracy at the local level. The third change, improved engagement of program partners to increase CSO impact, pertains to the CSO engagement component. Less sweeping in scope the first two changes, it nonetheless offers valuable information on the value of partnerships with civil society and public institutions by CSOs. Each of these changes is illustrated through case studies from various regions of Moldova.

Continuum of impact on participant behavior



5.1. Paradigm Shift and Increase in Individual Initiative

“It was important for us that we created new partners, acquired new abilities and more democratic ways to act because before we were in a way totalitarian; we learned to listen to others opinions.”

– CIG Leader Victoria Osipov, Popeasca Village, Stefan Voda.

CPP was effective in causing a paradigm shift in the way program participants perceived the roles and responsibilities of citizens and government. Participants shifted away from a top-down model of governance towards a democratic model. A shift in political culture, defined as “a people’s predominant beliefs, attitudes,

values, ideals, sentiments, and evaluations about the political systems of their country and the role of the self in that system,” was evident. Previously, citizens and local government saw their roles through a more paternalistic and autocratic lens, meaning that citizens expected government to function akin to its role during Soviet times, where LPA officials made important decisions on public spending often with little to no citizen input. Most citizens interviewed stated that before CPP, they expected the state to resolve all of their problems.

The program design, with its structured meetings and experiential learning, enabled participants to increase their knowledge about citizens’ roles and responsibilities in a well-functioning democratic system. The majority of interviewees stated that, as citizens and LPA began to view these roles

and responsibilities through a new lens, there was a discernable increase in individual responsibility. Program participants saw their government as more legitimate and accountable to their needs, while the LPA cooperated more closely with CIGs to address their concerns.

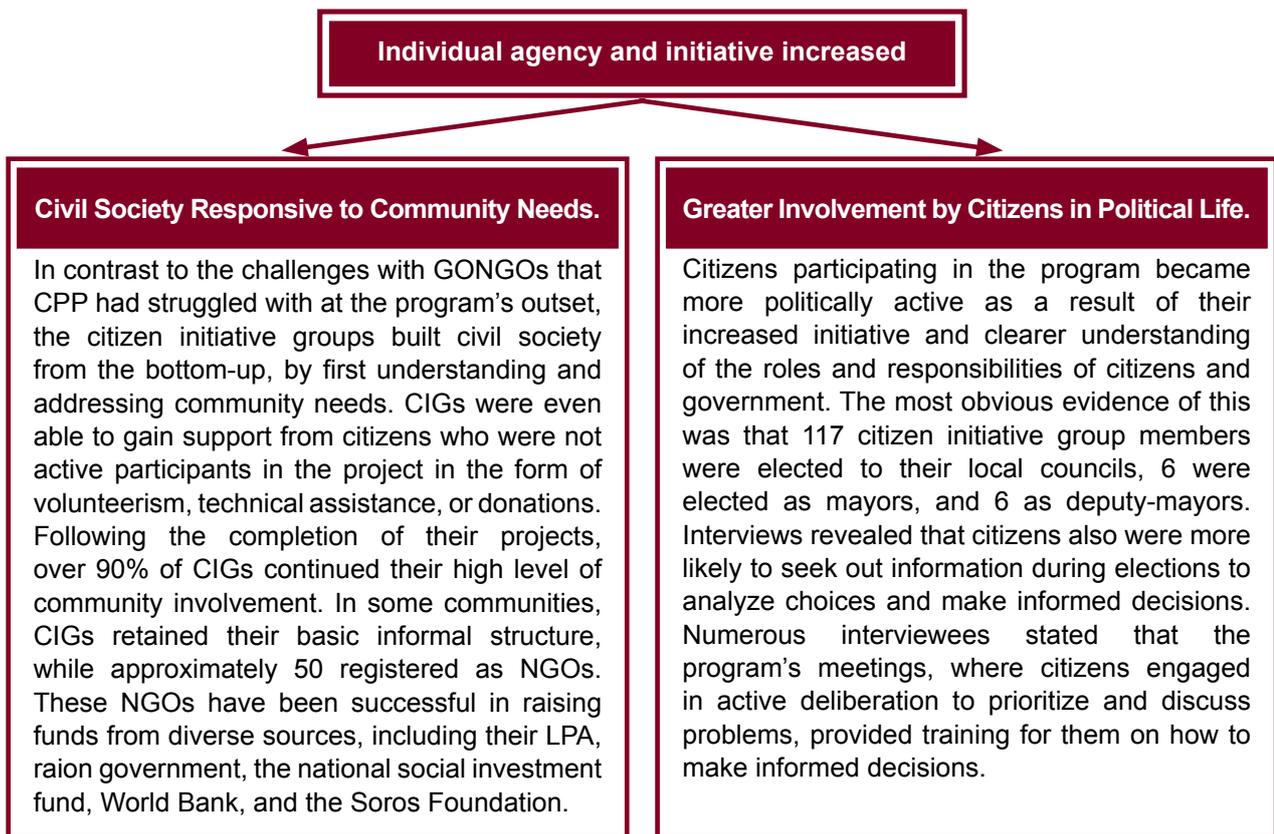
Changes Among Citizens

Individual agency and initiative increased. Citizens learned that they could influence and increase the accountability of their government, if they took initiative. Most of the interviewees stated that the structured program process helped them increase their confidence in their ability to effect change. By participating in the structured experiential learning process, participants felt empowered by identifying problems and selecting leadership groups and projects. Rather than just providing training, CPP provided opportunities to experience debating, voting, advocating, and monitoring. One could logically assume that if they saw their vote count during a meeting, they might feel more confident to participate in an election. This confidence and subsequent increased sense of agency was a key component to building a sense of individual initiative and driving the work of the CIGs forward.

This paradigm shift was central to project sustainability: as citizens' shifted their attitudes and sentiments about their role, their vision for what was possible for their communities expanded. As CIG leader Sophia Dvorniciuc, who led a project to renovate a school in Cimislia, mentioned, "there were changes on the part of the parents. They now understand they are working for the future of their children, not just for themselves." As they have increased their cooperation with the LPA and realized successes, they have also been less willing to use the LPA as a convenient scapegoat for their challenges.

"People are still involved even now that CPP has ended. They are asking for more information, contributing through in-kind work, financially, et cetera. They have a World Bank education project they have been granted. One part of this project has come from community contributions. They have also done more projects to modernize the teaching skills through a national program funded by Soros. They have a social investment project to renovate the roof. Then a different project with IREX."

– CIG Leader Sofia Dvorniciuc from Cimislia





Changes in Local Government

LPA now view citizen involvement as positive. In many communities, CPP changed the way that local governments viewed citizen interaction and participation in decision-making on community issues. While initially many local governments felt threatened by CPP, by participating in program and training activities, LPAs learned how their work could be complemented by active citizen groups. Their attitudes shifted from adversarial to cooperative, particularly as the citizens' initiative and collaborative abilities increased. Faced with the constant challenge of scarce resources, the LPAs came to see active citizens as a resource to help them reach their goals by mobilizing and educating citizens, securing outside funding, and driving community projects forward.

As citizen engagement increased, LPA accountability increased. As the LPA worked closer with its local constituents, its accountability to their needs improved. In addition to the program's emphasis on demonstrating the value of citizen participation, much of this change is attributable to the skills that LPA officials learned through CPP. Previously LPA members lacked basic skills, such as how to prioritize an agenda with multiple stakeholders, conducting a transparent tender, and mobilizing citizens to realize policy goals. Constantin Stratulat, the hub coordinator in Ungheni, reflected upon how the attitudes of the LPA shifted, "they saw in these groups a force—people with abilities and skills, capable to do something. In some communities, the LPA reformed the job description of some employees, making sure they will keep the relationships with the initiative groups and NGOs."

"If talking about the relationship between citizens and the LPA, I think that they got better. Citizens realized that the school, the cultural club, or the medical office are not the responsibility of the City Hall only, but their own as well."

– Victoria Osipov, Popeasca Village

"I think that in order to maintain an efficient communication with the citizens there are many ways, but it is important that the people could see the results, when they are addressing me I have to support them. In people's consciousness something is changed, they have a different attitude."

– Ludmila Gornea, Mayor of Bulboci Village

Changing Perceptions on Civic Engagement and Government Oversight: A Case Study of a School Renovation Project in Clișova

Project Period:	4 months
Beneficiaries:	150 Children (+ teachers)
Total Budget:	210,337 Lei (\$20,480)
USAID Funding:	167,933 Lei (\$16,350)
LPA Contribution:	32,849 Lei (\$3,200)
Community Contribution:	9,555 Lei (\$930)

The village of Clișova, located in Moldova's central Orhei district, faced many of the typical challenges associated with local democratic development in the region. The levels of trust between the local public administration and town-folk were low. The villagers, who had inherited a passive mentality from Soviet rule, expected the government to resolve their local problems and were generally disengaged from participation in civic or political affairs. These challenges were accentuated by low levels of capacity within the LPA to engage constituents. Citizens, too, lacked the ability to organize themselves to address local problems.

Building Legitimacy and Buy-in Through Consensus.

The first step that CPP staff and community members took was to identify the village leaders and institutions during the mapping process, ensuring that all the key stakeholders would be represented at the critically important Consensus Meeting, where the project topic and CIG members would

be selected. During the Consensus Meeting, citizens vigorously debated the merits of improving roadways, opening a youth center, or making capital improvements at the village elementary school. In the end, the citizens decided upon making the improvements to the elementary school, and voted to replace its windows and doors. The school, which is attended by 150 students and is one of the most important institutions in the village, was housed in a dilapidated building built during the 1970s. Its deteriorating windows allowed the cold to enter during the long Moldovan winter. As a result, the school faced ongoing problems with sick children, teachers, and parents.

The debate process built consensus among citizens about the importance of renovating the school. This consensus lent the project legitimacy and established a solid base of support as community members bought into the idea of channeling resources toward the school. Clișova's Mayor Ana Levinta stated, "There was a lot of debate, and people understood it was more important to have a good educational system than to have a youth center."

Citizens Learn about their Democratic Roles and Responsibilities.

As the CIG and LPA members and residents of Clișova participated in program activities over the following four months, they learned more about their roles and responsibilities. For example, one project activity required the posting of all expenses and funds raised for the project on an "information board" set up outside the school. This board listed all of the project donors, including USAID, private citizens, the LPA, and the raion. Citizens and parents picking up their children from school monitored project progress posted to the board. They saw the transparent accounting of project funds as well as other project news. Citizens had never seen project funds displayed publicly and so transparently, so this was an instructive activity that established trust among citizens that the CIG, school administration, and LPA were working in their best interest. CPP staff reinforced this message by training participants that these transparent practices should be a part of all public projects.



The project also taught CIG members how to engage their community. CIGs and LPAs received training in mobilizing citizens and then applied these techniques to motivate students' parents to help renovate the school by removing old windows and doors. Citizens participated in the project's open meetings where they played an important role in monitoring progress. The CIG was also responsible for raising funds for the project from the community at large. Project leaders witnessed how citizens who donated their time and money were more committed to the project, since they had a vested interest in its successful outcome.

Citizen Perceptions Shift and Participation Increases as they form an NGO.

The confidence of individual CIG members to solve community problems was greatly increased as they practiced their new skills and saw the newly installed windows and doors. Mayor Levinta reflected that the citizens now "understand they can solve the problems with common effort... Getting people together to solve problems is the way. Before, people were waiting for someone to come to solve their problems."

Once they saw that they actually possessed the power to resolve community issues, they began using their new skills to apply for funding for other projects, such as for a new heating system from the Moldovan government's national social investment fund. CIG leader Liuba Zaharia received an award at the school's teacher celebration for attracting the new funds to the school.

The LPA acknowledged that the project was successful in engaging Clișova's population beyond just teachers and pupils' parents. The mayor said "now, many people are getting involved, such as senior citizens who have a low pension. Even if they don't have kids in the school, they bring contributions of 50 lei."

The project also increased the sense of community commitment and pride. Project leaders noticed that the attitude of citizens toward taking care of the new windows and doors was one of greater care and concern than how other public goods were treated. They attributed this increased concern to the fact that people had invested their own time and money to make the renovation possible.

The citizens formalized their new organization, the Parent-Teacher Association, as a legal entity. Its mission is to increase the participation of parents in resolving school-related problems and improve the school's educational quality. While this association existed informally prior to this project, parental involvement has now increased from nine to fifteen.

Citizen Participation Increases Local Government Accountability.

Citizens applied their new skills to working with the LPA. As they increased their positive cooperation, their trust in the local authority and mayor's office rose, which led to more citizen involvement in local government affairs. Citizens have increased their participation in the annual strategic planning process as well as local council meetings. The mayor reported that now CIG members come to meetings armed with "ideas and arguments... Members are more informed. They can advocate for things."

The increase in citizen participation in government affairs extends beyond CIG members. Mayor Levinta continued, "before the CPP activity, people didn't really care what the LPA did. After passing through the CPP process, they would ask why the LPA was working on things that were not prioritized." In her view, the project has kept them more accountable.

The citizens are also increasing governmental accountability in another way: by making informed decisions when voting. Liuba Zaharia, CIG leader and school principal said, "I really believe now before

the parliamentary elections, people will think more now about how to vote. In this community, the majority votes. But this time, they will think more about for whom to vote. Now they have other opportunities, so they will analyze more. Some of this credit will go to the project, because people had to think about the options and think about their own decisions."

Lariza Guza, the Social Facilitator of the Balti Regional Hub saw how program participants disseminated the tools they learned through CPP. She recounted that the program participants "understand that this money is coming not just to change physical stuff, but to change the community and the way they work. At the beginning, it is difficult to work with them because they are focused on physical change, but towards the end they understand the goal of the project. At the end the participants start to use CPP terms- transparency, monitoring, success dissemination, sustainability, evaluation, participation, activism, etc."

"In the beginning they don't understand these words. At the end they understand them. They are proud to use these words in presentations they give. We have proof of this, because they organize trainings on their own. They invite other schools to participate in these trainings. One principal is planning a national workshop to disseminate the participatory management model in Elizaveta village, near Balti City... He is inviting other principals who participated in program. He is building social capital through this network."

5.2. Deepening of Democratic Practices at the Local Level

The second significant change, complementary to the first, was the adoption of democratic practices by CIGs and LPAs in the villages where CPP operated. For the purposes of this guide, these practices are defined as decision-making methods and processes adopted by participants that reflected the principle of citizen participation and decision-making; examples include: transparent procurement, inclusive problem-solving for community problems, and democratic decision-making through voting.

As participants shifted towards greater individual initiative and responsibility, the program principles of transparency, inclusiveness, and democratic decision-making were integrated into local practices. This occurred as the participants learned the skills and tools to follow these principles, such as how to conduct a tender meeting or make democratic decisions as a group. These skills and tools were of critical importance to building the confidence—and by extension agency—that shifted participants' perception of citizens' role in government, as described in section 6.1. It moved participating villages a few steps closer toward democratic coconsolidation.

It should also be noted that the trainings and democratic interactions discernibly increased the professionalism of program participants. This change led to various improvements in the efficiency of communications and meetings.

An overview of key changes that occurred is listed below, categorized by program principle:

Transparency. Both citizens and LPAs witnessed how transparency can be a powerful tool to build trust. They saw how this increased trust played a key role in increasing citizen participation, particularly in Moldova where suspicions of corruption are rife. As a result of greater transparency, trust improved between both citizens and their LPA as well as citizens and local NGOs. Project participants integrated higher levels of transparency into their work in several ways.



- **Accounting.** Both CIGs and LPA officials adopted more transparent accounting practices, using the information boards as a model. The new NGOs that were formed as a result of this project retained the transparent accounting practices. Additionally, CIG members said they applied these lessons to organizations at which they were already working to increase their transparency. Some LPAs also reported that they introduced more transparent accounting into their project implementation.
- **Procurement.** LPA officials learned how to conduct open and transparent public tenders. Grau Veaceslav, Hub Coordinator for Causeni Hub, stated that these were new skills for the LPA and that, “in the past, no one would ever know that there was a public tender. Just two weeks ago, [an LPA] conducted a public tender. The mayor was there, and he thought it was really helpful that the citizens were there.”
- **Communication.** Initiative groups and LPAs improved their communication when sharing information about the sub-grant projects with the communities they served. As participants learned the purpose and benefits of clearer communication, both parties sought to keep the other better informed.
- **Commitments.** Another way CPP effectively used transparency to improve citizen participation was to have citizens make public commitments in front of community attendees during project meetings. This technique was very effective in guaranteeing that participants, particularly elected officials, delivered their stated promises. For example, during consensus meetings, mayors often pledged a certain donation to the project and very rarely reneged on their commitments.

Inclusiveness. By incorporating inclusiveness integrally into project design, CPP educated participants about the value of this democratic principle, and increased the participation of citizens who had previously been excluded in the political process (due to a variety of reasons, including closed meetings and a lack of citizen oversight). Excluded groups varied by locations, but included groups such as youth, elderly, low- and/or high-income individuals, and politically connected and/or not connected individuals).

- **Decision-Making.** CPP introduced new, more inclusive decision-making tools that were adopted by LPAs and ongoing initiative groups to make strategic and project planning decisions. These tools, which included the mapping exercise (which fostered the inclusion of key stakeholders), open and interactive meetings, and participatory monitoring by the community, ensured that all community voices were heard when making and reviewing key decisions. As part of the experiential learning process, CPP facilitators asked participants to make decisions pertaining to the sub-grant project. For example, during the communication and presentation trainings, facilitators asked community members to decide upon who to invite to the program's opening ceremony and the agenda of this event. Later, when monitoring projects,

participants played a role in assessing the quality of work completed (which previously had exclusively been done by the LPA), and subsequently reelecting team members to the project monitoring committee.

Interviewees reported that previous grant-giving projects in their communities had been run by a self-selecting group of citizens, who made decisions amongst themselves on how resolve community problems. In contrast, the CPP methodology was targeted to include community members from diverse social groups (such as youth, the elderly and parents) and diverse professions (such as farmers, teachers, and business owners).



Many interviewees reported that the quality of decisions reached was higher with more participation. Grau Veaceslav, Hub Coordinator for Causeni Hub, stated that before CPP “decisions were made subjectively. Now one understands that the group decision is the most powerful one because it is objective. One can look more holistically at a problem. One can find more experts from different areas.”

Several mayors reported that these tools made governing easier and reduced conflict. Oleg Bursuc, Training Coordinator for CPP, reported that the mayor of Bucovat Village was now using the approach learned through the Consensus Meeting to prioritize the LPA's agenda; the mayor has found that this approach reduced the blame his office previously received. The mayor has since organized a meeting between other regional mayors who also participated in CPP to educate them about this approach.

- **Solutions.** CPP emphasized that solutions to community problems should be responsive to the needs of all citizens, not just to the needs of those crafting the solutions. For example, CIGs and CSOs surveyed their intended beneficiaries to uncover their needs, an approach not commonly practiced in Moldova. This more accountable process led to better quality solutions, greater satisfaction among beneficiaries, and increased ownership of the solutions reached. It also increased project sustainability as the solutions positively affected more citizens.

- **Mobilization.** CIGs as well as many LPAs adopted CPP’s skills and tools in advocacy and citizen mobilization, and continue to use them today. The advocacy tools acquired by participants were participatory, rather than adversarial in nature, an approach that built social capital. Citizens learned how to engage the LPA to become a stronger partner in solving community problems. For the LPA, the ability to mobilize citizens was particularly useful for several reasons. It helped them: 1) increase the contributions of citizens through volunteerism or monetary donations; 2) advance their agendas and educate local residents about the value of their favored policies or projects; and 3) mobilize neighboring communities or project partners to become involved in resolving challenges outside of their specific community.

“Considering the school is making decisions affecting students, they have to listen to our opinions... The first members of the radio team conducted an opinion poll... This is how we heard about what students wanted to listen to.”

– Vlad Riobu, 17 years old Volunteer at Radio Junior Station

Democratic Decision-Making. Citizens and LPAs embraced more informed, democratic decision-making systems into their work. These systems consisted of a variety of voting methods, including preferential voting, secret ballot, decision-making by consensus, and voting openly by majority.

Numerous interviewees stated that they had used these voting processes, particularly preferential voting and voting by majority, in their initiative groups after their CPP project closed. For example, numerous CIGs that completed school improvement projects, continued to use voting methods to select new school and kindergarten projects, elect teams to manage new projects, and/or elect members to Parent-Teacher Associations.

Democratic decision-making was also integrated into local governance practices. LPAs (as well as CIGs) reported continuing the practice of prioritizing community issues using a decision-making model similar to that used in the Consensus Meeting. Additionally, some former CIG members, having joined their local or *raion* governments after participating in CPP, disseminated knowledge to other government officials about different prioritization and voting methods and the value of community participation.

Adopting Democratic Practices in a Small Town: A Close Look at how the Village of Plopi Integrated CPP Tools into its Daily Processes

ACPP successfully taught project participants flexible tools and skills that they could adapt to their local context. Following a three month CPP project, which organized villagers to purchase furniture and sports equipment for their underfunded elementary school, the townsfolk in Plopi applied their new skills to deepen local democratic practices in their region. Following are a few examples of how these tools were adapted:

Project Period:	3 months
Beneficiaries:	450 People
Total Budget:	246,870 Lei (\$24,037)
USAID Funding:	198,870 Lei (\$19,400)
LPA Contribution	26,000 Lei (\$2,530)
Community Contribution:	22,000 Lei (\$2,140)

Strengthening democratic decision-making within the LPA and the local elementary school.

PStrengthening democratic decision-making within the LPA and the local elementary school.

The LPA and Plopi’s elementary school became more accountable to their constituent groups as decision-making became more democratic.

Gheorghe Popa, the mayor of Plopi, said “I, as the mayor, borrowed from CPP the method of problem selection by a consensus. Now at meetings with citizens we always give priority to those problems which are important for the whole village.” This change in methodology has made the decision-making process to set the LPA’s agenda more inclusive, as citizens now have a process through which to participate. It has also increased the transparency of how decisions are made, with the selection made open to the public.

CIG member Sofia Casianu-Plesh also reported integrating CPP’s decision-making tools. She recounted, “the director of the school and I took the method of problem prioritization, and we use it at the pedagogical meetings to decide which problems are the most important in that month.”

Improving communication with citizens to strengthen LPA legitimacy and increase citizen contributions. One of the reasons citizens in Moldova had such low levels of trust in public institutions was because of the extremely low levels of communication by these institutions on how public funds were expended. In Plopi, the LPA and multiple initiative groups (that mushroomed after the close of the project) effectively increased their communication with local residents by using information boards that listed all project donors, sums donated, project expenses, and updates on progress to increase their legitimacy as well as to increase citizen volunteerism and donations.

CIG Leader Maria Pascenco said, “The transparency has been very important, because, when people could see those informational boards, posted in all the villages at the City Hall and in school, they knew that the works were being executed and everything was real. Nothing is falsified. The community contributions lists signed by the mayor were posted. Any movement, that was made, was posted. Six informational bulletins were issued. And the people could trust that the money was used honestly and rationally. It awoke the feelings of responsibility in those people who didn’t initially want to give money. There were people who refused to give money because of some reasons. After the CPP project, a father who didn’t give money then, came and gave 600 lei for all 3 of his children.”

Mayor Popa built legitimacy for his administration and the CIG during meetings with influential local stakeholders. He recounts, “I participated in fund raising together with the CIG... I used this moment to promote the initiative group and its leader, to promote myself as the mayor, so that the people could see that my electoral program was being implemented and the CIG did their part as the people wanted it to.” For Mayor Popa, “the most efficient tool is informing the population about what is happening.”

Using transparency to secure commitments from key stakeholders.

One democratic concept borrowed from the program and applied to new scenarios was an increased number of public forums and meetings. The public nature of these meetings encouraged key stakeholders to adhere to their commitments made in these settings.



CIG Leader Maria Pascenco recounted how this had occurred in Plopi when describing how the Mayor was helping an initiative group fundraise for new projects; “even yesterday the mayor invited several vendors to a round table. They came to an agreement that after they gather in the crops, they will donate money as their contribution for renovation of the gym and of the assembly hall. One vendor... promised in front of all the pupils, that he would do something for the school.”

Results: The culture of democracy deepens in Plopi.

The Plopi example demonstrates the impact that is possible when the LPA cooperates closely with citizen

initiative groups. Since the project's close, citizens in Plopi have initiated five new projects, including one that is three times larger than the original IREX grant. The active citizens are planning to become more politically involved to have a greater impact in their communities. CIG member Sofia Casianu-Plesh said, "I personally thought to nominate myself for election to the local council. I can't solve all the problems by myself, but I still can give people a push, to make their ideas reach the LPA faster. The director of the school will nominate herself for Raion councilor, because she won the people's trust."

5.3. Improved engagement of citizens and public institutions by CSOs has broadened their reach and increased sustainability

The third significant change, which pertains to the CSO Engagement Component, was that CSOs reached more beneficiaries and improved their sustainability by deepening their partnerships with public institutions, other CSOs, and citizens. As part of the grant application, CSOs were asked to articulate how they would incorporate cross-sectoral engagement and community mobilization in their programs, while also being inclusive of minorities, youth, and women. These conditions led to fruitful engagements with public institutions as well as CSOs and volunteers. In many cases, CSOs leading the projects already had a relationship with these partners, but the project offered them an opportunity to deepen these relationships through concrete cooperation. CSOs were supported in these efforts through technical assistance and training from regional hubs. These hubs assisted CSOs in adopting more transparent procurement and accounting practices, which facilitated community partnerships by increasing their organizational credibility.

These partnerships led to increased impact by:

Increasing the number of project beneficiaries

CSOs reported that deepening their cooperation with the following stakeholders allowed them to broaden and diversify their beneficiaries:

- **Public Institutions:** By deepening their partnerships with public institutions, such as LPAs, schools, and the Ministry for Internal Affairs, CSOs were able to tap into an effective vehicle to disseminate their message and knowledge. In projects focused on public awareness-raising, CSOs trained staff at public institutions in the message they wanted to convey, who in turn shared this information with the population they served. At many of the project sites, staff at these institutions will continue to disseminate these messages into the foreseeable future, to new students and citizens served. For example, after receiving training from CPP beneficiary CSOs, teachers shared information about human trafficking with their students and social workers working with drug addicts shared information about the transmission of HIV/AIDS through needles. In instances where informal civil society groups affiliated with public institutions implemented projects that served a particular population, hubs trained the institution's permanent employees in the skills needed to continue providing the service after the project's close.
- **CSOs:** By partnering with other CSOs (both formally registered NGOs as well as less formal citizen groups), CSOs were able share knowledge with other organizations and work in complementarity, thereby widening their range of impact. These partnerships paved the way for continued cooperation in the future. For example, Katerina Ivanov, a psychologist at the Asociatia Familiilor MonoParentale (Association of Single Parents) in Cahul reported that



after partnering with NGOs and a school to implement a project to raise awareness about the prevalence of human trafficking, “the NGOs and school administration asked for more trainings and informational materials, not just for youth but also adults so they could cover a wider target population.”

- **Citizens:** Many CSOs placed a heavy emphasis on increasing volunteerism, which was instrumental in helping them champion their cause and disseminate their message. Some projects, particularly those that were led by informal citizen groups, were made up entirely of volunteers, many of whom were youth. Many of these volunteers participated in project trainings and gained experience in leadership, project planning, and advocacy. These volunteers are now advocates for the issues and projects they addressed, such as voter education, youth leadership, or the fight against human trafficking. They have been equipped with the skills and information needed to carry social messages forward in their future work. Some of these volunteers continue to work with the CSOs on these issues of concern.

Increasing sustainability

These partnerships have led to greater sustainability in the following ways: 1) CSO *projects* are more sustainable because their goals are known to more partners, who help disseminate information about the initiative; 2) CSO’s *messages* are more sustainable as greater inter-community collaboration resulting from the partnerships leads to deeper social capital, which facilitates collaboration between stakeholders on the issue in question; 3) CSOs *themselves* are more sustainable because these deeper partnerships are likely to lead to new collaboration and income in the future; and 4) CSO’s *themselves* are more sustainable as these partnerships help them gain trust from the community by raising their profile and educating people about their mission, thereby facilitating future work.

Case Study: Red Cross in Transnistria Increases its Impact on the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

Beneficiary Group:	1,720 persons
Period:	5 months
Total Budget:	90,327(MDL)/ \$8,603
USAID	57,250(MDL)/ \$5,452
Community	33,077(MDL)/ \$3,151

In Bender, Transnistria, USAID funded the local chapter of the Red Cross in a project to assist people living with HIV/AIDS and educate youth about the disease. IREX issued an RFA that stated that NGOs with partnerships and community collaboration would receive preferences in funding. They also required the NGO to complete a logical framework. These conditions helped the Red Cross design a project that strengthened their existing partnerships with stakeholders and ultimately led to the Red Cross increasing their local impact and identifying ways to better serve citizens in Bender.

ships with stakeholders and ultimately led to the Red Cross increasing their local impact and identifying ways to better serve citizens in Bender.

Maria Turcam, the Director of the Red Cross in Bender stated, “In previous projects, we mainly just worked with youth. Now we involve the stakeholders. Before they would be involved, but now we bring attention to linking these groups and broadening their base. This is a big change.” These stakeholders included the educational institutions in Bender, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, NGOs working with troubled youth, media outlets, and the LPA, among others. One of the most important project components was a roundtable that the Red Cross convened for stakeholders working on the HIV/AIDS issue. During the roundtable, stakeholders exchanged information with one another and built stronger partnerships for more coordinated collaboration in the future. Ms. Turcam continued, “before we used to have a roundtable with less people and less important people. This roundtable brought together the social and public sector. This is a big step towards partnership between us... After the roundtable, we established working groups for different sectors: media, local public administration, cultural groups, health, coordination team, youth group.”

As a result, the Red Cross was able to uncover that adults in Bender actually lacked more information about HIV/AIDS than the youth population; future programming will be targeted at this population. They also were able to increase the number of HIV/AIDS patients they supported directly from seven to sixty. The project has also led the local department of education to plan an upcoming seminar and roundtable specifically to share the collaborative experiences on the project and discuss new ways for collaboration on health issues with the Red Cross. Attendees will include education directors from each local school as well as other NGOs from Transnistria.

Case Study: Radio Junior

In a country where all radio is broadcast out of the capital and very little programming is targeted to the youth population, a group of students, teachers, and parents affiliated with a high school in Ungheni joined together to form the Radio Junior CSO. This organization has launched a high school “radio station,” broadcast through the school’s public address system and is dedicated to ensuring the radio station remains on the air in the years to come. Radio Junior provides an important outlet for youth for news, information, and music. The station has successfully forged strong relationships with local and national partners, which have played an important role in its success. These partners include the national Moldovan Radio, Moldovan newspapers, the LPA, the Student-Teacher Association, the raion government, and others. Some examples of Radio Junior’s partnerships include:

Beneficiary Group:	559 youth
Period:	3 months
Total Budget:	41, 338 (MDL) / \$ 3, 658
USAID	27, 998 (MDL) / \$ 2, 478
Community	13, 340 (MDL) / \$ 1, 180

- A mutually beneficial partnership with the **LPA**, where Radio Junior broadcasts important public service announcements on issues that include domestic violence, health, and the environment. These messages are particularly important since the students have less than adequate guidance with nearly 40% of their parents working abroad. Radio Junior provides an effective channel for the LPA to reach these students.
- A collaboration with the **national Moldovan radio** station to learn about broadcasting, technical aspects of running a radio station, and careers in journalism. These visits encouraged several recent graduates to choose majors in journalism at university.
- Close cooperation with **Ungheni’s Medical College**, which recently solicited Radio Junior’s help in setting up their own college station modeled on Radio Junior. In exchange for the help, the Medical College delivered presentations to the high school students on healthy lifestyles.

“Now the LPA listens to us. We are not considered only the students from the high school... They look at us differently, as adults.”

– Elena Briciuc, 17 years old, Radio Junior DJ and host

These partnerships have led to Radio Junior increasing the quality of its programming as well as the dissemination of important information to students about their school and community. As the transparency between students and the school administration has increased, students are more informed about their local environment, enabling them to make more informed decisions. It has also led to more responsiveness to students’ needs by the school administration. Principal Maria Pascan says, “having this radio station made the teachers conscious of the fact that they need to be more informed to understand the students.”



6. Recommendations for future programming

CPP has enabled villages and towns across Moldova to function as living laboratories for testing and adapting new democratic practices. Future programs will have the advantage of building upon its successes, and learning from its challenges. Practitioners involved in citizen participation programming in the region and elsewhere may also be able to learn from CPP's experiences as detailed in this Guide.

Recommendations for future citizen participation programs:

6.1. CPP Elements Relevant to Future Programming:

- *To increase citizen participation, consider effective CPP strategies, including:*
 - The highly structured multiple-step meeting process;
 - Programming informed by the democratic principles of inclusiveness, transparency, and democratic decision-making;
 - Utilization of the following strategies: 1) support to local projects with well-trained hub staff, 2) frequent “democratic interactions” that give citizens the opportunity to experience and practice democracy; 3) select groups and projects that contribute to the goals of the program, and 4) intensive multi-tiered support and monitoring; and
 - The cultivation of citizens that possess flexible skills and tools to engage their fellow citizens to meet local challenges democratically.
- *Provide program participants the opportunity to generate their own projects and encourage pragmatic thinking around solutions:* Even if the CPP model is not adapted for future use, engaging citizens through a Consensus Meeting-like process, where the community's problems are prioritized and potential solutions are identified, pushes citizens to plan actionable steps to resolve community issues (something that may be new for them), advocate or lobby their LPA, and take community ownership of these improvement projects. The structured meeting process was helpful in that it provided citizens opportunities to have real democratic experiences. For example, participants did not just learn about the importance of voting, they had to make real choices on who to elect as CIG leaders and which projects to direct resources towards in their communities. As citizens learn democratic skills and tools such as advocacy, effective communication, voting, and conflict management, they are tasked with putting these skills to use immediately. As a result, citizens rely less upon theory and more upon creativity to develop flexible, pragmatic approaches to implementing these tools that translates to effective solutions customized to local conditions.
- *Creating citizen initiative groups is often preferable to working through existing organizations:* When working to increase citizen participation, it is important to work through organizations with knowledge in this area, as it requires a specialized set of skills (such as skills in facilitation and conflict management). If these organizations do not exist, it may be necessary to create new CIGs to achieve this goal, which are inherently suited to mobilize their community since they are formed for this purpose. During this program, partnerships with NGOs to lead citizen participation projects was ultimately eschewed in favor of creating new CIGs due to the NGOs' low capacity in citizen engagement. These organizations played a valuable role in the community, but the initiative groups were better prepared and more motivated to increase citizen participation within their own neighborhoods than outside NGOs or local government. A CIG built from the bottom-up is much more successful because it: 1) knows how to engage citizens with democratic tools and is focused on their participation; 2) is seen as a legitimate representative of citizens' interests;

3) is therefore able to engage new participants not normally involved in their community; and 4) is a group that represents the community interests and not those of the LPA or the international community.

- *Select vehicles for citizen mobilization carefully.* Before the program was restructured, CPP originally solicited interest from CSOs to receive small grants through an RFA process. It was CPP's experience that many CSOs that applied to the program were created for the express purpose of receiving grant funds and were openly connected to or even directly controlled by the local government, in essence a GONGO. The GONGOs that were originally recruited to mobilize citizens were not ideally suited for the task, as their raison d'être was not aligned with CPP's needs. These organizations are virtual extensions of the local authorities and are usually formed only to become eligible to receive grants. This was not necessarily deceptive, and in most cases, was most likely done for the good of the community. Since GONGOs report to the LPA, they were not interested in getting the community involved. Other organizations, including issue-based NGOs faced similar challenges.* Community groups were a far better vehicle to increase citizen participation.

6.2. Recommended changes to build on success:

- Foster linkages between cigs and the lpa: future programs should build upon the goodwill generated in cpp communities between cigs and the lpa by fostering policy-making linkages between these groups. cigs should retain their independence from the lpa while still cultivating a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship by engaging in cooperative advocacy. these advocacy campaigns, which should target the lpa, should seek changes to local laws to increase citizen input into: annual strategic planning, budgeting, oversight, and/or feedback to the lpa on policy changes.
- Support cigs' impact by fostering greater inter-connections with other cigs and with government: building a stronger network among cigs as well as between cigs and local and regional government would be an effective way to deepen current citizen participation initiatives, facilitate the exchange of best practices and success stories, and access new communities. this network could be built through a variety of activities, including events (such as conferences and roundtables), workshops, and jointly implemented projects on pressing regional concerns.
- Stronger networks among cigs would build social capital and expose them to innovative ideas from other communities. the networks would also play an important role in reaching out to non-CPP communities skeptical about the program's effectiveness in their locality. Several interviewees stated that they were able to increase citizen mobilization and participation in nearby communities by sharing their results and sparking interest among their local population.
- By fostering stronger networks between CIGs and their local and regional governments, CIGs will be better positioned to share citizens' priorities with the LPA and raion governments as well as convey the concerns and needs of the government to citizens. This increased connectivity would also increase CIGs' access to funding sources.

* However, it should be noted that these NGOs are well positioned to address civic and social problems in Moldova. A strong NGO, as a legitimate actor in the social sector, plays an important role in addressing problems that affect people of a greater "community". Indeed, the CIG component of CPP engaged NGOs and other civil society organizations as stakeholders to improve those communities that were defined by shared social concerns and interests.

Recommendations for future local government strengthening programs:

Future local government strengthening programs should:

- Work with local governments to formally institute channels for citizen input and participation into the agenda-setting process (budgeting or strategic planning).
- Build relevant skills among public administration officials to increase professionalism and transparency (and by extension, trust). Most important, these skills should include:
 - The ability of LPAs to establish informal and formal channels of communication with their constituents (where public officials can explain citizen rights and national policies and where constituents can communicate their concerns to their LPA);
 - The ability of LPAs to represent their constituents' needs to regional and national governments; and
 - Basic practical skills that will increase trust in local government among the electorate, such as more transparent accounting, citizen input into setting the LPA agenda of priorities, and more open procurement processes.
- Advance advocacy and/or legislation to improve transparency and inclusiveness (for example, create a national or regional law mandating LPA meetings be open to the public).

Appendix of Sources

Most Significant Change Interviews

Bulboci Village, Soroca Raion

Corcimari, Daniela	October, 17, 2008. CIG Leader, Bulboci Village, Soroca Raion, Moldova.
Gornea, Ludmila	October, 17, 2008. Mayor, Bulboci Village, Soroca Raion, Moldova.
Turcan, Ion	October, 17, 2008. CIG Member, Bulboci Village, Soroca Raion, Moldova.

Cahul

Denisenco, Tatiana	October 23, 2008. President of Pro Vatra NGO, Cahul, Moldova.
Hariton, Nadejda	October 23, 2008. 11th Grade Student, Ioan Voda High School, Cahul, Moldova.
Ivanov, Katerina	October 23, 2008. Psychologist, Asociatia Familiilor MonoParentale, Cahul, Moldova.
Mihailuc, Irina	October 23, 2008. 11th Grade Student, Ioan Voda High School, Cahul, Moldova.

Cimislia

Parascovia, Colta	October 17, 2008. School Principal, Cimislia, Moldova.
Plesca, Sergiu	October 17, 2008. Deputy Mayor, Cimislia, Moldova.
Raileanu, Gheorghe	October 17, 2008. Mayor and Medical Doctor, Cimislia, Moldova.
Dvorniciuc, Sophia	October 17, 2008. CIG Leader and Deputy Director for Jr. High School, Cimislia, Moldova.

Clisoua Village, Orhei Raion

Levinta, Ana	October 16, 2008. Mayor, Clisoua Village, Orhei Raion, Moldova.
Zaharia, Liuba	October 16, 2008. CIG Leader and Principal, Clisoua Village, Orhei Raion, Moldova.

Chisinau

Asauleac, Raisa	October 22, 2008. Assistant Project Coordinator for the Step Forward NGO, Tiraspol, Moldova.
Bilic, Anatoly	October 22, 2008. Head Specialist of Education Department and Red Cross Volunteer, Bender, Moldova.
Bursuc, Oleg	October 22, 2008. CPP Training Coordinator, Chisinau, Moldova.
Evsukova, Masha	October 22, 2008. 11th Grade Student, Tiraspol, Moldova.
Guza, Lariza	October 15, 2008. Social Facilitator in Balti Regional Hub, Balti, Moldova.
Kvasha, Tatiana	October 22, 2008. Biology Teacher and Trainer of Trainers for the Red Cross, Bender, Moldova.
Lupachcu, Eugene	October 15, 2008. Social Facilitator in Comrat Hub, Comrat, Moldova.
Tanascova, Ecaterina	October 22, 2008. Eicumena NGO, Tiraspol, Moldova.
Turcam, Maria	October 22, 2008. Director of the Red Cross, Bender, Moldova.

Elizaveta

Gnida, Elizaveta	October 17, 2008. Accountant, Elizaveta Village, Moldova.
Gorobet, Valentina	October 17, 2008. CIG Member, Elizaveta Village, Moldova.
Marcautan, Valeriu	October 17, 2008. CIG Leader, Elizaveta Village, Moldova.

Inesti Village, Orhei Raion

Dascalu, Veronika October 16, 2008. CIG Leader and Primary School Teacher, Inesti Village, Orhei Raion, Moldova.
Rosca, Eugenia October 16, 2008. Head of Concordia NGO and Local Councilor, Inesti Village, Orhei Raion, Moldova.

Izvoare

Grosu, Grigore October 2008. CIG leader, Izvoare Village, Moldova.
Strisca,, Veceslav October 2008. Mayor of the Commune covering Izvoare Village, Moldova.
Vascan, Vera October 2008. CIG Leader, Izvoare Village, Moldova.

Causeni

Veaceslav, Grau October 17, 2008. Hub Coordinator, Causeni, Moldova.

Plopi

Casianu-Plesh, Sofia October 2008. CIG member, Plopi, Moldova.
Pascenco, Maria October 2008. CIG Leader, Plopi, Moldova.
Popa, Gheorghe October 2008. Mayor, Plopi, Moldova.

Popeasca Village, Stefan Voda

Cojocaru, Chiril October 17, 2008. Mayor, Popeasca Village, Stefan Voda, Moldova.
Osipov, Victoria October 17, 2008. CIG leader, Popeasca Village, Stefan Voda, Moldova.
Sanduleac, Ion October 17, 2008. CIG member, Popeasca Village, Stefan Voda, Moldova.

Soroca

Botaniuc, Tatiana October 21, 2008. High School Student, Leader of Civil Society Organization "Group Ecoul", Soroca, Moldova.
Focsa, Elena October 21, 2008. Deputy Mayor of Soroca for Financial Affairs, Soroca, Moldova.
Gherghelegiu, Olga October 21, 2008. CIG Leader and Deputy Director for Education, Soroca, Moldova.
Taran, Ala; Dubneac, Petru; and Digol, Ana. October 21, 2008. Hub Coordinator, Technical Facilitator, and Program Associate, respectively (joint interview), Soroca, Moldova.

Ungheni

Briciuc, Elena October 20, 2008. High School Student and Member of Info Junior Radio CSO, Ungheni, Moldova.
Bureiana, Maria October 20, 2008. Director of Education at Ungheni High School and Member of Info Junior Radio CSO, Ungheni, Moldova.
Morari, Lilia October 20, 2008. CIG Leaders and Pre-School Teacher, Ungheni, Moldova.
Pascan, Maria October 20, 2008. School Principal and Project Leader for Info Junior Radio, Ungheni, Moldova.
Procopovici, Valentina October 20, 2008. CIG member and Head of Pre-School, Ungheni, Moldova.
Riobu, Vlad October 20, 2008. High School Student and Member of Info Junior Radio CSO, Ungheni, Moldova.
Stratulat, Constantin October 20, 2008. Hub Coordinator, Ungheni, Moldova.

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