Polish aid

IDEA

EVALUATION OF POLISH DEVELOPMENT AID PROVIDED THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND TO SUPPORT REFORMS IN UKRAINE AND SELECTED EDUCATION INITIATIVES IN EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES IN 2012-2016

Final Evaluation

Report

COMPONENT I

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Evaluation of Polish Development Aid Provided through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland to Support Reforms in Ukraine and Selected Education Initiatives in Eastern Partnership Countries in 2012-2016

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Cover photos: Murals in Kiev (photos by: Maciej Kolczyński)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAWI - Computer Assisted Web Interview

CED- Centre for Education Development

CPM – Chancellery of the Prime Minister

DDC - Department of Development Cooperation in the MFA

EP – Eastern Partnership

ETF - European Training Foundation

EU – European Union

FII – Foundation of International Initiatives

FIU – Financial Intelligence Unit

GIZ - German Development Aid Agency (in German: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)

ICCSS - International Centre for Chemical Safety and Security

IDI - individual in-depth interview

MDGs - Millennium Development Goals

MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MNE – Ministry of National Education

MND – Ministry of National Defence

NED – National Endowment for Democracy

NGO – non-government organisation

NRC- National Reform Council

OECD DAC - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee

PCDSP – Poland-Canada Democracy Support Programme

PDA- Polish Development Aid

PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment

RP – Republic of Poland

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

SF PL – Solidarity Fund PL

Skat - Swiss Centre for Resource and Consultation on Development

TAIEX - Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Office

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

ABSTRACT

Projects supporting key systemic reforms are distinguished by a high level of overall relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. However, a detailed assessment of the Programme is more nuanced and ambivalent and depends on the support area and level.

Polish experiences were an inspiration for the Ukrainian party, particularly at the initial stage of work on decentralisation. However, over time Polish experiences and references to the Polish model were less and less evident. One reason is the activity of donors from other countries and the fact that Polish experiences were invoked to justify decentralisation on ideological grounds.

Two projects of the SF PL Office and the Poland-Canada Democracy Support Programme, which included 40 projects implemented mostly at the local level, played a key role in supporting local government reform.

The impacts of initiatives taken show that a mechanism of change was launched, covering broadly understood competences of initiative participants and the implementation of new local government functioning mechanisms. Also, many other impacts were identified, such as, drafting of strategic documents, sharing of Polish experiences in the running of the local government, improved competences of local government officials. These initiatives sometimes translate into a change in the way local government administration operates, but that depends on many factors like availability of funds, legislation, and the readiness of Ukrainian administration employees to change their working methods.

The project impacts were mainly local in nature and were not visible at the national level. This is due to the fact that they were too small, too short and too dispersed to make a wider impact.

The reform of the Ukrainian education system was the second important area reformed with significant support from Poland. In this case, the impact of Polish initiatives on comprehensive and systemic changes was more significant. A broader long-term impact affecting the whole country can also be expected.

Initiatives could be more efficient if recipients' needs were better identified and more emphasis was placed on how the Polish education system operates. The Ukrainian party is interested specifically in how national reforms translate into everyday school work, as evidenced by the very successful Polish reforms, including the education system reform, in 1999. Moreover, extending the duration of projects so that support also includes the stages of implementation, monitoring and impact assessment could generate great value. Projects could become more effective if academics dealing with education were part of the project's target group instead of being perceived as hinderers as is now the case.

Some of the current initiatives are complementary and followed up on earlier projects. New projects usually covered a wider scope of activities or were addressed to a different group of recipients. Additionally, PDA initiatives were complementary with other donors' initiatives and in some cases generated additional impacts.

There was no effective coordination between different projects implemented in one support area and the potential offered by the SF PL Office in Kiev was not used which led to achieving lesser synergy impacts.

Overall, the projects contributed to building a positive image of Poland and of its transformation. Even before coming to Poland, project participants usually had a positive opinion about our country which their visit here only reinforced. References made to the Polish transformation during the implementation of the projects also reinforced Poland's positive image in Ukraine.

I.   OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION CONCEPT

The report, *Evaluation of Polish Development Aid Provided through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland to Support Reforms in Ukraine and Selected Educational Initiatives in the EaP countries in 2012-2016* was commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (further referred to as the MFA) to evaluate Polish development aid (further referred to as the PDA). **IDEA of Development Foundation** was contracted to carry out the study following an open call for tenders. The research was conducted between 25 July and 19 December 2017.

There are three components of the research study. This part of the report evaluates Component I, the development and outcomes of selected initiatives carried out in Ukraine as part of Polish development cooperation and financed through the MFA in 2014-2016 out of the state budget's targeted reserve fund and MFA funds allocated to supporting Ukrainian reforms.

I.1. STRUCTURING WORKSHOP

A structuring workshop was held in the MFA on 17 August 2017 to discuss a draft report on methodology. Its purpose was to reconstruct the logic of the 2012-2016 Polish Development Aid Programme separately for components I and II of the research study. The workshop results are presented in chapter II.1 of the report.

I.2. DESK RESEARCH

Desk research was conducted at stage II of the research report and consisted of an analysis of documents, data and media materials, and project outputs.

Documents, project applications, project implementation reports, and MFA monitoring reports were analysed in detail. As a result, record cards of all projects were made and analysed qualitatively and quantitatively based on evaluation questions. The record cards were also useful in identifying the projects which were analysed in detail at the stage of field studies.

The analysed documents included national and international planning documents of strategic and operational nature. Data needed for benchmarking were analysed concurrently, as described in part I.5 of this chapter.

The analysis of data and media materials covered all the ongoing projects. Internet domains in Poland and abroad concerning all the ongoing projects, specifically the domains of project promoters and their partners were evaluated. Media content was also analysed using the available data and information from social networking sites to assess how they impacted the image of Polish aid.

Project outputs were evaluated by conducting desk research (of applications and reports), analysing Internet domains in Poland and abroad and doing field studies (interviews conducted in Poland and abroad).

I.3. FIELD STUDIES

Field studies were conducted both in Poland and Ukraine. In the course of preparing the field studies (research stage III) based on the projects' record cards, a list of projects and lists of replacement projects and proposals of case studies were drawn up upon prior agreement with the Contracting Authority. During the field studies, 6 projects (and 3 projects as a reserve) were selected for an in-depth analysis within Component I of the research study. The final list of projects that were analysed in depth is included in Appendix 1.

The following field studies were conducted at stage IV of the evaluation study:

- individual in-depth interviews (IDIs),
- questionnaire surveys of project participants
- telephone in-depth interviews for benchmarking purposes

In order to prepare and conduct field studies in Ukraine, two-person research teams made two evaluation visits on 31 August-1 September 2017 and on 11 -13 October 2017.

I.3.1 INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Individual in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with people representing different categories of respondents: government administration coordinators, NGO coordinators, representatives of SF PL and of partner organisations, implementers of project initiatives, beneficiaries, MFA project supervisors and MFA senior management. The selection of respondents was intentional and resulted from the qualitative character of individual interviews.

I.3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

A questionnaire survey of project participants was conducted using CAWI (*computer assisted web interview*) technique by which respondents fill in online questionnaires. The questionnaires were translated into Ukrainian. Eighty-eight questionnaires were obtained in Component I of the evaluation.

I.4. CASE STUDIES

The following research techniques were used to prepare a case study:

- detailed desk research (e.g. project documentation/reports on project implementation)
- individual interviews conducted at home and abroad.

The following 3 case studies were conducted under Component I of the research study:

- 1 case study covers a project implemented by government administration,
- 1 case study covers a project implemented by the SF PL Office
- 1 case study covers a project implemented by a non-governmental organisation under the Polish-Canadian Democracy Support Programme

Additionally, out of the three case studies that were conducted under Component I one was an in-depth study.

At the stage of the methodological report, it was assumed that in-depth case studies would present the best practices used in the evaluated projects to set a good example for other project promoters. The projects selected for the case studies were indicated in Appendix 1 (* and ** if it was an in-depth study). The case studies are presented in Appendix 2 to this report.

I.5. BENCHMARKING

In an attempt to find new solutions to apply to the Polish model of Polish development aid, benchmarking in this study was used to identify good, innovative practices found in four selected developed countries (which carried out aid initiatives in Ukraine in 2012-2016) that could be implemented in Polish development aid. Switzerland, Germany, Lithuania and Sweden were selected for benchmarking as previously agreed to with the Contracting Authority.

The subject matter of the research study and the Contracting Authority's information needs determined the scope of benchmarking which covered the following aspects:

- support for reforms implemented in Ukraine
- initiatives aimed at enhancing security in Ukraine
- education initiatives addressed to the citizens of Ukraine and of other EaP countries.

Mainly these two benchmarking research techniques were used:

- desk research consisting in:
    - reports on development cooperation carried out by selected developed countries, including documentation relating to the mission, the strategy behind the implemented initiatives, the areas of support, the institutional environment, reports on the impact of support,
    - websites concerning the development aid provided,
    - statistical data on provided aid (including financial data),
    - OECD/DAC (Development Assistance Committee) data and reports.
- individual interviews conducted in person or on the phone with people in charge of implementing aid initiatives in Ukraine.

The report on benchmarking results is presented in Appendix 3.

I.6. PANEL OF EXPERTS AND SWOT ANALYSIS

At stage six of the evaluation, a SWOT/TOWS analysis was conducted and a panel of experts was organised to summarise the results of analyses of the initiatives taken within component I. The panel was made up of specialists in development policy and development cooperation appointed by the MFA's Department of Development Cooperation (hereinafter referred to as the DDC).

II. DESCRIPTION OF EVALUATION RESULTS - ANSWERS TO EVALUATION QUESTIONS

II.1. RECONSTRUCTION OF INTERVENTION LOGIC

Polish development aid provided to Ukraine and other Eastern Partnership countries is oriented at achieving the objectives set out in Polish and international strategic documents.

In international relations, the objectives, directions and guidelines of development aid are set out in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2000, and in the follow-up 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted for 2015-2030 to implement sustainable development goals (SDGs). The new development agenda is global in its scope (covering all countries) and aimed at multidimensional sustainable social, economic and environmental development.

The objectives of Polish foreign policy, including development aid and development cooperation realised when aid programmes were implemented in Ukraine, are set out in *2012-2016 Polish Foreign Policy Priorities.* The *2017-2021 Polish Foreign Policy Strategy* is the currently applicable strategic document*.* These two documents emphasize the importance of cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries and with Ukraine in particular. The strategic objective of cooperation and aid provided to the Eastern Partnership countries is to increase their social and economic stability and thus to raise the level of Poland's security. Sharing experiences and supporting democratisation processes, the rule of law and modernisation reforms that foster political transformation and social and economic development help to achieve this objective.

The objectives and priorities of Polish development aid, the subject of this evaluation, are set out in the *2012-2015 Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme* and the *2016-2020 Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme*. Aiding broadly understood social and economic development of developing countries and their societies is the main objective of Polish aid.

Aid recipients also see Poland in a better light and this helps Polish foreign policy to achieve its overall objectives using soft power instruments.

The Eastern Partnership countries, i.e. Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in particular are the main geographical priorities of Polish development cooperation. Aid is provided to Ukraine under the following priorities for 2012-2015:

1. Public security and border management
2. Regional development, public and local government administration capacity building
3. Small and medium-sized enterprises and job creation

And also as part of the following priorities for 2016-2020:

1. Good governance
2. Human capital
3. Entrepreneurship and the private sector

In Component I of this study, the outcomes and impacts of projects implemented in Ukraine under the Regional Development, Public and Local Government Administration Capacity Building (2014-2015) priority and the Good Governance (in 2016) priority were analysed. The diagram below illustrates the programme intervention logic used for Component I area of support.

Particular blocks corresponding to the identified potential impact of development aid for Ukraine are connected by arrows, which reflect relations – adopted explicitly or assumed implicitly - between particular elements of the intervention logic. The numbering of the squares corresponds to the evolution of relations and or to the assumed impacts achieveed.
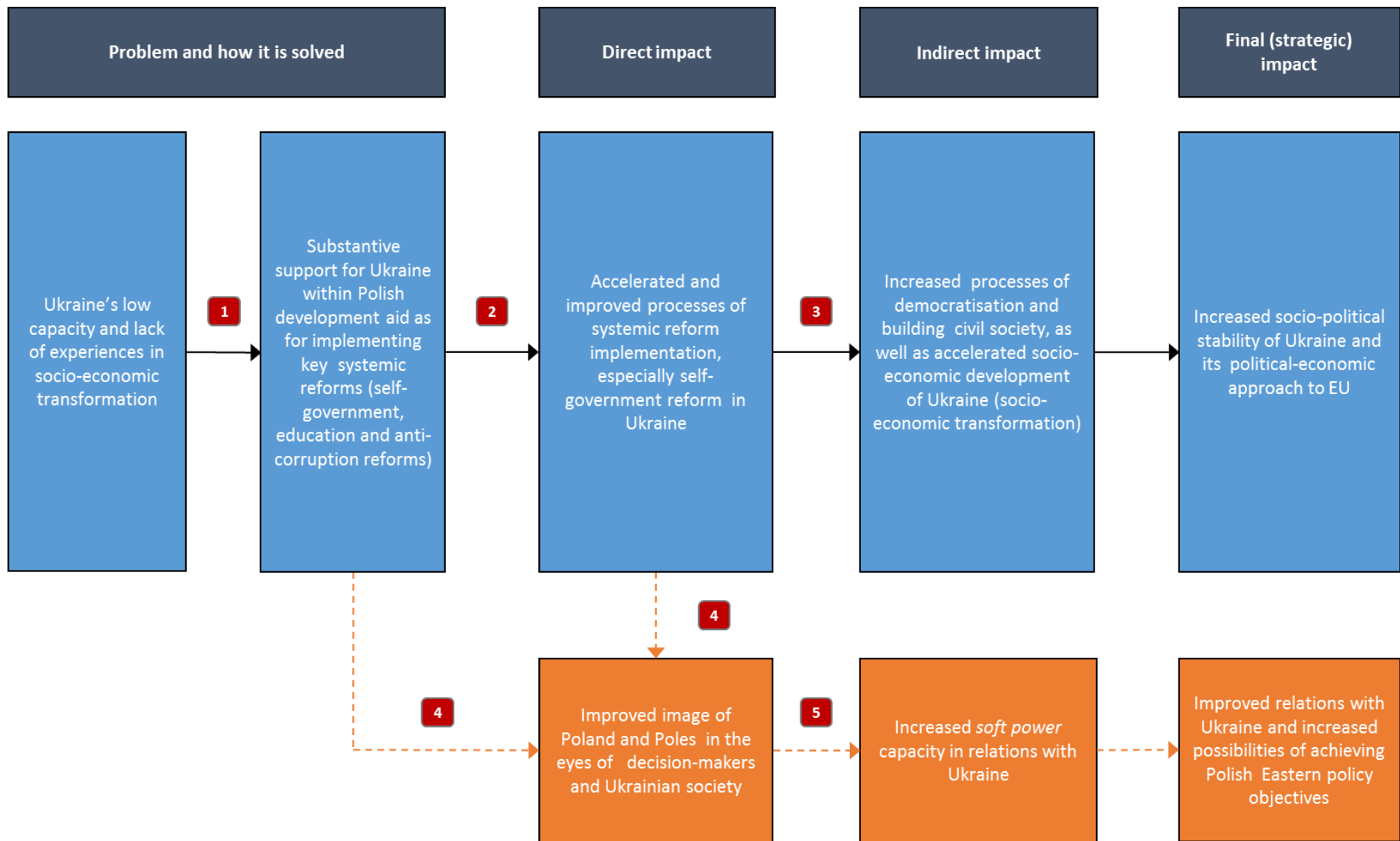
Problem and how it is solved		Direct impact	Indirect impact	Final (strategic) impact
Ukraine's low capacity and lack of experiences in socio-economic transformation	**1** → Substantive support for Ukraine within Polish development aid as for implementing key systemic reforms (self-government, education and anti-corruption reforms)	**2** → Accelerated and improved processes of systemic reform implementation, especially self-government reform in Ukraine	**3** → Increased processes of democratisation and building civil society, as well as accelerated socio-economic development of Ukraine (socio-economic transformation)	Increased socio-political stability of Ukraine and its political-economic approach to EU

4

Improved image of Poland and Poles in the eyes of decision-makers and Ukrainian society **5** → Increased *soft power* capacity in relations with Ukraine → Improved relations with Ukraine and increased possibilities of achieving Polish Eastern policy objectives

4

Diagram 1. Programme intervention logic for the support area evaluated under Component I

Source: Authors' own work

The above diagram shows that the main need and reasons for implementing Polish development aid in Ukraine is this country's low capacity (including barriers related to low social capital and corruption) and lack of experiences in effectively implementing key systemic reforms which are a necessary condition of the country's long-term socio-economic development and its closer integration with the European Union.

Poland responded to the needs of the Ukrainian party by implementing projects under Polish development aid which involve supporting the key systemic reforms in Ukraine **(1**). Within Component I, the research evaluation has taken account of 44 projects aimed at the support to decentralisation and self-government and education reforms, as well as to reforms which are to counteract 'money laundering' and build an effective anti-corruption system. The following instruments were used to provide substantive support:

- papers, analyses, expert reports
- study visits
- seminars
- conferences
- trainings and workshops
- publications and presentations on the initiatives taken in order to promote projects and present good practices
- informative and promotional activities

Following the adopted assumption, Polish support for Ukraine should make a substantive contribution to the acceleration of the systemic reforms implemented in Ukraine and to the improvement of their quality **(2)** and, consequently, it should indirectly lead to initiating and consolidating processes with regard to development, democratization and building civil society in this country **(3).** Such initiatives constitute one of the conditions for achieving a strategic objective of Polish foreign policy, which is Ukraine's increased socio-political stability and consequently Poland's increased security as well.

Another parallel objective of the Polish Aid Programme offered Ukraine is improving the image of Poland and Poles in the eyes of the Ukrainian society and the main decision-makers at the central and local levels**.** It helps to improve Polish-Ukrainian relations and increases the chances of achieving Polish foreign policy objectives.

II.2. IMPACT

Which projects or initiatives have had a particularly positive impact on programmes, development strategies, legislative documents or other documents of similar significance prepared or implemented by a beneficiary? (Which to the greatest extent?)

Has synergy between Polish projects/initiatives in the given area or in the given group of stakeholders been observed? (In what aspects?)

Did impact include benefits related to the so-called soft power diplomacy? (To what extent? /In what development initiatives in particular?) Which PDA initiatives were most effective in raising the visibility of the best Polish experiences and in promoting Poland's image as a valuable partner with stable development prospects? How can the correlation between Polish development aid in Ukraine and the achievement of the objectives of Polish foreign policy be strengthened?

II.2.1. OUTCOME ASSESSMENT

In Component I, the evaluation focused on a total of 44 projects, the vast majority of which (34 projects) were implemented by non-governmental organisations under the Poland-Canada Democracy Support Programme. Ten projects were implemented by three ministries, i.e. the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Finance, as well as the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the most active implementer of which is the MNE with five projects implemented so far.

All projects by non-governmental organisations and a chamber of commerce were implemented in partnership with Ukrainian non-governmental organisations. The partners' scope of responsibility was very varied, but the main tasks included the following:

- support for the project promoter as initiatives taken in Ukraine, such as recruiting participants of meetings, conferences and trainings
- information and promotion activities
- current supervision of local initiatives implementation, substantive support for project promoters, as well as active participation in project ventures, i.e. trainings, workshops and study visits

As for Component I of the research, the value of the projects implemented has amounted to over PLN 12.4 million[1] over the last three years. In 2014, the support was provided to 3 projects worth a total of PLN 734 thousand. In the year 2015, the amount of PLN 7.3million was allocated to 21 projects and in 2016, by contrast, 20 projects were implemented, but their budget was nearly half as big as in the previous year, i.e. PLN 4.4 million. The chart below presents the project values defined in the support applications and the actual expenditures incurred in particular years (chart 1.).

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[1] The information is based on the data available for 37 projects. It does not include the projects implemented directly by the SF PL, the data of which are unavailable to the evaluator.

Chart 1. Project values planned and settled in particular years
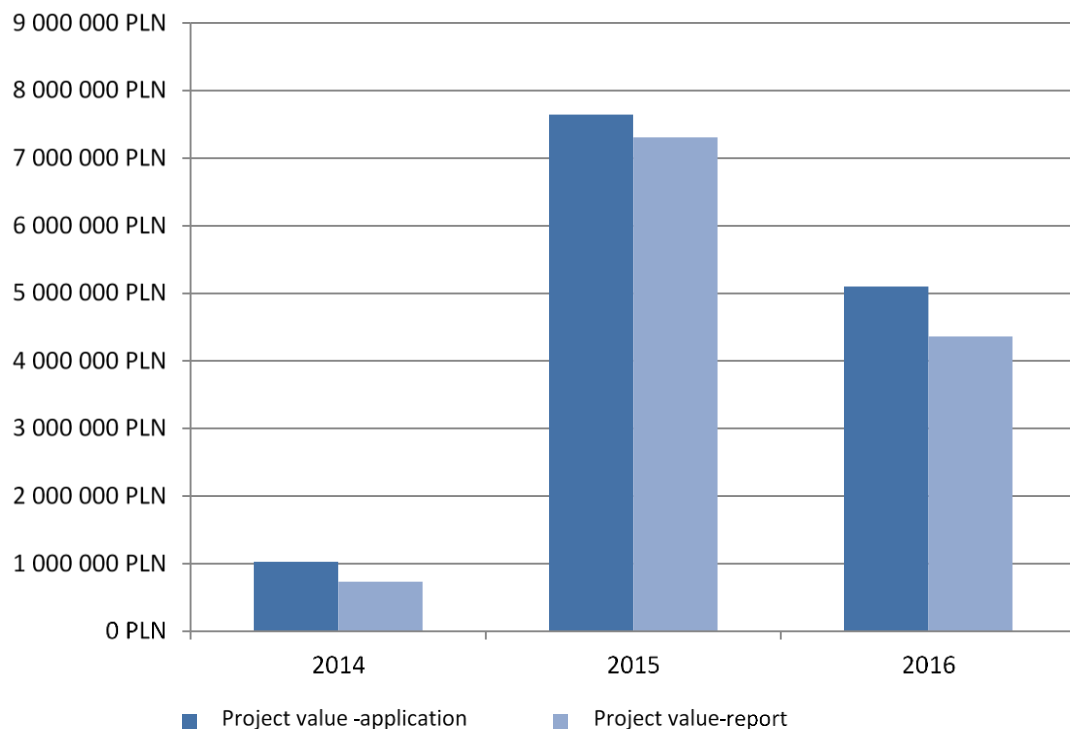
Source: Authors' own work based on conclusions and reports on project implementation

The fact that the available allocation for projects implemented within Component I has not been fully used resulted mainly from the lower costs of organising study visits, which consequently was due to having difficulty in estimating the exchange rate fluctuations or to a smaller number of visit participants. Also, in the process of implementing the projects their scope was changed, for example, it was decided that there was no need to publish a paper version of developments, which also caused the budget to be unused. Project promoters often changed the subject matter or project implementation schedule, which mostly had no effect on the budget, however, there were some cases that the decision to accept the changes was made late enough to make it possible to put an additional scope of the project subject matter in practice. What is more, savings related to tender procedures had an impact on the unused project budget.

The initiatives taken were addressed to a wide range of recipients, but in most cases the ultimate beneficiaries were: self-government administration, residents and non-governmental organisations.

Despite the fact that the available funds were not fully used, most indicators defined in applications were acheveed, and in many cases they were even considerably exceeded. As a result of the project implementation within Component I, over 8 thousand people have been trained. The trainings focused on varied subject matter, including: among other things, the following:

- decentralisation in practice
- principles of implementing public ventures by local self-governments and their cooperation with NGO representatives
- planning local development
- conducting a local diagnosis

- soft trainings : conducting public meetings, conducting a dialogue with residents, conducting public consultation
- preparing lessons based on interdisciplinary scenarios of classes on competence development – entrepreneurship and innovation
- creating new standards in curriculum development
- anti-discrimination trainings
- trainings on emergency intervention methods

The greatest number of people were trained as part of the project: *School Entrepreneurship Academy-3.* There were 5122 teachers, who completed a 20-hour training with a positive result and ran lessons with students using the set 'Lessons with entrepreneurship in the background'. The classes preparing for development of the key competence, which is entrepreneurship and

Chart 2. Number of project initiative participants[1]
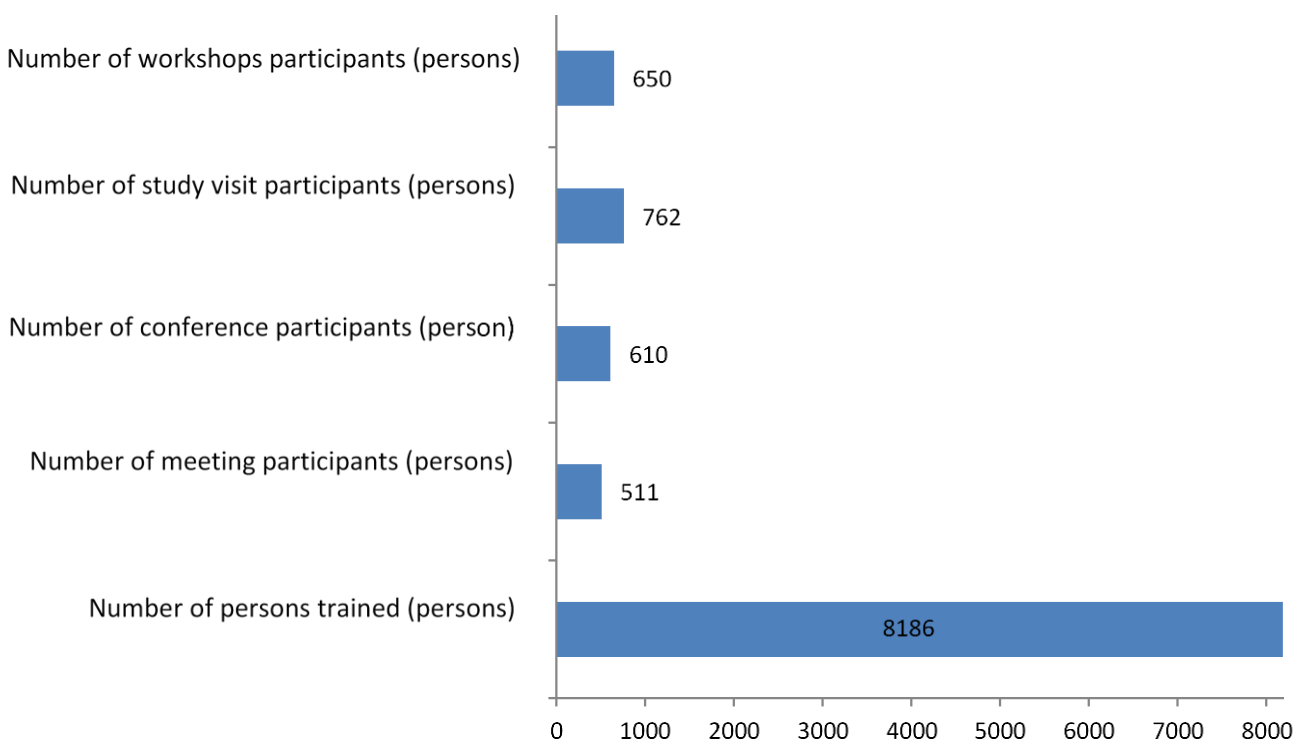
innovation, attracted over 72 thousand pupils.

Source: Authors' own work based on conclusions and reports on project implementation

The initiatives contributed to preparing and publishing a wide range of informative materials, reports and analyses (total circulation of over 12 thousand copies). Additionally, Polish experts supporting the self-government reform provided the Ukrainian party with approximately 10 compilations and expertise reports. The SF PL Office in Kiev worked out 7 analyses on: among other things, general situation in Ukraine, prospective areas of PL-DE-UA cooperation or unification of communes (*hromadas).* Over 600 people took part in conferences on the initiatives taken. Additionally, as a result of project implementation, over 200 expert and consultation groups were set up with the aim of making use of project outcomes and promoting the tools developed. A list of the project initiative participants is presented in terms of numbers in the above chart.

Also, consultations and advisory support have proven to be the project initiatives of great significance. Almost 1 thousand hours of consultations, as well as more than 30 various meetings were held. These figures were set following calculations based on accessible reporting data, however, the meetings and consultations with residents were also held, but they were not recorded so as not to burden citizens and so as to limit bureaucracy. In view of this, it can be concluded that both the number of consultation hours and the number of meetings were much higher in reality.

Impact assessment in the area of decentralisation

A major support area was underlined decentralisation. The value of the projects implemented in this area amounted to about PLN 9.5 million, i.e. 77% of the value of all projects implemented over 2014-2016. The projects implemented within this area were in the first place aimed at supporting the government administration in preparing the assumptions of a decentralisation reform. Those initiatives were coordinated by the Office of Solidarity Fund PL in Kiev and they were mostly targeted at the governmental administration. The activity of the Fund involved working with an expert team on s self-government reform in Ukraine, but also developing cooperation with other foreign donors, as well as organising internships, trainings and study visits for representatives of central and regional administration, self-government officials, experts, journalists and activists of non-governmental organisations as well.

Another key support area in respect of decentralisation was supporting self-governments and unified communes (*hromadas*) in implementing the decentralisation reform. These projects were implemented at the local level within the Polish-Canadian Cooperation Programme.

The project impact can be discussed with reference to the two levels:

- national level – support to the reforms at the national level (preparing reform assumptions, preparing for their implementation)
- local level - support to the implementation of solutions at the local level, mainly self-governments

The outcome assessment of Polish development aid in the area of decentralisation should be discussed in respect of the context in which the reform is implemented (more information on the issue of decentralisation reform can be found in the chapter discussing sustainability). The problem of decentralisation of power has been discussed for years, however the reform definitely accelerated in 2014, following the enthusiasm that burst out after the Revolution of Dignity. The fundamental directions for changes were defined in the document approved by the government of Ukraine in April 2014 entitled: *The Concept of Local Self-Government Reform and Territorial Organisation of Power in Ukraine*[2]. The decentralisation reform was strongly supported by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Regional Development. Since 2016 it has also been backed up by Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman, a former mayor of Vinnytsia and an advocate of self-government, who –in addition- is very well familiar with Polish experiences with regard to decentralisation. Unfortunately, despite the support to the self- government reform at the local level, the idea of decentralisation at the national level was regarded highly controversial. A particularly disputable question was the scope of power planned to be passed on to self-governments. The resistance to changes demonstrated by part of political elites and the fact that the changes proposed were also to be introduced in the regions occupied by separatists made the government fail to win in the Parliament 2/3 of the votes necessary to amend the Constitution. As a result, the mode of implementing the reform has changed.

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[2] http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/333-2014-%D1%80

It involved encouraging- by legal and financial instruments- voluntary unification of communes. A change in the mode of implementation has hindered the implementation of the reform as a whole[3].

In the year 2014, after the Ukrainian government extended the invitation, a group of Polish experts, was formed. They were to support Ukrainian administration in preparation of the decentralisation reform. Initially, the works of the experts were coordinated by the MFA, however, in 2015 this task was delegated to the Solidarity Fund PL, mainly due to more flexible management rules. Taking these initiatives was based on the Cooperation Agreement concluded between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Regional Development Construction and Communal Living of Ukraine with regard to support to the self-government reform in Ukraine.

The SF PL Office provided the Ukrainian party with expertise reports based on a particular demand expressed by the Ukrainian party. The contribution of Polish experts was of particularly great importance at the primary stage of developing fundamental assumptions of the decentralisation reform. As a result, the decentralisation assumptions adopted in Ukraine are very similar to the Polish ones, which was pointed out by the head of the group of experts working in Ukraine, Marcin Święcicki during his speech in Parliament:

> ' Here I must say that a very close affinity with the Polish model of constitution was adopted, which means that the levels of self-government are independent, they have their owns powers, there is no hierarchy, they have at their disposal their own funds that aren't sort of overall funds, but they are coordinated at their own level, they have their own property, supervision of self-government has only to do with compliance with the law and there is a possibility of appealing against it to court'.[4]

Other important areas related to decentralisation in which the contribution of the Polish experts was noticeable included the following:

- concept of voivode office and supervision of self-government
- decentralisation of public finance
- idea of unification of communes (*hromadas*) and the idea of hamlets

Representatives of the Polish party highlight almost at any interview the significance of the Polish decentralisation model to the works on Ukrainian solutions. These statements are confirmed by the provisions of Ukrainian documents. Polish experiences were referred to very often especially at the beginning of the decentralisation reform. The previous version of a portal informing about progress in decentralisation included a link to Polish reforms. The information presented there included the following:

- Polish experiences in water supply, waste water discharge and municipal waste treatment (publication of 23 Feb. 2016)
- History of introducing a decentralisation reform in Poland (publication of 3 March 2016)

In 2015 this portal also presented some publications on Polish experiences. Although these materials are not easily accessible in the new portal version, they can be found in the archives[5]. The publications discuss the Polish experiences in much detail and their main plot is the improved quality

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[3] B. Jarábik, Y. Yesmukhanova; *Ukraine's Slow Struggle for Decentralization;*
http://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/08/ukraine-s-slow-struggle-for-decentralization-pub-68219
(24.10.2017)
[4] http://swiecicki.blog.onet.pl/2015/10/12/moje-wsparcie-dla-reformy-samorzadowej-w-ukrainie/
[5] http://old.decentralization.gov.ua/news/tag/match/Pol==scha)

of public services and increased quality and standard of living in general ('Europeanness') as a result of the reform introduced.

The statement is confirmed in reports of international organisations, which also show that the reforms are based –to much extent- on Polish experiences, which is reflected in such elements as e.g. powers of *hromadas,* three-level administrative system of self-government and a qualitative approach to defining communes, districts and regions (*hromadas, raions, oblasts)[6].*

In view of this, it is clearly seen that at the primary period of decentralisation works the Ukrainian party was inspired by the Polish experiences. However, over time references to the Polish experiences were increasingly less frequent, which was pointed out by our respondents, as well as other donors and what is confirmed by a review of literature. Several factors have led to it.

Firstly, other donors have joined the decentralisation area over time- experts from other countries turned up and hence the poorer visibility of Polish experiences. As one respondent claims:

> *'(…) let's say this 2014 and the year 2015, indeed, there was a greater demand for Polish experts. But as early as 2015 experts from other different countries appeared and so did much bigger money that was behind them'.*

Secondly, the Polish experiences were referred to as rather an ideological justification of decentralisation, but in practice Polish inspirations are limited to the fundamental elements of decentralisation (e.g. three-level self-government). In the opinion of some researchers, the decentralisation model applied in practice resembled the Latvian model more, including the model-related problems. The main elements of resemblance between the Ukrainians and Latvian models are as follows:

- works on legal, fiscal and administrative aspects of the reform were stopped
- decentralisation reforms were based on voluntary cooperation of neighbouring administrative units, but their popularity and impacts were unsatisfactory
- units which were being created had many problems and they were far from perfect(particularly at the very beginning)[7]

It shows that when it comes to such a complex reform as decentralisation, different experiences are taken into consideration and adopted to local conditions.

According to another hypothesis, which cannot be ruled out, after the blockage of amendments in the constitution, much more emphasis was put on the support addressed directly to self-governments and to particular thematic areas (e.g. education, health care, security), as well as on the support to *hromadas,* which were being formed. It was the kind of support which was offered on a much larger scale by other donors operating in this area (although they often referred to the Polish experiences). Consequently, the visibility of Polish expertise deteriorated.

To sum up, it should be stated that the impact assessment of Polish development aid in Ukraine as for support to the decentralisation reform at the national level is ambiguous. The initially great

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[6] USAID (2014), *Local Governance And Decentralization Assessment: Implications of Proposed Reforms in Ukraine,* http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00k59f.pdf (24.10.2017 r.)

[7] V. Udovychenko, A. Melnychuk, O. Gnatiuk, P. Ostapenko (2017), *Decentralization reform in Ukraine: Assessment of the chosen transformation model;* European Spatial Research And Policy; Volume 24, Number 1 https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/j/esrp.2017.24.issue-1/esrp-2017-0002/esrp-2017-0002.pdf (24.10.2017)

success of Polish aid, which involved developing the reform assumptions, was blocked due to external factors. As a result, the power of Polish expert assistance has been definitely weakened.

Another division of initiatives concerned the support to the implementation of self-government reform at the local level.

Support to the implementation of self-government reform was included in two projects of the SF PL Office entitled: *Organisation of study visits, trainings and internships*. The project was implemented in cooperation with the Swiss programme DESPRO, which was aimed at supporting the decentralisation reform with a special emphasis on the quality improvement of public services (particularly in the area of water supply and developing a sewage system). The task of the Office was mainly to organise study visits to Poland, which were part of a more extensive support programme for local authorities in selected regions.

The result of the visits was mostly practical acquaintance of representatives of Ukrainian government and self-government administration with Polish solutions: their strengths and weaknesses. It enabled the representatives of the Ukrainian party to more consciously prepare and implement their reforms. It also positively influenced the image of Poland and Polish solutions. It is also worth paying attention to the fact that such a model of acting was quite efficient economically thanks to a significant contribution of the Swiss part. Unfortunately, any attempts to contact the visit participants which were made within the evaluation research failed[8], therefore it is difficult to assess the impact of those visits from their point of view.

In this respect, an important role was also played by the **Poland-Canada Democracy Support Programme (PCDSP)**, which involved the implementation of 40 projects, mainly local ones.

The projects were implemented in several areas:

- strengthened *hromadas* which were being formed (voluntary unions of administrative units)
- strengthened mechanisms of dialogue and participation of citizens in managing a local community, as well as activated members of social councils and non-governmental organisations in the making-decision process
- increased competence of officials and citizens in respect of cooperation with self-government, promoted positive outcomes of engaging society in decision-making, as well as possibilities of including society in the process of local development
- implemented participatory budgeting
- increased knowledge and competence of governmental and self-governmental officials in respect of challenges related to :
  - ➤ decentralisation, i.e. with regard to principles of funding, but also to advantages, prospects or consequences
  - ➤ management of self-government reform implementation

When it comes to intervention impact at the local level, the question of key significance is a social **change** which occurred following project implementation in the given local society, i.e. to what extent the project impact has translated into stakeholders' initiatives taken in practice. In this respect, particular impact categories cannot be considered separately (e.g. competences, strategic documents, changed attitudes). They should be taken into account altogether, as the conditions necessary for the change to be made, according to the diagram below.

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[8] Contact data unavailable

Diagram 2. Social change components in decentralisation
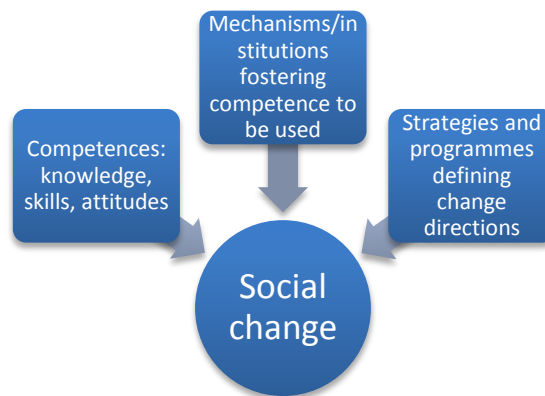
Source: Authors' own work

In view of this, the following impact categories are of key significance:

- **Competences** (knowledge, skills, attitudes) – in practice, particular elements of competences are closely connected -e.g. the acquired knowledge on civic dialogue mechanisms is insufficient if the skills of taking advantage of this knowledge in practice, and most importantly, attitudes- readiness to get engaged in a genuine (not seeming) dialogue and to build confidence between stakeholders at the local level are not changed. Obviously, it is much more difficult to measure and verify attitude changes, but in the long run they are very important in view of launching change mechanisms.
- **Mechanisms** – competences are insufficient if there is a lack of formalised mechanisms for using them. As for social dialogue and participation, it is essential that many partners should be engaged and in order to make their work effective, it is necessary to plan and implement proper processes involving stakeholders. Sometimes the implementation of such mechanism needs legal changes, however, it is often possible to base on the existing legal system (as it was with social councils).
- **Strategies and plans –** understood not only as documents (although a version in writing is often necessary), but also as deliberate modes of acting that aim to achieve the objectives planned.

Only combining the two (competences and mechanisms) or three elements allows to trigger social changes which seem to be particularly valuable due to their capacity to launch sustainable processes of democratisation and building civic society in Ukraine. While the research was being conducted, two example projects in which this type of impact was noticed were successfully identified. Both concern civic participation. In the course of implementing the projects, mutual distrust in the relations of authorities with local societies was disappearing until it was gone the moment the first impacts were felt. It happened within projects supporting the establishment and work of social councils, as well as the implementation of participatory budgeting.

Social councils were set up in the year 2007 and they were instruments of an apparent dialogue and participation. They were established as new entities, but they were composed of satellite organisations, loyal to the authority, and they mainly legitimized decisions made by local authorities. Within the project: *Active Social Councils*, this instrument was successfully revived and filled with new content. Polish experiences allowed representatives of the Ukrainian party (representatives of government and self-government administration) to see how it works in practice in Poland – how local self-government and citizens cooperate to solve a problem. As the project partner pointed out in an interview, they got convinced that the cooperation of this kind contributes to improving the living standard of local community. Such observations were motivating to the visit participants and

they turned out to be extremely helpful in practical implementation of the knowledge gained. So, the impact in this case is seen with regard to competences, including mainly attitudes: an approach to cooperation and partners has been changed, confidence has increased, a belief that cooperation is valuable and that it could bring positive impacts has appeared. All the above could confirm that a culture change has occurred.

Another respondent indicates the impacts on the implementation map: an agreement reached successfully at the local level and conditions provided for a dialogue between youths and self-government have become a basis for new ventures. Also, new solutions with regard to participatory budgeting are being worked out. So, these changes are clearly visible at the level of mechanisms – mechanisms of authentic dialogue and cooperation were worked out and then implemented.

The above mentioned impacts were observed at the level of single sites, whereas the project outcome essential to Ukraine as a whole was preparing and publishing a guidebook which - based on Polish experiences- took account of the Ukrainian realities.

A project impact is also preparing a team of Ukrainian experts (employees of a partner organisation) who get engaged in popularising the new approach to social councils in Ukraine after the project completion. However, there is no information available on the scale and effectiveness of their activity.

The other example refers to projects of the PAUCI Foundation on participatory budgeting. In this case, given the initial reservations of project recipients and favourable political circumstances, the idea of participatory budgeting has been successfully implemented: at first in three sites and then within the subsequent project in several further ones. A detailed description of the project is included in the report on benchmarking. It is worth paying attention to several key impacts:

- the project has overcome the unwillingness and distrust of social representatives towards mutual cooperation. Thanks to it, a dialogue between citizens and self-government reached a new partner-like level. As a result, it translates into self-government openness to citizens. Social consultations and meetings with citizens are organised more often. Moreover, communication with citizens has improved. Following such initiatives, in Cherkasy it was decided to prepare the City Development Strategic Plan till 2030. In the opinion of the project partner, it was the first step to restore confidence between citizens and officials, which paved the way to using forms of social participation which are different from participatory budgeting.
- residents have gained real power in implementing projects that they care about. It translates into citizens' engagement in implementing participatory budgeting in subsequent editions (more and more projects are notified). Moreover, citizens understand better how the budget works and how to prepare it, they are aware that everything has its price and everything cannot be implemented. Such awareness also has influenced the improved communication between citizens and officials. The citizens have got believed that they can be powerful, they can put their ideas into effect and suggest solutions. Additionally, it was possible to identify enthusiastic social activists willing to get engaged in different self-governmental initiatives.
- Officials have made sure that their work could have a social dimension. They learned how to talk to society, which improved the quality of their work. They also get engaged in the exchange of knowledge with other self-governments lacking in legal regulations in this respect. Other cities which have not participated in the projects contact them and request their expertise support, counselling, sharing experiences.

The above impacts show that the project has managed to successfully trigger change mechanisms including both broad competences of the process participants and implementation of new

mechanisms of self-government activity. Importantly enough (see more information in the chapter on sustainability), a new model of acting, i.e. participatory budgeting, is implemented in subsequent sites in Ukraine, but unfortunately without PDA participation and reputation.

Within the research, a variety of other impacts have been identified, such as preparing strategic documents, becoming familiar with Polish experience in self-government activity, improving competences of self-governments. In some cases, these initiatives translate into a change in the way self-governmental administration works, although the impact of this kind depends on a lot of factors, including: among other things, available funds, legal conditions, willingness of representatives of Ukrainian administration to make changes in the way they act. These problems have been discussed in the chapter on factors determining the Polish aid impact.

Also, it should be stated that the project impacts were unnoticeable at the national level. The projects were too small, short-lasting and too dispersed to bring visible impacts. **Therefore, the impacts can be discussed mainly at the local scale.** In view of this, in order to improve PDA efficiency with regard to supporting the decentralisation reform it is advisable to consider implementing a smaller number of projects with larger budgets and concentrated on selected thematic areas, which could trigger a social change. It also seems that the strengthening of PDA efficiency in this area would be fostered by preparing a cohesive strategy of the support to the reforms in Ukraine which would include initiatives taken at the national, regional and local levels and take account of coordination of initiatives with other donors.

Impact assessment in the area of education

Another important reform area, supported substantially by Poland, was **a reform of the Ukrainian education system.** PLN 2.7 million was allocated to this objective, which amounted to 22% of the funds for the projects analysed. The support to the education system reform over 2015-2016 was provided within the two interrelated ventures:

- Programme of the Centre for Education Development (CED): 'The New Ukrainian School (CED is a subordinate unit of the Ministry of National Education, which is why MNE is regarded as a formal project promoter)
- MNE Programme: 'Support to the education system reform in Ukraine'

The New Ukrainian School project was focused on developing a new curriculum, especially in respect of primary education. The MNE projects supported specific areas of education management, such as:

- External exams, particularly in the English language (2015)
- Curriculum (2015)
- Pedagogic supervision (2015)
- Education management in decentralisation conditions (2015)
- Vocational education (2016)
- Teacher training (2016)
- Education quality monitoring system (PISA) (2016)

As for the projects, the emphasis was mainly put on organising study visits of Ukrainian representatives to Poland, where they got acquainted with Polish experiences and -with the help of Polish experts- worked out solutions adequate to the situation. These initiatives fitted in with the education reform called 'The New Ukrainian School', which was just being launched in Ukraine (more information on the reform itself can be found in the chapter on relevance).

Within the evaluation research, several levels of impacts in the education area have been identified:

- Effects at the level of attitudes/ awareness

- Effects at the level of specific solutions/ outputs
- Effects at the level of competences

The level of attitudes and awareness, although difficult to be measured and verified, seems to be a key to the success of reforms in the Ukrainian education system and it constitutes a basis for more measurable impacts. At this level a major outcome- as it was highlighted by all beneficiary representatives - is a change in Ukrainian school philosophy, i.e. shifting from the school concentrated on passing on knowledge towards building the school focused on developing students' competences, i.e. apart from knowledge also skills and attitudes necessary to use the knowledge in practice. It is also related to developing key competences (e.g. communication), as well as general competences (e.g. solving problems, critical thinking, etc.).

> *'We hope that this new standard will change a direction of our education- from education based on knowledge towards education based on competences, using an active approach to education where teachers focus on developing skills rather than on memorising factual material. We also take account of some European recommendations regarding a competitive approach. We hope that in this way we can integrate our education system with the European system.'*
>
> *'A traditional approach is the approach oriented at knowledge, where the main teachers' and students' achievement is acquisition of new knowledge. As for the approach based on competences, it is important to develop skills and attitudes so as to use the gained knowledge. An example could be such skills- so important in the 21st century - as working out critical thinking, an ability to solve problems and another approach to doing research. Particularly, in the field of natural science it is development of scientific thinking. Important questions about the implementation of the new approach arise, i.e. how this new approached should be assessed, how to estimate the level of this new phenomenon.'*

Another impact is also directly connected to the above mentioned change and it refers to a change in the role ascribed to the teacher in the education process. In interviews Polish experts pointed out that a key matter was switching from the transmission model in which the teacher concentrates on putting knowledge across and then verifying it towards the model in which the teacher is responsible for organising an educational situation and the student becomes an active participant of the education process.

> *'because one of such problems, (….) is the question of changes in sort of awareness of teachers in Ukraine connected with the way they work with these kids, the question of switching from this transmission model (…) mostly to show that the student can be a person who gains this knowledge actively, and the teacher is an organiser of educational situations which foster this activity instead of being someone that gets this knowledge across in an authoritarian way, I would say.'*

It is also connected with increased autonomy of the teacher, who has more freedom in selecting teaching methods and educational contents.

An important thing is that in the project duration beneficiaries not only became familiar with a new approach to education, but they also actively put the above mentioned assumptions into practice by creating key documents implementing the reform in Ukraine. These changes were applied to a new curriculum developed for primary education within the project: 'The New Ukrainian School'. Importantly, this document was not developed by Polish experts but by a team of Ukrainian experts and practitioners supported by Polish experts. It resulted in a sense of ownership with regard to the outputs created and limited a risk of 'polonisation' of education in Ukraine.

In 2017 a new model programme based on the new curriculum has been developed, showing teachers in more detail how they can work with students.

In the school year 2017/2018, with the support of experts and practitioners, the new curriculum is to be introduced as a pilot programme in 100 schools and from 2018 on such an approach is to be commonly applied all over Ukraine.

However, it should be stressed that despite the fact that the impacts achieved were positively assessed, they did not satisfy all needs of the Ukrainian party. It is essential that curriculums for further education stages should be developed, particularly for secondary schools.

> *'We have started developing governmental educational standards in reality, the works are in progress, for the time being we have only concentrated on a curriculum for primary education. We have to continue initiatives related to the development of curriculums for secondary and higher schools.'*

These initiatives are still continued within the project which is being implemented now and they are tangible evidence of support complementarity.

Also, the development of guidelines for assessing the acquired competences, especially with regard to formative assessment is still a challenge.

The third level of impacts refers to new competences acquired by teachers and experts in respect of the new curriculum. The project participants are to ultimately train teachers at the schools where the pilot scheme is to be launched.

Within the research, the following modes of strengthening the impacts to be achieved in the future have been also identified:

- better recognition of recipients' needs – it often turned out at meetings/workshops that the recipients' needs concern new questions which were not considered at the stage of planning. It could result from the fact that the main emphasis was put on the needs of Ukrainian administration at the stage of planning, whereas taking account of other stakeholders' perspective was insufficient. Better recognition of their needs would allow to plan more relevant and effective support. On the other hand, the dynamics of projects arouses new questions - not always considered at the stage of diagnosing the needs – to come up and it is worth taking an insight into them. Therefore it is advisable to adopt a kind of flexible approach to the project.
- greater emphasis on the familiarity of representatives of the Ukrainian party with practical aspects of the education system functioning in Poland – e.g. by participating in visits and internships in institutions and schools that use new solutions. The education process of this kind turns out to be very effective and efficient. Also, such methods are highly thought of by the participants themselves because they allow to take a look at new solutions in practice and to fulfil some theoretical assumptions they learn about during trainings with practical activities. Obviously, exercising new competences, e.g. by undergoing internships in Polish schools and institutions would be even more effective.
- on-the-spot application of visit elements by Polish experts – the elements which help to observe implemented changed in practice at the level of school/institution. It would allow to immediately support change implementation, solve prospective problems, etc.
- academics considered in the projects as a target group – the interviews confirm that scientists dealing with education often represent quite conservative attitudes and they strongly oppose to the introduced changes. It is a barrier for reform implementation, particularly in view of the support to academic circles and teacher training.
- introduction of longer-lasting, more extensive and more complex projects which include not only single reform elements, but also the whole process of planning, preparing, implementing, monitoring, assessing and making possible corrections. These can be module projects, but implemented within broader, strategic frameworks.

Other elements are as follows:

- stronger coordination/cooperation with other donors in the area of education – in the course of the evaluation it turned out that Polish project promoters cooperate to a little extent with donors from other countries operating in the area of education. If such cooperation comes up, it is rather into the credit of the Ukrainian party or personal contacts of Polish experts.

Moreover, it is worth paying attention to other important elements of the education system reform in Ukraine which were supported within Polish development aid, such as:

- support to Ukraine in preparation for the international assessment of students' competences (PISA) coordinated by the OECD – it is a particularly important area in view of the education reform as it will allow to monitor the impact of the introduced changes . At the same time it will strengthen Ukraine's presence in international community. In this respect, Polish experts- well-experienced in the project- have transferred Polish experiences related to conducting this assessment research.
- support in implementation of a new model of teacher training – it is an extremely important supportive element to the implementation of the education system reform in Ukraine.

The two indicated areas are not definitely the only threads of the education system reform in Ukraine which can be developed by Poland as for providing knowledge and passing on experiences. The changes in education in Poland show that it is a multi-aspect question and it demands work to be done at the same time at many levels, which is why it is justified to continue the implementation of projects focusing on other elements of education system than the curriculum.

As for the other projects, they focused on the system of counteracting money laundering and financing terrorism and on strengthening the Ukrainian public finance system, and their total value did not exceed 1% of the value of all the project s. Training initiatives have increased competences of public administration staff at the central, regional and local levels with regard to transaction analyses, institution control and cooperation of FIUs, and in this way they have contributed to strengthening the system that prevents laundering money from crimes. These projects were not subject to an in-depth qualitative analysis, therefore any additional information in this respect- going behind the content presents in reports- has not been collected in the course of this evaluation.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The impact assessment of Polish development aid in Ukraine as for support to the decentralisation reform at the national level is ambiguous. The initially great success of Polish aid, which involved working out the reform assumptions, was blocked due to external factors. As a result, the power of Polish expert assistance has been definitely weakened.

2. The most efficient projects implemented within the PCDSPS are those which launch the process of social change contributing to democratisation of social and political life. Although the projects with such a capacity have been identified, it is worth stating that their impact range was mostly local.

3. As for the support to the education reform in Ukraine, the impacts have been observed at the level of attitudes/awareness, at the level of specific solutions/ outputs and at the level of competences.

4. The conclusions on the education reform implemented in Ukraine indicate that the improved initiative efficiency would be fostered by better recognition of recipients' needs and greater emphasis on the familiarity of representatives of the Ukrainian party with practical aspects of the education system functioning in Poland. The Ukrainian party is particularly interested in how the reforms introduced at the national level translate into everyday school work, which led to a spectacular success of Polish education following the 1999 reforms. Moreover, a great value could be achieveed by lengthening project durations so that the support will also include the stages of implementation, monitoring and impact assessment. It could be done through on-the-spot counselling provided by Polish experts in Ukraine. The project effectiveness could be increased by taking account of academics dealing with education science as a project target group, who now are perceived as hinderers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In order to improve PDA efficiency with regard to supporting the decentralisation reform it is advisable to consider implementing a smaller number of projects with larger budgets and concentrated on selected thematic areas, which could initiate a social change.

2. It also seems that the strengthening of PDA efficiency in this area would be fostered by preparing a cohesive strategy of the support to the reforms in Ukraine which would include initiatives taken at the national, regional and local levels and take account of coordination of initiatives with other donors. However, such a strategy would have to be flexible enough to adapt initiatives to the changing political situation in Ukraine.

3. It is recommended to introduce changes in how the education reform in Ukraine is implemented by developing longer-lasting, more extensive and more complex projects (module projects) implemented within broader strategic frameworks, which include not only single reform elements, but also the whole process of planning, preparing, implementing, monitoring, assessing and making possible corrections.

II.2.2. SYNERGY IMPACT

As for Polish development aid, complementarity of some initiatives can be observed, mainly due to continuation of project activities over subsequent years. As a result, a wider scope of initiatives was included in a new project or it was targeted at a new group of recipients. Additional PDA initiatives supplemented initiatives taken by other donors, which in some cases contributed to achieving additional impacts.

Such additional impacts were achieved as part of Polish development aid by including other donors in implemented ventures. An example of this cooperation is the project: *Civic dialogue- self-government cooperation – better quality of public services* implemented by the European Cooperation Centre Society. Within the project cooperation with DESPRO, the Swiss-Ukrainian project: *Decentralisation Support in Ukraine,* funded by the Swiss Confederation through Swiss Cooperation Office and implemented by the Swiss Centre for Resource and Consultation on Development (Skat). Following the cooperation (additional financial resources provided by DESPRO), it was possible to increase the number of participants of a study visit organised within the PDA project by 63%.

Another example of cooperation which led to obtaining additional outcomes was the project: *Strong local communities as a key to the success of self-government reform,* implemented by the Education for Democracy Foundation together with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED)[9]. The cooperation made it possible to organise additional trainings on local diagnosis and on work with local communities, which were aimed at strengthening a team of trainers. Within the project, the NED also organised additional inter-Ukrainian study visits, which helped to exchange experiences between project participants from different regions at the stage of taking local initiatives.

The initiatives which contribute to achieving synergy impact, taken within the evaluated projects, often involve using the experiences of previous projects for a more relevant diagnosis of the recipients' needs or for a continuation of the earlier activities. One of many examples is the project: *Ukrainian self-government track*, which used the experiences from other projects implemented in Vinnytsia region, i.e. *Creation of a model of administrative-territorial system reform for Vinnytsia region*, as well as *Optimisation of administrative-territorial system of Zhmerynka district in Vinnytsia region,* funded by DESPRO. Within the two projects, spatial and economic models of unification in Zhmeryka district were created and later those outcomes were used in the PDA project to design a strategy of unification of 7 neighbouring communes (*hromadas)* in Zhmerynka district, Vinnytsia region.

Similarly, experiences from previous projects were used in the project: *Civic dialogue clubs. Citizens' support to the self-government reform in Ukraine,* which was a continuation and extension of the following projects implemented earlier: *Transparent Ukraine in social dialogue* (2014) and *Building social approval of combating corruption* (2014). Following the projects, methods of social participation were introduced and clubs of dialogue were set up in 10 locations. As for the outcomes of the project implemented in 2015, 15 more clubs were established in other regions based on experiences from the previous edition.

With regard to the education reform, the greatest impact can be observed in the projects which are a continuation of initiatives started earlier. A good example could be two editions of the project: *Lessons with entrepreneurship in the background* which were the continuation of the project: *School Academy of Entrepreneurship*, implemented over 2012-2013. The gained experiences and well-tested

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[9] The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is an American private, nonprofit foundation dedicated to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world

schemes, as well as the forms of work and the demand from the Ukrainian party were taken into consideration in the subsequent project. At the first stage the initiatives were targeted at teachers of economic subjects, whereas the subsequent stages project initiatives were addressed to a larger group of teachers teaching subjects unrelated to economics. The important thing is that the projects were implemented almost nationwide and that a series of cascade trainings in 18 regional centres of teacher training has made the project impact 'spill over' a considerably larger number of teachers than those who participated directly in the project. The projects implemented in this way are continuous (cooperation has lasted since 2005) and they have been including an increasingly wide variety of issues, which can lead to achieving synergy impact.

In the area of strengthening public finance, the PDA projects were complementary to the initiatives taken earlier by other donors, for example, study visits to Warsaw and Kiev organised within the programme TAIEX[10] and dedicated to: among other things, an exchange of good practices in the field of counteracting money laundering, exchanging information between different agencies engaged in combating money laundering and terrorism funding, FIU cooperation with fiscal control bodies, etc. The projects funded within Polish development aid supplemented and extended the competences acquired previously by new areas, such as analyses of transactions which could be related to money laundering or terrorism funding, audits of institutions reporting on transactions or legislation counteracting money laundering and terrorism funding. At the same time, as a result of the project implementation in 2015, there was the demand for further broadening knowledge of Ukrainian officials in the area of the above mentioned issues. Therefore, in the following year it was decided to continue the project and extend its scope by additional information related to the role of other entities than the FIU in the Polish system of combating money laundering.

However, it should be stated that **achieving synergy impact is hindered by a lack of effective coordination between projects implemented in one support area, both between different project promoters and Polish implementers and other donors.** An example is projects implemented in the area of education. In fact they did not overlap, nor did they foster interactions which could result in working out the value added. Another example illustrating the limited PDA capacity of achieving synergy effects is closing down the SF PL Office in Kiev. Despite the fact that the Office was set up to coordinate and support a team of Polish experts dealing with centralisation, its role evolved over time and it seems that it should have been defined more clearly. On the whole, the analysis of different complementarity and synergy levels shows that there is a need for a tool which would allow to efficiently coordinate initiatives with other donors at the implementation level, to search for complementarity and opportunities of joining forces with the aim of achieving synergy impact. Such a function could be played by the Office, although its capacity would have to be strengthened.

As it is seen in the above analysis, support complementarity mostly means that the experiences gained in earlier projects are used to diagnose needs more relevantly and to take more and more efficient initiatives in implementing new projects. In some cases, if such a continuity is broken, it can lead to a loss of impact, e.g. in terms of image. An example is projects related to participatory budgeting.

Although they turned out to be a great success, the project which was to be the continuation of those initiatives have failed to be funded in 2017. However, it was not due to a deliberate decision made by the MFA or SF PL (PCDSP operator), but because of a dysfunction of the existent project selection mechanisms, which do not promote investments in the ventures that turned out to be successful even if there is a demand for the given kind of support reported by the Ukrainian party.

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[10] TAIEX – Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Office

Such projects have to compete with all other projects and the assessment is made by experts who may not be familiar with the specific venture. There are no solutions allowing to launch funding for the ventures which have proven to be effective and which can successfully promote the image of Poland, such as scoring bonus points for such ventures or launching a multiannual programme dedicated only to this issue. This case illustrates well the effect of excessive attachment to competitiveness, which poses a risk of wasting the capacity of well-tested solutions.

> 'The USA can afford to do it, they have multiannual contacts, it is a separate agency and they have a lot of money. In view of this, they study a problem, if they think it is interesting enough and it can have a big impact, so they go for it and make multiannual contracts. And the outcomes are that when I last went to Ukraine I watched a TV programme where a girl showed up who works now for USAID and well, she did mention that in 2015 the first civic budget was in Ukraine, but she didn't hint at it [Poland's participation – evaluator's note] *but moved to what USAID is doing. So it is that a person unfamiliar with the matter could make out that it was USAID in this 2015 introduced those….., whereas USAID came to us and not only found out, but also quarrelled with us and persuaded it was impossible'.*

The result of lack of funding and other donors entering this area is that the topic initiated by PDA projects, which could have become a Polish niche has been 'managed' by other donors and now is not commonly associated with Polish support.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Support complementarity mostly means that the experiences gained in earlier projects are used to diagnose needs more relevantly and to take more and more efficient initiatives in implementing new projects based on the collects experiences.

2. Some PDA initiatives were complementary to the initiatives taken earlier by other donors, which translated into the additional impact achieved.

3. Obtaining synergy impact is hindered by a lack of effective coordination between projects implemented in one support area, a discontinuity of project initiatives justified to be taken, as well as the unused capacity related to a lack of permanent presence in the support country, in this case absence of SF PL Office in Kiev.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To achieve synergy impact, it is important to strengthen coordination of initiatives in the given support area (e.g. through suitable ministries) between both PDA projects and initiatives of other donors. It requires strengthened incentives for such coordination and strengthened tools to facilitate such cooperation. Appropriate stimuli encouraging for better coordination involve articulating appropriate project selection criteria and MFA emphasis on project coordination. One of the instruments strengthening coordination can be the SF PL Office dealing with building relationships between projects (in this respect the strengthened function of a programme operator). It mainly refers to coordination of Polish projects and coordination of initiatives with other donors as well.

2. PDA support should be continued wherever the discontinuity of project implementation might lead to a loss of the impact achieved so far. In view of this, it is necessary to make amendments in project selection mechanisms involving: an analysis of the implemented projects in view of their capacity, modification of project selection criteria so that they will intensively promote projects whose great development capacity has been identified or launch a separate budget line for selected areas.

II.2.3. IMAGE IMPACT

The projects implemented as part of Component I have usually built a very positive image of Poland and Polish transformations among their recipients. Project participants, especially those taking part in study visits, had thought highly of Poland before they came here, but that positive opinion was even strengthened during the visits. Additionally, the positive image of Poland in Ukraine was strengthened by references to the Polish transformations in the project duration[11].

> 'The active multiannual support to Ukraine from Poland in recent years has considerably contributed to creating a friendly and positive image of Poles among Ukrainian society. The most significant programmes are those related to small towns and villages. One relatively small event organised in the village gathers a bigger audience and has a bigger impact than a video presentation on TV.

The question is to what extent the project impact translates into the strengthened image of Poland not only among project recipients (it is obvious that there are not many of them), but also in the whole society. In view of this, the project image impact has undergone an analysis. Within the research evaluation an analysis of data and media material has been conducted with reference to each implemented project, including Internet domains in Poland and- if possible- in Ukraine, as well as social networking media such as Facebook and YouTube.

The analysis shows that the projects implemented within Component I are mostly promoted through the websites of their project promoters and partners. Only in several cases there were some problems with finding information on project initiatives and it mainly referred to the projects implemented by Polish administration. Undoubtedly, projects within the Poland-Canada Democracy Support Programme stand out positively (although with one reservation as for clear identification of a donor – see p. 32).

Having reviewed the media data, it is clear that in respect of promotion of Polish activity within Component II, one source which could collect information on the initiatives taken is missing. Such a role could be played by the portal polskapomoc.gov.pl, however, apart from a list of the implemented projects along with the highlighted fund values and beneficiaries' names, it is possible to find there detailed information only on selected projects. It also lacks in interesting descriptions of project outcomes.

Also, the websites of Polish diplomatic missions in Ukraine are not sources of detailed information on Polish activity. Subsites dedicated to Polish development cooperation contain only general information on this subject and links to other websites dedicated to this subject matter, without any possibility of getting acquainted with project details. In the section of current affairs there is, by contrast, up-to-date information not including the period which is evaluated in this research. Some shortages of information on the projects are also evident on the SF PL site, which will be discussed further below.

Within Component I, 43 projects altogether underwent an analysis. In the case of 9 of them, it was impossible to find detailed information on any websites, neither on any subsites found on the official Internet websites of their beneficiaries nor on separate sites which would be dedicated to the given project. Two of them, however, are just mentioned (only their names appear) on the site www.polskapomoc.gov.pl as projects implemented by government administration (Ministry of Finance)[12]. Nevertheless, it is worth stating that it does not mean that information on the given project is not available on the Internet at all. The fact that there is a problem with searching for it

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[11] http://obserwatormiedzynarodowy.pl/2016/07/06/miekka-sila-polski-co-widac-znad-dniepru/
[12] *Strengthening of the Ukrainian system of public finance* and *Strengthening of the Ukrainian system of combating money laundering and terrorism funding*

implies that the average user will also find it difficult, which finally might make them stop searching. Consequently, it might negatively influence the visibility of Polish aid initiatives and recognition of Poland as a donor operating in Ukraine.

A different case has been observed with reference to 5 projects which were implemented in 2015 and 2016 by the SF PL and which concerned the activity of the Foundation Office in Kiev, organisation of study visits, internships and the activity of the expert team. On the SF PL websites it was not possible to identify separated information on the projects, yet hints about initiatives taken within their frameworks (surely not all) appear in current affairs and they concern, e.g. organising study visits. However, it is difficult to clearly ascribe this dispersed information to these specific projects, which weakens a perspective image impact of these initiatives.

Information on the other 34 evaluated projects can be easily found on websites and social media, although they differ in the approach to how the information is presented.

Chart 3. Modes of presenting information on projects within component I
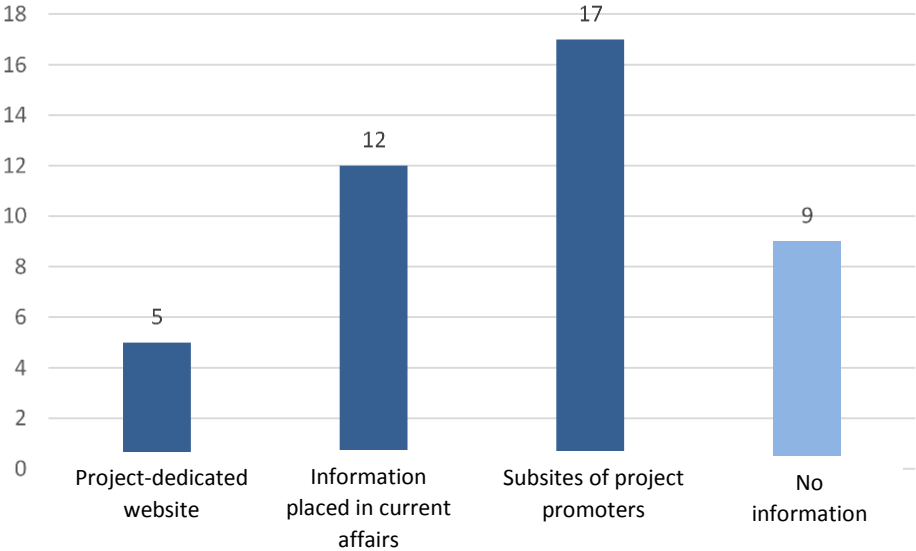
Source: Authors' own work based on website analysis

In the case of 5 projects, separate websites, dedicated to their initiatives were in operation. At http://polishproject.nus.org.ua/home-neptun-type/ it was possible to find information on the project *'The New Ukrainian School'[13]*, whereas the portal http://decentralizationnow.eu describes initiatives within the two subsequent editions of the project: *Decentralisation in practice.* On the occasion of implementing the project: *Together for development – activation of local communities in newly-established territorial units of Dnipropetrovsk region in the process of decentralisation and development planning* the portal http://officereform.dp.ua/ was launched with the aim of promoting and informing on the project process. Also, current teaching materials worked out in cooperation with Ukrainian self-governments can be found here. As for the project: *Training and creating anti-discrimination network of Ukrainian non-governmental organisations,* the website http://gendernaobservatoriya.dobrawola.eu/ is referred to as the official project site. It is still active, however it shows no content if the note *„головна"* (main) is not added to the address. The average used can find it difficult to get to some information on the project.

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[13] It is a positive example as for an aesthetic value and functionality of websites created for projects.

As for the other projects, 17 of them are promoted on the websites of project promoters, whereas information on the other 12 is published in the form of newsletters/current news on the websites of both project promoters and partners. These pieces of information are, however, varied, depending on the project promoter's approach and in this respect a kind of standardisation would be advisable.

In the case of 3 projects, no detailed descriptions were put on the site. In the two projects (*Ukrainian self-government – citizen standard* and *Ukrainian administration in the future)* the reason could be changing the website of the project promoter, which is the Foundation of International Initiatives. Nevertheless, a hint at the two projects, which are evaluated, is found in a summary of international project activity of the Foundation. More detailed information on the project: *Ukrainian administration of the future* is placed in the Ukrainian langue on the administration website of Zhytomyr region.

Only in the case of one project[14] there is no information about the donor. On the project promoter's website only general information can be found and after clicking the link the site is not displayed. Perhaps it is due to the fact that - as constituted at mid-October 2017- the project promoter had only a temporary website[15]. The situation was much worse when it comes to the presence of Polish aid logotype. It appears in 18 projects but 25 projects lack in it.

As for identification of the donor, PCDSP projects are worth being commented on. If we move on to the description of particular projects from the main SF PL site, at first we come across a general description including some information on donors. But if we search in the Internet data on particular projects then, as a rule, we are redirected to the SF PL site with a description of the given project but unfortunately, such information is not included there. If the average user looking for information on the project could find such a hint under each project described on the SF PL Fund, they would get the information much faster than if they started with the search engine.

The effects of initiatives taken are described in the case of 21 projects, however, the detail level is very varied. Beneficiaries, by contrast, are described in30 projects. Any information on further cooperation, project continuation or possible relationships with other Polish projects is rare. Only in the case of two projects, it was possible to successfully come across a reference to the partner's site. Links to media information are also difficult to be found. For 15 projects, it is possible to find on the Internet photo documentation that presents project initiatives. The materials developed in the project implementation are accessible in the case of 10 projects and they include: among other things, presentations, evaluation reports, a report describing good practices, handbooks developed to address project needs and other educational materials. The detail level of the information on projects can be regarded as satisfactory, however, the presented above shortages in project descriptions could weaken the prospective image impact of initiatives taken in Ukraine.

Activity in social media was identified in 13 projects. Most frequently, it is related to information on taking project initiatives included on fan pages of implementing organisations, profiles of experts engaged in project ventures or participating entities. In the case of 20 projects implemented within the Poland-Canada Democracy Support Programme, some material can be also found on the Ukrainian sites of local self-government units and organisations participating in project ventures: among other things, descriptions of selected project initiatives, photos and videos, information on

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[14] *Cooperation of administration and non-governmental organisation for providing social services*
[15] It was due to rearranging the original website in connection with the failure of the company which hosted the site.

meetings. Eight projects were also presented in separate footage on You Tube[16]. Furthermore, one project was described in articles published in two editions of the local newspaper Niva[17].

Unfortunately, Polish development cooperation projects are poorly visible in Polish and Ukrainian media and in this respect it would be advisable to take some measures which would result in popularisation of knowledge on the support provided by Poland to Ukraine. In view of this, it is worth taking account of organisation of trainings for project promoters on cooperation with the media.

The analysis of media data in Component I has revealed that the main source of information on Poland's activity in Ukraine within development cooperation is the websites of Polish project promoters/partners. Although the content is properly presented, it should be stated that, as for the mode of publishing information on the above mentioned websites, no minimum standards have been adopted, i.e. the adopted form and scope of presenting information depends on the approach of the entities taking part in project implementation. As a result, the visibility of the effects of implementing Polish development cooperation is worse, contrary to the situation in which such informative-promotional activities were conducted in a more orderly way.

In order to improve clarity and recognition of the Polish PDA support, it is suggested that the approach to presenting information on the aid should be more uniform. The coverage of Polish projects on websites should:

- depict projects outcomes on the websites more thoroughly (presenting figures and numbers, but also in a way showing them from the point of view of individual recipients)
- contain, depending on the project specificity, project outputs presented in the form to be downloaded, such as training material, reports, or at least bulletins or informative leaflets
- include Polish aid logotypes and information on the donor
- include links to the partners' websites along with information on the partner (provided that such websites exist)
- inform about prospective plans of continuing the initiatives taken in the project or about connections with other projects
- be available for some time after the project completion, also in case the project promoter has their site changed (proper migration of contents from the old site to the new one).

In order to put the above mentioned assumptions into effect, it could be advisable to consider working out guidelines for project promoters, which would include minimum requirements regarding the scope and mode of presenting information on websites, as well as good examples taken from the experiences of other donors/other projects. Also, it could be a good idea to take account of organising trainings for project promoters in this respect, including e-learning as well.

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[16] E.g. the projects: '*Good Governance in Odessa. Building NGO cooperation with city administration*', '*Participatory budgeting - chance of broadened civic activity and real partnership with public authorities*', '*Participatory budgeting –success of civic activity and public administration openness*', '*Active Social Council-support to cooperation of civic society with state administration in Cherkasy region*'.
[17] http://niva.zp.ua/assets/niva/pdf/2016/11/5_11_2.pdf
http://niva.zp.ua/assets/niva/pdf/2016/11/9_11_2.pdf

With a view to monitoring the visibility of information on Polish projects in the future, it is also suggested to modify the template of reporting form so that – like in the case of the projects implemented within the Poland-Canada Democracy Support Programme, financed by the governments of Poland and Canada – it will contain a field referring to IT technologies used within the project and to information on the project in the media. In the future, it will make it possible to more effectively get to the information on projects published in sources different from the websites.

At the same time it is worth considering creation of a platform which could collect information on implemented projects, where the minimum scope of information should be stated. A good basis for creating such a tool would be the website: www.polskapomoc.gov.pl, which now contains detailed information only on a few selected projects. Collecting such information in one spot not only would improve the visibility of the effects of Polish development aid, but it would also enable future project promoters to identify: among other things, prospective partners for their initiatives or to plan projects complementary to those already implemented.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The analysis of media data in Component I has revealed that the main source of information on Poland's activity in Ukraine within development cooperation is the websites of Polish project promoters/partners.

2. The content regarding the projects implemented is properly presented, however, it should be stated that, as for the mode of publishing information on the above mentioned websites, no minimum standards have been adopted, i.e. the form and scope of presenting information depends on the approach of the entities taking part in project implementation.

3. The Polish development cooperation projects are poorly visible in Polish and Ukrainian media and in this respect it would be advisable to take some measures which would result in popularisation of knowledge on the support provided by Poland to Ukraine

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In order to improve clarity and recognition of the Polish PDA support, it is suggested that the approach to presenting information on the aid should be more uniform. In order to put the above mentioned assumptions into effect, it could be advisable to consider working out guidelines for project promoters, which would include minimum requirements regarding the scope and mode of presenting information on websites, as well as good examples taken from the experiences of other donors/other Polish projects. Also, it could be a good idea to take account of organising trainings for project promoters in this respect, including e-learning as well.

2. With a view to monitoring the visibility of information on Polish projects in the future, it is also suggested to modify the template of reporting form so that – like in the case of the projects implemented within the Poland-Canada Democracy Support Programme, financed by the governments of Poland and Canada – it will contain a field referring to IT technologies used within the project and to information on the project in the media.

3. At the same time it is worth considering creation of a platform which could collect information on implemented projects, where the minimum scope of information should be stated.

4. It could be advisable to organise trainings on cooperation with the media for project promoters.

II.3. RELEVANCE

> **Which projects or initiatives have met Ukraine's needs defined in strategic and programming documents to the greatest extent?**

The relevance of Polish development aid in Ukraine could be considered in two basic dimensions:

- **strategic,** defining how much Polish ventures fit in with the main strategic assumptions and objectives of Ukrainian public policies, as well as with the assumptions of the main reforms and the current social, economic and political situation
- **operational,** showing to what extent particular projects relevantly address the main recipients' needs, whether the outputs and outcomes are useful to them and whether the projects contribute to solving problems and socio-economic challenges diagnosed earlier.

Strategic relevance of Polish development aid in Ukraine

An analysis of Ukraine's main development objectives and strategic priorities and structural reforms which result from them can be an introduction to the relevance assessment of Polish development aid.

Strategic development priorities of Ukraine

The strategy of sustainable development of Ukraine entitled 'Ukraine -2020', presented at the beginning of 2015, is a document which defines Ukraine's key development priorities[18]. It defines 4 vectors of development of the country over 5 years. They are as follows:

- Vector of development – it mostly refers to economic questions (taking account of environmental protection)
- Vector of security – including not only border security, but also issues related to counteracting corruption, social security, life and health, as well as ecological security protection
- Vector of responsibility – it concerns the state's responsibility with regard to citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin, skin colour, political or religious views, etc. This vector also covers the question of making citizens be closer to the process of making decisions on local matters.
- Vector of pride – it involves creating conditions in which citizens would take pride in their own country, its history, culture, science and sport, but also conditions for mutual respect and tolerance.

Each of the above mentioned vectors has defined an area in which reforms and special development programmes (altogether over 50) were supposed to be launched. They are: a judicial reform, decentralisation combined with a territorial system reform and a health care reform. The priorities did not include the education reform, but it is just being implemented and it covers the whole teaching system, ranging from pre-school to higher education. A reform of pension scheme, which is also in progress, is not among the priority reforms, either.

Also, information on Ukraine's development priorities can be found in analytical materials attached to the annual address of the President of Ukraine[19], published by the National Institute of Strategic Studies, as well as on the websites of the National Reform Council[20] (NRC).

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[18] The document was approved by the decree of the President of Ukraine of 12 Jan. 2015
[19] http://www.niss.gov.ua, links to analitical materials at http://www.niss.gov.ua/articles/1855/ (9.10.2017)
[20] http://reforms.in.ua/ua/reformy (9.10.2017)

The National Reform Council is a coordination body established to set priorities and coordinate the reforms implemented in Ukraine. As mentioned before, there are many reforms being launched in parallel, therefore it seems that such a body is necessary. The National Council is very big, as it consists of 62 people, including the most important people in the state (President, Prime Minister, Parliament President), dealing with current management. Thus, it is clear that this body cannot fulfil a real coordination function. Having read the information published by the NRC, it is possible to find out which proposed and planned reforms are really priority ones and are in progress and which reforms have a chance of being launched in the near future. Among them there are the following:

- decentralisation – in short, it is a reform of the territorial system of Ukraine which involves passing on much more power and funds to self-governments than it is now. The reform has been implemented since 2015. Transferring power and financial resources to new self-governments is a gradual process which is launched after voluntary merging the existent self-governmental structures into bigger consolidated communes called *hromadas (*об'єднані територіальні громади).
- reform of education system – it concerns all levels of education, ranging from pre-school and primary to secondary and higher education. It seems that the reform of secondary education, initiated in 2017 according to a law of 5 Sep. 2017, is the most spectacular. It assumes a variety of significant changes, especially the lengthened period of education from 11 to 12 years, a complex change of school curriculums and handbooks, as well as an optimised network of educational institutions, which is important in view of self-government budgeting. Secondary education is funded within the budgets of consolidated territorial communes (*hromadas).*
- reform of health care system – the reform concept was presented at the end of 2016. Its fundamental principle is 'money follows the patient'. The reform introduces a 'state-guaranteed package' of medical services and materials which will be covered from the state budget funds. The content of such a package is to be approved by the government every year.

The analytical material of the National Institute of Strategic Studies, developed for the President every year, also contains information about the pension scheme reform, which was described particularly extensively since the beginning of 2017[21]. The pension scheme is to be transformed into a funded scheme, but no time frameworks or deadlines have as yet been defined. At present, according to the quoted analytical material, in Ukraine reviewing and ordering the functioning Pension Fund (so as to decrease its huge deficit) and creating databases of pensioners are in progress. Interestingly, this reform is not even mentioned on the websites of the National Reform Council or in the strategy "Ukraine -2020", although since 2015 many legal regulations aimed at the new pension scheme have been put in force.

Decentralisation

Of the above described Ukrainian reforms regarded as priority ones, the decentralisation reform is most advanced, aiming to create a new system of state management. The reform involves merging (voluntary) the existent self-government structures (rural and urban councils)[22], establishing consolidated units (*hromadas)* and electing their new authorities. In the future perspective, the tasks and powers of particular levels of self-governmental authorities (three levels are foreseen) are to be divided pursuant to legal regulations in line with the principle of subsidiarity. Following the data

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[21] http://www.niss.gov.ua/articles/2684/ (11.10.2017, p.397.)
[22] To be more precise, in the Ukrainian system there are 3 types of councils at the lowest level of self-government: village council (сільська рада), settlement council (селищна рада, рада селища міського типу) and city council (міська рада).

presented at http://decentralization.gov.ua/5_steps (11.10.2107), the ultimate administrative division of Ukraine is to include 27 regions (*oblasts)*, 120-150 districts (*raions)* and 1500-1800 communes *(hromadas)*.

By the end of 2017 the law 'on foundations of the administrative-territorial system of Ukraine is due to be enacted; it is to regulate: among other things, powers of government and self-government bodies, as well as other issues related to centralisation.

By the mid-October 2017, 665 consolidated *hromadas* were set up and they comprise 20% of the country surface and 10% of the population. 252 of them have not elected new authorities yet.

Reform of education system[23]

As mentioned before, the reform includes changes at all education levels (in Ukraine higher education is also subject to the ministry of education). At the lowest level the following changes are planned:

Pre-school education:

- Providing access to pre-school education at the place of residence
- Creating pre-education infrastructure by providing the same conditions for the activity of all pre-school institutions.

Secondary comprehensive education (in Ukraine this is the next level after pre-school education):

- structural education reform – introducing 12-year comprehensive school with profiled senior classes (class 11 and 12)
- comprehensive renewal of curriculums and handbooks
- separation of education quality control and provision of access to education in the education management system
- optimisation of the education institutions' network

This school year a new curriculum was introduced as part of a pilot programme in 100 schools, which received special support from the central authorities (secondary education is funded from the budgets of consolidated *hromadas,* whereas teachers' salaries are paid for by the state). The pilot programme involves conducting trainings for teachers. E-learning courses were developed. The pilot schools were provided with a set of teaching materials based on the new curriculums.

Changing the system of education management is related to the decentralisation reform- before it was launched education had been included in the task scope of government administration at the district (*raion*) level (*raion* is a counterpart of Polish *powiat*; in Ukraine at this level government and self-government powers meets).

Documents on the education reform do not refer to Polish experiences at all (any other foreign experiences are not mentioned either). However, it does not mean that the Polish experiences in this field are unknown in Ukraine. A description of the Polish education system reform is found in the publication entitled "How things are there. Polish experiences in the secondary education reform[24]".

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[23] Information source : http://reforms.in.ua/ua/reformy/reforma-osvity (21.10.2017)
[24] https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/2015/10/25/202280/ (21.10.2017). Published on 25.10.2015 . The article written by Hałyna Tytysz.

Polish development projects vs. Strategic objectives and assumptions of structural reforms in Ukraine

In the area of decentralisation support, the PDA projects have fitted in with the reforms being launched and they supported implementing provisions of legal regulations on the decentralisation and self-government reform.

In 2010, the resolution of the Council of Ministers of Ukraine 'On provision of public participation in formulation and implementation of public policy' made citizens be able to participate in governance, which means it facilitated establishing the so-called social council which -pursuant to the law -are an instrument of engaging society in regional policy. Nevertheless, these councils did not have a real impact on the decisions made by authorities and they were insignificant. In 2014 Ukraine ratified the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority. This document was the basis for implementing in self-governments participatory solutions based on European standards.

The PDA projects aimed at development of civic society and increased public participation in the decision-making process fit in with the assumptions of the above mentioned documents. An example is the projects implemented by the Foundation OKNO NA WSCHÓD: *Active Social Councils- support to cooperation of civic society with government administration in Cherkasy region* and *Active Social Councils II –support to cooperation of civic society with local self-government and government administration in Ukraine,* which were mainly aimed at the increased role of the existent social councils by rising their powers as for using instruments enabling to monitor and control authorities, methods and good practices regarding cooperation of social councils with administration, or conducting public consultation. It was also important to increase –within the projects - the awareness of decision-makers as for building relations between society and administration based on a dialogue.

Another legal regulation that supports the self-government reform is *The Law on voluntary unification of territorial communes*, which paved the way to the establishment of financially self-dependent and effectively operating *hromadas.* It also allows to create a bottom-up mechanism of operating for territorial communities. An example project which responded to challenges newly-established *hromadas* faced up with was the project related to the support for preparing strategic documents defining development directions for the unified *hromadas* in 22 regions of Ukraine and setting priority areas for the years to come. Another example is the project: *Increased participation of residents in strategic planning and in the planning of rendering public services in newly-unified* hromadas *in Ukraine.* It was aimed at supporting local self-governments in their preparation for making full use of the new powers gained as the result of decentralisation reforms, as well as at increasing residents' participation in strategic planning, taking as an example 5 pilot *hromadas* where *Strategic development directions for the* Hromada were worked out.

In the area of education, the only strategic document for the education reform is *The Concept of education development 2015-2025,* developed by the Strategic Advisory Group (an expert team supporting the Ukrainian MND). However, this document is quite general and therefore one of the projects: *Support to the education system reform in Ukraine* focused on working out recommendations for: a system of monitoring education quality, teacher training, and a reform of the system of vocational education. Also, the project: *The New Ukrainian School* was concentrated on the support to Ukrainian experts working out new principles of creating educational contents aimed at achieving particular didactical goals related to key competences.

With reference to higher education, a significant legal act is *The Law on Higher Education of Ukraine*, enacted in 2014, and the resulting from it *National Strategy of Higher Education Development.* The project: *Innovative university and leadership* supported the higher education system reform by initiatives targeted at the development of new staff managing the higher education system in Ukraine, which will be able to support the transfer and implementation of innovative European know-how in Ukrainian educational practice.

The analysis presented above shows that **the assumptions, objectives and thematic scope of Polish development aid is cohesive with the main strategic objectives of Ukraine and that PDA relevantly fits in with the planned and implemented structural reforms.** The support provided by Poland in the area of decentralisation and self-government reform, as well as in the area of education reform should be assessed as relevant. The overall positive assessment of strategic relevance is not influenced by the ambiguous support impact in the area of self-government reform at the central level, as mentioned above. It is due to the fact that -in this respect- the achieved outcomes, smaller than the expected, did not result from the wrong diagnosis at the strategic level, but they were conditioned by independent political factors which were beyond the programme impact.
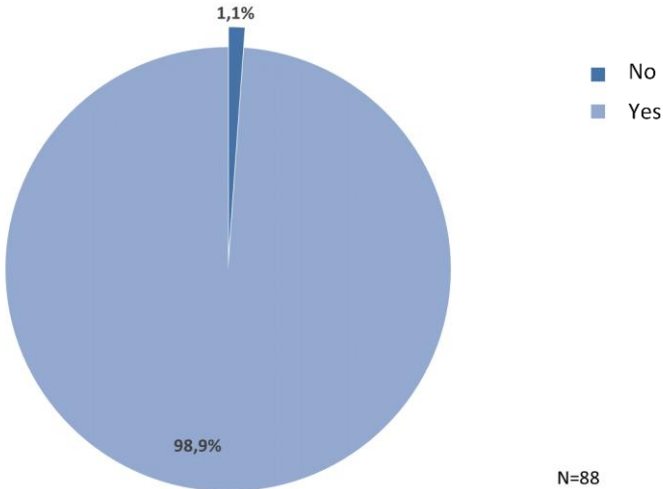
It should be stated that the high relevance of Polish development aid in Ukraine in a strategic dimension is closely connected to a similar geopolitical situation of Poland and Ukraine and to **'**historic community of transformation experiences', which is often referred to by the respondents. It translates into a possibility of a more relevant diagnosis of the needs and into an ability to work out practical modes of solving the problems and socio-economic challenges the Polish party experienced at the stage of system transformation (during interviews the beneficiaries referred to Poland as *' an elder sister who has succeeded')*.

Also, as for ensuring the appropriate level of adequacy of the aid, the direct contacts and engagement of decision makers at the central level played an important role. A special attention should be paid to: among other things, an active role of Ukrainian minister of education Lydia Hryniewicz, whose direct engagement in project preparation allowed to cohesively and relevantly fit Polish development aid in Ukraine's overall initiatives in this area.

The high relevance of the Polish support for the reforms in Ukraine is reflected in the results of a questionnaire survey in which the beneficiaries had no doubts about it. In fact, all of them pointed out that the Polish projects fitted in with reform initiatives of the Ukrainian authorities (chart 4).

Chart 4. Assessment of the Polish support relevance as a response to the reform needs

Do you think the project has contributed to supporting the reforms in Ukraine?

1,1%

98,9%

No
Yes

N=88

Source: Authors' own work based on CAWI results

It should be stated that in view of the support relevance, an initiative of the Ukrainian party (at a political level) was of key significance. It is representatives of the Ukrainian government who expressed interest in Polish expertise in the selected areas. The scope of this support was defined in detail at the political level as well.
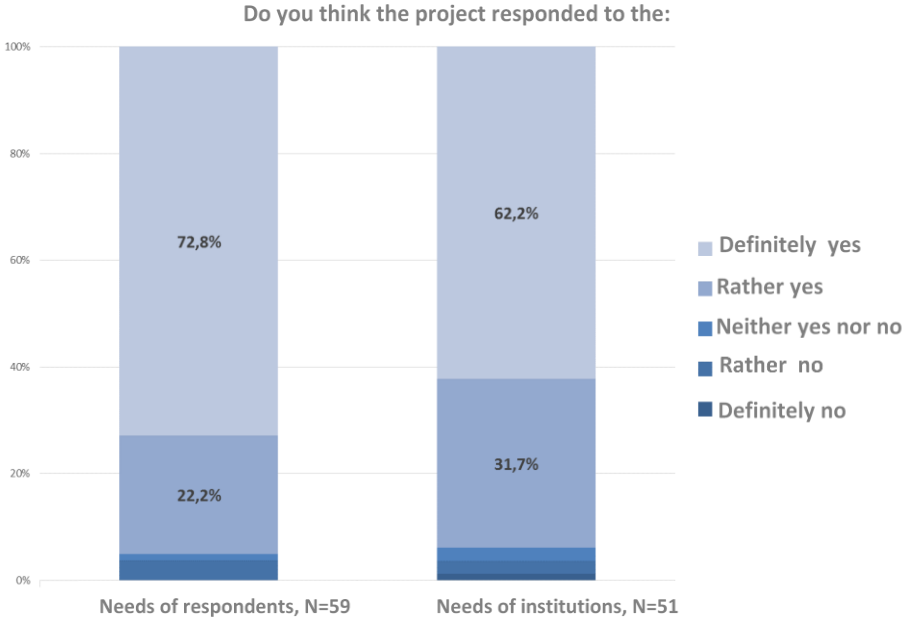
All considered, **it is particularly advisable to continue the support the decentralisation and education reforms.** However, it is necessary to define – in cooperation with the Ukrainian administration and other donors – a detailed scope of further initiatives in the two areas. Moreover, it is essential that the mechanism of coordinating initiatives with other donors should be strengthened in these areas.

As for support relevance, it is important to constantly monitor the situation in Ukraine in view of the planned and implemented reforms so as to adjust Polish development aid to Ukraine's changing needs. Following the results of such monitoring, **bilateral relations at the level of particular ministries- which could effectively contribute to launching and preparing development aid programmes –** should be strengthened. In the course of the research several areas, regarded by Ukraine as priority, have been identified. They are the reforms of higher education, health care and pension scheme. Poland has a lot of experiences in each area which are worth sharing. Initiating, supporting and monitoring the relations of this kind should be a task of the MFA. Additionally, it is recommended **to conduct in-depth interim analyses of the needs of the Ukrainian party in particular areas** (by independent experts), which should consider the perspective of a bigger group of stakeholders other than Ukrainian administration. Such analyses should be conducted in the areas which have development capacity.

Operational relevance of Polish development aid (at the level of implemented projects)

Polish development aid in Ukraine responded relevantly to the needs of beneficiaries and the whole communities, also at the level of particular projects. It is confirmed by the survey results according to which over 90% of beneficiaries point out that their needs were properly addressed (chart 5).

Chart 5. Assessment of the Polish support relevance as a response to the needs of the institution/respondent

Do you think the project responded to the:

Legend:
- Definitely yes
- Rather yes
- Neither yes nor no
- Rather no
- Definitely no

Needs of respondents, N=59: 72,8% / 22,2%
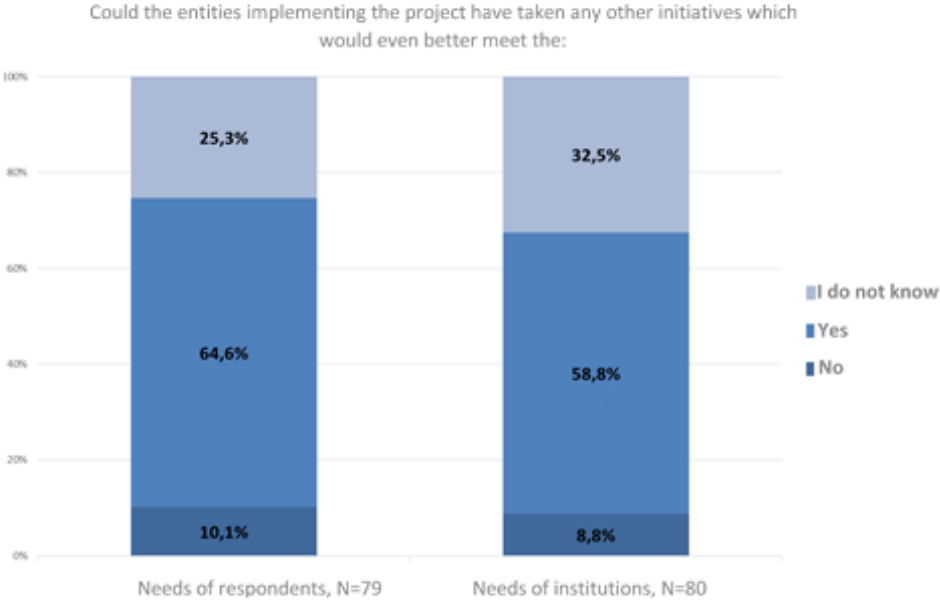Needs of institutions, N=51: 62,2% / 31,7%

Source: Authors' own work based on CAWI results

It should be pointed out that the high relevance refers to the needs of individual respondents, as well as the institutions they work in. It is evidence of the relevant diagnosis and the complexity of solutions used within the projects. Adjustment of the support to the needs of institutions constitutes a significant factor fostering the support sustainability and broader impact.

A distinctive feature of the Polish aid programme in Ukraine is that socio-economic needs of the support recipients considerably exceed the financial and operational capacity of the Polish projects. It is confirmed by the results of the questionnaire survey (chart 6)

**Chart 6. Assessment of meeting the needs of the respondent/institution**

Could the entities implementing the project have taken any other initiatives which would even better meet the:

Legend:
- I do not know
- Yes
- No

Needs of respondents, N=79: 25,3% / 64,6% / 10,1%
Needs of institutions, N=80: 32,5% / 58,8% / 8,8%

Source: Authors' own work based on CAWI results

42

The above results - showing that over half the respondents point to other initiatives which could meet the recipients' need – are not evidence of poor relevance (it is confirmed by the results of the same survey and by individual interviews), but they rather depict the scale of Ukraine's needs in the ongoing process of systemic transformation. It is also confirmed by the results of interviews with project implementers and beneficiaries in Ukraine, who very often emphasized that the demand for support considerably exceeded the project assumptions. It concerned a number of participants in meetings, trainings and other initiatives within the projects, as well as a territorial range of ventures (e.g. changing project assumptions as for participatory budgeting and extending its range by additional sites).

The critical condition for ensuring the proper level of meeting the support recipients' needs was **a complex diagnosis conducted correctly** before the project started. The results of the survey confirm that the diagnoses preceding the project implementation identified effectively the needs of support recipients.

Chart 7. Assessment of need identification (respondent/institution)

Were the following needs identified before the project/venture implementation:
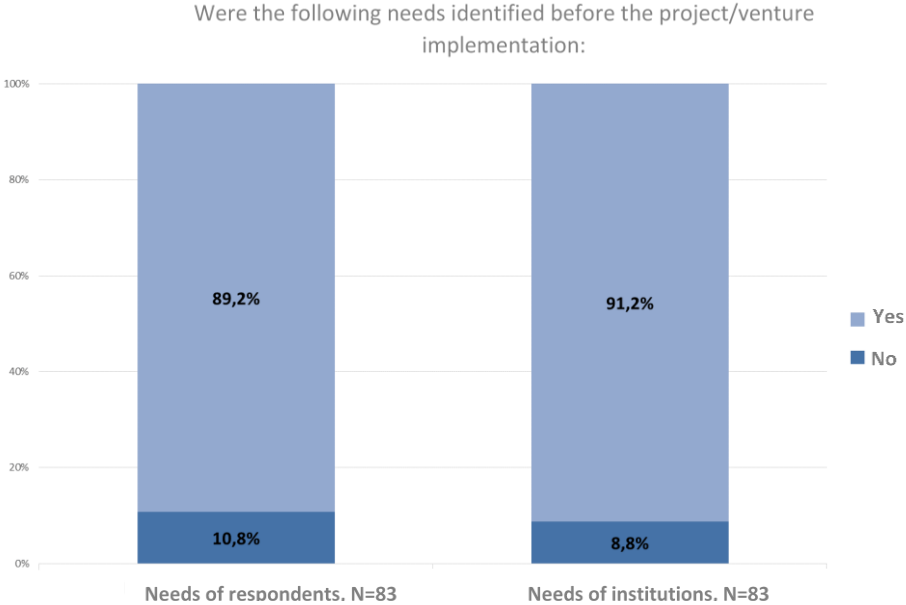
Source: Authors' own work based on CAWI results

Nevertheless, the project success was not determined only by sheer fulfilling the duty of conducting the diagnosis, but also by its scope and mode of conducting. A participatory form of diagnosis should be regarded as particularly useful. It involves exploratory visits preceding project implementation, like in the case of the Poland-Canada Democracy Support Programme or educational projects implemented by the MNE. It allows to recognise needs from the perspective of various stakeholders.

The relevant **diagnosis was fostered by the experience and earlier contacts of Polish organisations with the Ukrainian party.** The interviews made indicate that the projects the Ukrainian party was most interested in were implemented by Polish entities which have a **several- or more than dozen – year experience in cooperation with Ukrainian party,** as well as an extensive network of private and professional contacts. An important factor contributing to the increased support relevance was the substantive capacity of Polish institutions, which was in most cases the result of define specialisation (like in educational projects, e.g. within *Support to the education system reform in Ukraine).*

Due to the demand of the Ukrainian party for practical solutions which are directly applicable to specific and current social problems, an important factor determining the aid adequacy was its **practical dimension:**

> *'It is worth mentioning that people conducting trainings and seminars were practitioners, not theorists. We had the impression that their words could be easily translated into practical actions and that made us sure that those ideas could really be implemented in Ukraine. That faith turned out to be even stronger when we saw with our own eyes how those ideas were effectively implemented in Poland'*

> *'Coaches who took part in this project and conducted activities were very knowledgeable, they were not only theorists, but they have also implemented these solutions.'*

The practical dimension of the projects resulted directly from the implementation capacity of Polish institutions. Higher relevance was a characteristic of the ventures implemented by organisations with practical experience in implementing the proposed solutions:

> *It seems to me that there should be **organisations that have implemented what they recommend.** If we want to recommend a participatory management model, it would be good to have such a management model, as one must admit that **they just pick up immediately any inauthenticity,** they do not value what is theoretical, or sort of book-like. If we show that we recommend a certain model of training directors, so it would be good to show that we work with our directors just in this way.*

Another factor fostering the support relevance was an ability to verify and update the diagnosis after confronting it with the real conditions of project implementation. **Flexibility of response and adaptation of projects to the Ukrainian national and local specificity** resulted in more effective meeting the needs of the ultimate aid recipients. The flexibility and ability to adapt to the current situation also constituted one of basic competitive advantages of Polish development aid as compared to other donors in Ukraine.

> *'(…) because these procedures, there is transparency, it is written nicely, but on the other hand it bothers, they stick to these procedures so firmly that, God forbid, one should go out of the framework…. We here are more flexible. The point is to respond to the demand, not only that if we've planned something and we get hold of it only. We are sort of quick in action, we don't have to wait very long to start any action – if we had such procedures as just these big programmes from the West, we wouldn't have implemented any project.'*

To conclude, the most important factors determining the relevance of Polish development aid in Ukraine are:

- Correct and complex diagnosis conducted before the project commencement
- Experience in the given area and earlier contacts of Polish organisations with Ukrainian entities (better familiarity with realities)
- Practical dimension of the solutions proposed
- Flexibility of Polish organisations as for initiatives taken within the project.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Polish development aid in Ukraine with regard to supporting fundamental systemic reforms is characterised by a relatively high level of relevance, and consequently high utility to the ultimate support recipients, including institutional recipients. The Polish aid programme in Ukraine relevantly fitted in with Ukraine's strategic development objectives, as well as with the assumptions of the fundamental Ukrainian systemic reforms.

2. In view of relevance, contacts at the political level and adjustment of the support to the needs expressed directly by representatives of the Ukrainian party were of key significance. It concerned both decentralisation and the education reform.

3. The most relevant ventures were preceded by a complex diagnosis, including on-the-spot-visits, which were characterised by a high level of flexibility with regard to the assumptions in the process of project implementation.

4. One of the key factors fostering the support relevance and utility was good familiarity with the Ukrainian realities, resulting from the experience and earlier contacts of Polish organisations with Ukrainian partners.

5. The support relevance and utility were also fostered by practical solutions proposed within the projects and by the implementation experience of Polish organisations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is advisable to continue or even intensify the support in the two key areas: decentralisation and education reform.

2. It is important to constantly monitor the reforms implemented in Ukraine and to conduct interim in-depth analyses of the demand for the Polish support. Also, bilateral cooperation between ministries responsible for the areas identified as prospective cooperation areas could be significant.

3. Projects should be implemented by Polish organisations which have a practical experience in both the project subject matter (particularly implementation experience – i.e. organisations which have implemented what they recommend') and cooperation with partners from the Ukrainian party.

4. It is recommended to enable project promoters to detail the project concept at the primary stage of implementation, following on-the-spot visits and contacting prospective project recipients. It should particularly concern the projects/subjects which are implemented in Ukraine for the first time.

5. Project implementation principles should enable project promoters to flexibly adapt the scope of implemented ventures to the needs of the recipients emerging in the process of implementing practical ventures.

II.4. SUSTAINABILITY

Which initiatives supported within Polish development cooperation have had the most sustainable impact on the situation of beneficiaries?

The sustainability of Polish development aid provided to Ukraine is reflected in two types of effects. On the one hand, there are **tangible and directly applicable outputs**, such as new documents, expertise reports, solutions or procedures worked out, as well as direct effects of project implementation. On the other hand, there are **hard-to-measure sustainable soft effects,** such as a propensity to use the acquired knowledge and experience in everyday practice, to continue self-dependent analogous ventures after the project completion, or effects which involve building sustainable relations (personal and social networks). This group of effects also includes sustainable changes in attitudes and awareness, which translate into changes in the way project participants -or in many cases -whole societies function. These effects are particularly valuable and desirable for launching long-term processes of socio-economic development, democratisation and building civic society in Ukraine.

As the starting point for a long-term assessment of Polish development aid in Ukraine in the area of self-government reform and education reform, below there are presented selected examples of sustainable and directly applicable outputs of the projects implemented:

Self-government reform and decentralisation

- expertise reports provided to the Ukrainian party with the support of the SF PL Office in Kiev
- **strategic documents** worked out together with authority representatives and local communities (e.g. 22 development strategies for the united *hromadas* in 22 regions of Ukraine prepared within the projects: *Ukrainian administration of the future* or *Regional programme of civic society development in Cherkasy region till 2019)*
- practical publications in the form of **handbooks and guidebooks** for administration and citizens (e.g. the guidebook of implementing participatory budgeting : *Participatory budgeting- a guidebook of the pilot edition of participatory budgeting in the city of Sambor* accessible on a website, or *Handbook of Model Social Council: Social Council Navigator)*
- developed **procedures** which can be sustainably applicable in the long run (e.g. procedures of notifying and selecting projects on participatory budgeting or principles of cooperating the authorities of the city of Odessa with non-governmental organisations within the project: *Good governance in Odessa. Building NGO cooperation with city administration)*
- local **legal acts** (e.g. draft regulations on participatory budgeting or rules of procedures with regard to functioning social councils)
- new **institutions** (e.g. social councils and advisory groups)
- **Internet sites** dedicated to projects (e.g. the website on Facebook, which apart from playing an informative –promotional role is also a forum of contacting experts, created within the project: *Decentralisation in practice II. Poland's experience in decentralisation and self-government education for the leaders of 7* hromadas *in 7 regions of central Ukraine)*

Education reform

- **reform fascicles** within the project: *The New Ukrainian School* including **the education reform assumptions,** including a curriculum reform in Ukraine, as well as **a concept of Curriculum** and its main assumptions, worked out by experts

- **model solutions** for formulating normative ministerial regulations, prepared within the project: *Innovative university and leadership*
- **recommendations** worked out within the project: *Support to the education system reform in Ukraine* for the Ukrainian education system and including an analysis of the present solutions, as well as a proposal of new solutions to be introduced

Initiatives taken within the projects and their direct outputs translate into less tangible but sustainable changes of more extensive and long-lasting changes. Here are such sustainable effects of Polish aid in Ukraine:

- application of the acquired knowledge and experience in everyday personal and professional practice
- changes in attitudes and awareness of decision makers and citizens within local communities participating in the projects
- continuity and extension of ventures initiated within the projects (the-so called *spill-over effects)*
- networking effects in the form of building new networks of relations (building relational and social capital)

As beneficiaries declare, one of the most visible aspects of the sustainability of Polish development aid is **high practical utility of the knowledge acquired within the projects.** Actually, all beneficiaries of the support participating in the survey (about 98%) indicate the importance of the gained experience to their everyday professional practice (chart 8).

Chart 8. Use of knowledge/solutions/ skills/ material worked out in the project after its completion

Do you use knowledge/skills/materials worked out in the project after its completion?

2,4%

97,6%

- No
- Yes

N=83
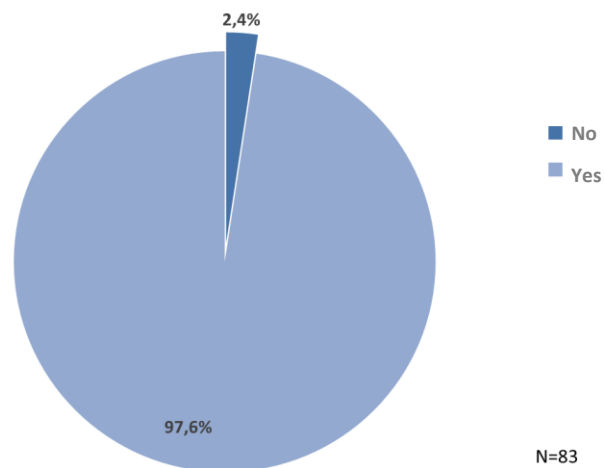
Source: Authors' own work

It concerns the projects aimed at supporting both the self-government reform and the education reform:

'When it comes to sharing the knowledge gained in Poland, it usually happens during seminars and meetings with supervisors and teachers. Because we have to do with institutions of higher education, not schools, we have an opportunity to invite such specialists to our pilot programme, comprising 100 schools.'

'Using the gained knowledge and skills is at a very high level'.

'I've learnt how to talk to people who have a different point of view. This change has significantly improved my lifestyle and the quality of work.'

'Practical experience is important because I can use it in practice with teachers and I can put this knowledge across to other people so as to be able to create an educational programme, plan a curriculum, etc. I think that this is an invaluable experience and I'm really happy that I could take part in this project.'

Moreover, it is necessary to point out that in the case of projects aimed at supporting the education reform, the impact sustainability, which is particularly reflected in practical use of the acquired knowledge and experience, is additionally strengthened due to parallel and effective implementation of systemic changes.

'New educational standards, including those concerning vocational education, are to the Ministry an absolute priority, set by the government and thanks to it this task will be completely implemented, The experiences acquired during this visit will be fully used'.

In view of the programme sustainability, it is **changes in attitudes and awareness thanks to which positive processes are sustained in a longer perspective** that are particularly valuable and desirable. The changes of attitudes also result in the extended scope of using the skills gained within the projects. A good example confirming the sustainability of such ventures is the project: *Active Social Councils- support to cooperation of civic society with government administration in Cherkasy region.* The survey conducted among the support beneficiaries in Ukraine has shown that the project implementation has brought in a distinctive and sustainable change in relations between the authority and the local community. The consistent implementation of the project assumptions allowed to build mutual confidence and set a sustainable standard which is active and formalized public participation in implementing local public policies:

'The idea of dialogue between the society and the authority, adopted in the process of project implementation, is now the primary compound of every activity. It is used in 100% of cases.'

Moreover, the change in attitudes and the improvement of mutual relations of the authority with the society have translated into everyday use of many additional forms of consultations and contacts with the local community, including informal contacts. Undeniably, the project has contributed sustainably to building civic society at the local level of this specific community. The sustainability of the solutions used it is confirmed by consequent application and consolidation of worked out principles and standards:

'Newly-implemented modes of cooperation between the commune council and the government had more and more supporters, who never before had participated in the project. The councils are still very active, which means that the experience gained has a long-lasting impact.'

As for the sustainability of 'self-governmental projects, particular attention should be paid to those supporting launching and implementing participatory budgeting, such as *Participatory budgeting as a chance for broadened citizens' activity and real partnership with the authority.* Due it their specificity,

which is a chance of including a large number of people in implementation of local public policies, the projects of this kind were characterised by a high level of sustainability. It mostly concerns the effects such as changes in social attitudes, including those among representatives of local authorities in particular (respondents point out that thanks to the project the authorities have stopped treating social proposals as competitive ones to their own ventures):

> *'A change in paradigm is one of the most important project outcome. Our beneficiaries and we were sceptical. Average citizens were asked to present their opinion and they admitted not being ignored (as it had been previously, even if somebody asked for the opinion, they went waste).I think that it was the first step – of many necessary steps towards restored trust between citizens and the local authority.'*

The impact sustainability also depends on whether the developed and implemented **outputs are used in a longer perspective and whether the scope of their use broadens.** As mentioned before, this sustainability dimension is especially visible in ventures aimed at supporting the education reform in Ukraine. In this case, sustainability is fostered by a priority, complex and systemic approach to the reform and consequently, the use of the Polish aid products is more efficient. It refers to: among other things, the new curriculum (already mentioned in the previous chapter), worked out within Polish development aid. It is due to be implemented in the year 2018.The impact sustainability in the area of education is also fostered by the high sustainability of the aid assumptions, worked out together by the Polish and Ukrainian parties. Thanks to I, the projects fitted in with the priority tasks which were already being implemented and thus they consolidated positive processes within the education system reform:

> *'We want to continue works on developing educational standards and take part in PISA, even if we don't get support from Polish Aid. These are our current priorities, even if it took more time, if it were more complicated and less effective.'*

Furthermore, the support in the area of education generated additional sustainable effects. Participants of educational projects use their outcomes also within other ventures and projects implemented in their everyday professional practice after project initiatives have been completed:

> *'I work as a coach and instruct teachers how to efficiently use information technologies. Thanks to this project I have deepened, broadened and implemented my own voluntary project, i.e. Creation and assessment of own critical thinking in assessing Internet sources'.'*

Also, as for the projects aimed at supporting self-government reform, a long-term use of the development aid outputs can be noticed. In the case of the projects on participatory budgeting, such solutions have become common practice in many offices which participated in them. A similar situation is observed in the ventures that increase citizens' participation in decision-making processes at the local level, where the developed models – assuming the functioning of social councils- are used in everyday practice. An important aspect of sustainability is the so-called *spill-over effect*, which means that the ideas and practices worked out within projects spread to other recipients and other local centres. It is visible: among other things, in the projects related to implementation of participatory budgeting. Numerous local centres are interested in implementing this kind of solutions on their own area. As a result, it was necessary to expand the range of the project -implemented by the PAUCI Foundation – by additional cities. Moreover, Polish development aid has contributed to creating quite a big community interested in the idea of civic budgets in Ukraine (about 1300 active discussion participants on an Internet forum dedicated to this subject).The Polish projects of this kind have also an impact on sustainable changes in legal regulations related to budgeting management at the local level.

The impact sustainability is also determined by **a range and strength of relations built as a result of aid project implementation.** The survey results, particularly interviews conducted in Ukraine, show that these sustainable aid effects are numerous and very important. The character of proposed solutions (particularly their innovation, which forces cooperation and efficient communication) and the way in which the projects are implemented (in most cases based on instruments assuming direct contact, such as study visits) fostered initiating contacts and establishing relations. Polish aid projects have contributed to building sustainable social networks not only at the local level. Numerous formal and informal networks of cooperation have been set up and they included experts, representatives of authorities and local communities. The interview results show that after the project completion the intensity of interaction between participant's remains at a high level and its range widens:
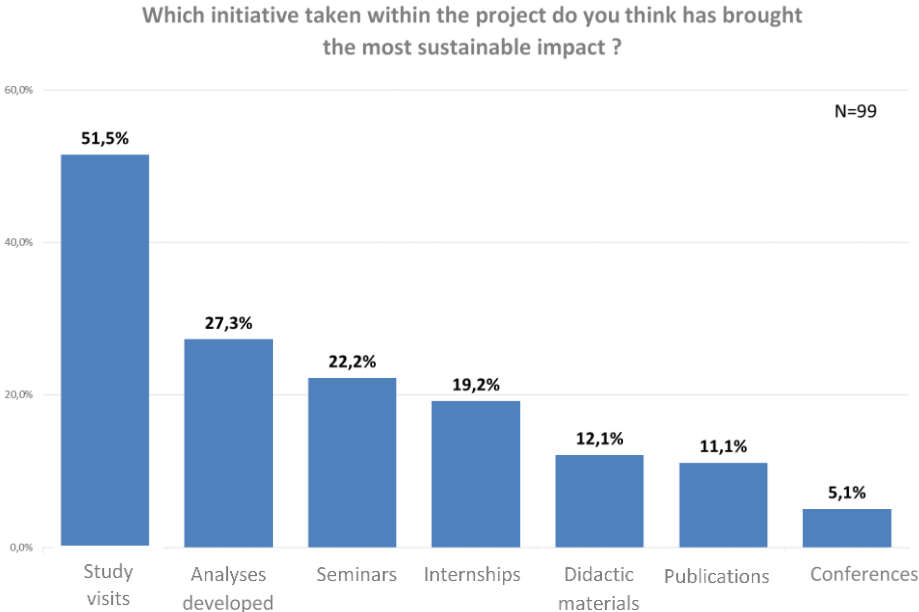
> *'Now we see that the project participants [beneficiaries} from different districts and regions cooperate and share their knowledge and experience: when they know that a neighbouring community has the same problem, they will be able to contact them and see what has been done. We didn't expect such effects of creating a bond between them.'*

> *'Now we have a strong partnership with commune officials and their communities. We also set up a network of experts: many members of working groups have become our experts, whom we invite within other projects to share knowledge with communes from other regions.'*

In this context, **a lack of institutional empowerment and work discontinuity of the SF PL Office** in Kiev **should be indicated as a factor deteriorating the support sustainability within the programme in the area of self-government reform.** A lack of sustainable structures that facilitate a continuation and extension of initiatives launched within the project will make it difficult or impossible to take advantage of the contact networks and institutional memory. There is a high risk that the outputs developed within the activity of the Office (legislative documents, expertise reports, analyses, developments) will not be used in the optimal scope.

At the level of particular support instruments used within PDA in Ukraine participants of the survey pointed to study visits as those which brought the most sustainable outcomes (Chart 9).

Chart 9. Assessment of project initiative sustainability

Which initiative taken within the project do you think has brought the most sustainable impact ?

N=99

Study visits 51,5% — Analyses developed 27,3% — Seminars 22,2% — Internships 19,2% — Didactic materials 12,1% — Publications 11,1% — Conferences 5,1%

Source: Authors' own work

Such an indication is strongly connected to the specificity of study visits and the character of the above described effects of project implementation, which is confirmed in the conducted interviews. The most important support outcomes include soft effects which refer to a change in attitudes and awareness, as well as to a propensity to use the gained knowledge in practice. The most adequate instruments to trigger such changes are initiatives involving direct and practical contact in the real environment (e.g. study visits). The interview results show that study visits have led to real changes in attitudes and contributed to numerous additional effects, often unrelated to the project subject matter (e.g. building a football pitch for youths to train, a counterpart of to the so-called orlik in Poland, was the effect of an informal observation within a study visit with regard decentralisation).

However, it should be stated that high effectiveness of study visits as a support instrument depends on the way they are organised and the requirements that must be met by their participants. The results of the qualitative research (including interviews with project coordinators in particular) show that an important factor determining the effectiveness of study visits is ensuring follow-up initiatives, which should be taken after the visits with the aim of further transferring the acquired knowledge (including formal requirements which, e.g. would oblige the participants to implement or transfer the acquired knowledge after their return).

The research results indicate that the main **factors (barriers) decreasing the sustainability** of obtained PDA outcomes in Ukraine are as follows:

- **limited financial resources** of support recipients, which makes it impossible to implement all developed solutions
- too short **a project duration** and **insufficiently extended implementation elements** of the projects (i.e. a lack of support to developed solutions to be implemented)
- **low level of public trust** (in this context a significant factor is also the project duration because according to the research results, the trust of particular parties was effectively built in the process of project implementation, especially at the stage of putting particular solutions into practice).

The main **factors increasing the sustainability level** of Polish development aid in Ukraine are as follows:

- **practical dimension** of the projects and the solutions proposed in relation to them, as well as **implementation experience** of Polish and Ukrainian institutions implementing projects
- **institutionalisation of** support **outcomes,** as well as **building sustainable** social **structures (**e.g. contact networks backed up by an Internet forum or an institution, such as e.g. formally empowered social councils)
- **participatory project models** assuming engagement of a **wide variety of stakeholders** from different social backgrounds (including **decision makers** in particular)
- **relevant diagnosis** of the needs, as well as **response flexibility** and **adaptation** of projects to the Ukrainian and local specificity

In conclusion, the Polish aid projects implemented in Ukraine and aimed at supporting the self-government and education reforms are characterised by high sustainability. Its scope is more extensive in the case of the education reform (due to favourable political and systemic factors). As for the self-government reform, the sustainability has a local dimension. The support sustainability results from direct aid outputs, their implementation and then from their application in a longer term, as well as from the observed change of social attitudes which are an important contribution to the processes of development, democratisation and building civic society in Ukraine.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Polish development aid in Ukraine supporting the self-government and education reforms is characterised by a relatively high level of outcome sustainability.

2. Knowledge acquired within the projects is used in everyday professional practice of support recipients. Nevertheless, there is a risk of decreasing the impact sustainability in the case of ventures involving only training initiatives. Therefore, it is advisable to extend the scope of the used instruments which allow to become familiar with Polish experiences by e.g., study visits, internships or job – shadowing (accompanying at work). Also, an important role is played by counselling provided to support recipients in the course of change implementation, which demands greater and longer-lasting engagement of Polish experts.

3. The most sustainable projects are those which have contributed to the establishment of sustainable institutions or social structures (e.g. active networks of contacts), which were set up either within the projects or as the result of the projects.

4. Particularly valuable support outcomes are changes of attitudes and awareness, which should be a significant contribution to launching and consolidating the processes of democratisation and building civic society in Ukraine.

5. One of the major barriers for ensuring the aid impact sustainability is too short a project duration and insufficiently extended project elements which serve for implementing solutions developed within the projects

6. The factors which foster the outcome sustainability were: practical knowledge transferred within the projects and a participatory model of project implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Project assumptions and objectives should be aimed more at supporting and establishing sustainably empowered institutions and procedures (e.g. formal civic participation procedures), as well as at sustainable social structures (e.g. formalised networks of contacts).

II.4. EXTERNAL COHESION AND PDA DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Which projects or initiatives were compatible with the initiatives of other donors? Could cooperation with them increase the value added of Polish aid (In what areas? /On what conditions?)

Were the initiatives taken within Polish aid distinctive from the initiatives of other donors? (In what aspects?)

The area of support to the reforms in Ukraine is a priority for donors operating actively in Ukraine. All the countries researched within benchmarking engage in development aid in this area, although the scope of the reform support and the methods adopted are varied. As for the support priorities of the researched donors, the decentralisation reform is the most frequent subject. The Germans, the Swedish, the Swiss, the Canadians and the Americans are the most active in this area. It is seen that despite the same interest in decentralisation in Ukraine, each of the experienced donors has also their own area of interest which distinguishes them from others. For the Swedish, it is the subject of environmental protection/ increased energy efficiency, for the Swiss, by contrast, such an area is the health care system reform. As for the Germans, they are particularly interested in counselling in respect of the reforms of public finance sector and the judicial reform. Also, each donor (except for Lithuania, which is characterised by the greatest thematic dispersion) makes efforts to focus on three or four selected support areas (for more information see: report on benchmarking)

The support to the decentralisation reform is the most 'crowded' area of donors' activity. At present 15 large projects are being implemented in Ukraine which are funded by international organisations and foreign donors[25]. The biggest ones are: the programme DOBRE (USD 50 million over 2016-2021) funded by USAID; the programme U-LEAD (EURO 102 million over 2016-2020) funded by the European Union and its members (Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Poland and Sweden), as well as DESPRO – the Swiss Ukrainian programme supporting decentralisation (CHF 9 million over 2007-2017). In view of the fact that many donors have engaged in supporting the decentralisation reform, there is a risk of developing competitive solutions. Hence, a key question is close coordination of initiatives taken by the donors, which is ensured: among other things, by meetings of a group of donors on decentralisation. During the interviews the donors pointed out that the effective support to the Ukrainian reforms needs initiatives taken at many levels:

- political level – by direct contacts between politicians and Parliament members, as well as by public debate during official visits
- strategic level – in cooperation with officials of Ukrainian ministries on developing strategies and their implementation
- programme level – in cooperation with other donors at the forums of donor groups active in different support areas
- implementation level - by supporting implementation of specific reforms

As for **Poland, in the donors' opinions, it is most visible at the political level,** which is mostly reflected in declarations of political support during official visits, as well as in references to Polish experiences in the area of decentralisation which are made also at the political level. **Poland's**

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[25] The information based on data available at http://donors.decentralization.gov.ua

engagement is much less visible, by contrast, **at the other levels, i.e. strategic, programme and implementation levels.**

It is worth considering a better use of the existent channels of coordinating Polish initiatives with other donors with the aim of avoiding overlapping ventures and of searching for opportunities to unify efforts to achieve synergy impact. It is especially significant not to work out different model solutions in parallel in the case of launching advisory support to the development of new operation models and then to their implementation. Also, Ukrainian respondents paid attention to the question of coordinating initiatives between donors. The interview results show that this coordination is insufficient and that it is the Ukrainian partner that is burdened with ensuring cohesion among initiatives taken by different donors. On the other hand, it should be stated that the coordination of support from various donors seems to be mainly responsibility of the state receiving aid and particular donors can be supportive in this respect.

As for the education reform, apart from the Poles, the Norwegians and the Swiss have been engaged in this area so far and they will be soon joined by the Finns. The Ukrainians are also supported by the European Training Foundation (ETF). It should be stated that the Polish party lacks in mechanisms of coordination with other donors in this area of activity. Polish project promoters were not familiar with the projects of other donors implemented with regard to the education reform. It is the Ukrainian ministry in charge of this reform that makes efforts to implement the projects financed by other donors in connection with the solutions developed by the Polish party. For example, Polish experts who have participated in PDA projects are engaged in initiatives funded by the ETF, which allows to cohesively continue initiatives designed in cooperation with the Polish party at the implementation stage (it is also a mode of copying with too short and too dispersed Polish projects).

It is also pointed out that the projects implemented by other donors referred to only certain aspects of the education reform, whereas the Polish aid was involved in the reform process in a comprehensive and systematic way. Additionally, Polish experiences in reforming education, especially those which proved to be a great success and to be highly thought of internationally, are regarded by the Ukrainian party as extremely interesting and useful. Basing on the Polish experiences (good and bad) allows the Ukrainian administration to increase the pace of launching changes and to decrease the risk of making errors.

Furthermore, as for the projects implemented in this area, the Poles have presented not only their solutions, but also international ones, which was an inspiration for the Ukrainian authorities. It is worth adding that Poland has funded an OECD review in Ukraine in the area of education.

Coordination with other donors at the implementation level was fostered by the presence of the SF PL Office in Kiev (e.g. cooperation with the Swiss within the project DESPRO). The Office representative took a lot of initiatives, such as participation in meetings and conferences, which helped to strike up relationships with representatives of the Ukrainian party and other donors. As indicated during interviews with other donors, on-the-spot presence in Kiev is a necessary factor determining efficient coordination of initiatives, searching for complementarity and a possibility of joining forces in order to achieve synergy impact. The lack of on-the-spot presence makes it difficult or even impossible to efficiently cooperate with other donors, particularly at the implementation level because the Polish diplomatic mission does not have the right capacity for such intense

engagement in initiatives of this kind. Taking account of other donors' activity, especially in the area of decentralisation reform, it is recommended to use in the future such an instrument as the SF PL Office. However, some changes in organising its activity should be made (for more information see: case study- SF PL Office).

The lack of close coordination with other donors at the implementation level, as well as a lack of Polish party's consistence in filling up the Polish niche make other donors enter the areas of Polish activity, involving much higher funds than the Poles. An example is the engagements of donors in participatory budgeting – the area initiated within Polish projects has been now taken over by other donors (for more information see: case study -Participatory budgeting).

As for complementarity of Polish development aid to initiatives taken by other donors, it should be noticed that there has been a positive trend that involves searching for opportunities to join larger projects, which is reflected, for example, in Poland's participation in the EU programme U-LEAD. As pointed out by the respondents, for donors having bigger budgets than Poland, its inclusion in their programmes /projects is a value as it adds credibility to their initiatives. Polish experiences are more easily applicable in Ukraine, they set a good example, but also bring a very positive psychological effect – the fact that Poland has successfully gone through the reform processes arouses beneficiaries' confidence and faith in possible changes for the better. What is more, the Ukrainian party itself is keen to engage Polish experts in other donors' programmes due to the fact that the Poles are more reliable and that it is easier to apply their knowledge and experience. It is worth making use of this comparative advantage, which could be a good justification for engagement in initiatives taken by other donors. Another example of joining forces in taking initiatives is the Poland-Canada Programme of Support to Reforms in Ukraine.

Examples of innovative solutions used by donors

The Programme U LEAD is interesting due to the fact that in respect of programming and implementing initiatives it is oriented at outcomes. Concentration on the target outcomes instead on the process itself enables to adopt a flexible approach to planning further initiatives. Moreover, within a part of the programme, managed by the GIZ, the established institutional structures facilitate information transfers among the local level, programme coordinators and the Ukrainian ministry responsible for regional development. Such structures comprise 24 branches – local development centres, which cooperate with regions *(oblasts)* and communes *(hromadas)*, collecting information on needs at the local level and transferring this information to the central reform office – the contact point between the Programme and the Ukrainian ministry of regional development. On the other hand, the central reform office transfers information received from the ministry to the local level (by GIZ structures), which allows to adjust the initiatives being taken to the current plans of this ministry. It facilitates managing the programme and adjusting it to the needs of the Ukrainian support recipients.

Another interesting solution -with regard to programming- used by other donors is a multiannual strategy of development cooperation with Ukraine prepared by the Swiss. It includes variant scenarios of the planned outcomes depending on the development of the situation in Ukraine.

Partners and beneficiaries of Polish projects have indicated PDA distinctive features as compared to other donors. It was stated that the Poles provide practical knowledge, which is easily applicable in Ukraine. Polish solutions are treated as model due to a similar starting point for both countries and a very positive opinion of the Ukrainians on the effects of Polish transformation over 25 years. Thanks

to cooperation with the Polish donor the implementation of changes is accelerating. As one respondent said: 'Thanks *to their [Poles'] counselling we have a chance not only to go towards improvement, but even run.'*

Another distinctive feature as compared to initiatives taken by other donors is a cultural affinity and similar mentality, which makes cooperation with the Polish donor easier. However, what seems problematic in cooperation with Poland is a lack of transparent information on possibilities of funding projects – in the form of uniform register including information on accessible sources of funding and projects implemented in Ukraine.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Support to the reforms in Ukraine is a priority for donors operating in Ukraine; the most 'crowded' area of donors' activity is decentralisation

2. Coordination of initiatives with other donors is insufficient; it is due to: among others, a lack of continuous Poland's presence in Kiev at the implementation level (such as SF PL Office), insufficient activity of the Embassy, project dispersion and short project durations, as well as low capacity of project promoters.

3. It should be noticed that there has been a positive trend of PDA inclusion in larger projects, e.g. Poland's participation in the EU programme U-LEAD; it could contribute to increased complementarity of initiatives to other donors, but on the other hand, a lack of powerful institutional background in Ukraine poses a risk of PDA 'vanishing' in larger programmes.

4. As compared to other donors, Polish development aid is distinctive in a practical approach to solutions, as well as in a cultural affinity and similar mentality, which positively influences the support efficiency and effectiveness.

5. The Ukrainian party is keen to use Polish templates as they are more easily applicable in Ukraine and they set a good example; also, the fact that Poland has successfully gone through reform processes has a positive psychological impact – it arouses beneficiaries' confidence and faith in possible changes for the better.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is worth considering a use of the existent channels of coordinating Polish initiatives with other donors (e.g. a group of donors in the given support area in Ukraine) with the aim of avoiding overlapping ventures and searching for opportunities to unify efforts to achieve synergy impact. It is especially significant not to work out in parallel different model solutions in the case of launching advisory support to the development of new operation models and then to their implementation.

2. Taking account of an intense activity of donors in Ukraine and the necessity of continuous coordination of initiatives with other donors, it is recommended to institutionally strengthen the PDA presence in Ukraine, which could be done by setting up a formally registered and sufficiently funded permanent Office. Running the Office could be outsourced, however it is advisable to take account of considerable changes in organisation of its activity (for more information see: case study- SF PL Office) and in the mode of communication and supervision of its activity.

3. It is advisable to provide transparent information on possibilities of funding projects from Polish resources– in the form of uniform register including information on accessible sources of funding and projects implemented in Ukraine (this recommendation could also serve for strengthening image impact.

II.5. FACTORS DETERMINING POLISH AID EFFICIENCY

What type of experiences and capacity of Polish organisations and institutions is necessary/particularly fosters project implementation in Ukraine: a) with public administration at different levels, b) with local non-governmental partners c) with other donors (states, international organisations)?

What are the major political, social and organisational limitations and challenges which determine the effectiveness and efficiency of initiatives taken by Polish project promoters and what remedial measures were taken in the process of project implementation in order to level a negative influence of various barriers on the effectiveness and efficiency of the implemented projects?

(To what extent) do Polish projects present innovative and implementable (from a point of view of the support recipients) solutions?

II.5.1. EXPERIENCE AND CAPACITY OF POLISH ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

Chapter II.2 includes a description of the impact achieved through projects within Polish development aid. This chapter, by contrast, describes factors which have an influence on the effects achieved (both positive and negative) in relation to the experience and capacity of Polish project promoters.

Familiarity with Ukrainian realities and a contact network

The main factor which strongly determines mostly the project relevance and effectiveness is familiarity with Ukrainian realities, which demands having an experience in implementing projects in Ukraine. It allows to adapt projects to the specific needs of Ukrainian recipients and to avoid pitfalls which could be too optimistic assumptions.

The vast majority of projects within Component I were implemented by entities which has such a kind of experience. Although it was one of PCDSP requirements to project promoters, the knowledge concerning Ukrainian experiences was additionally strengthened by a study visit to Ukraine organised for applicants. During the visit the applicants met representatives of different institutions. It was justifiable and in the opinion of SF PL representatives it improved the project relevance and effectiveness.

Cultural and civilizational affinity of Poland and Ukraine

This thread has been raised in many interviews. Cultural affinity allows to easily and quickly strike up relationships between Ukrainians and Poles.

Also, it was stated that Polish experiences are very credible to the Ukrainian party- in fact more credible than examples from developed countries – because they are evidence that the country which was at the similar starting point as Ukraine has succeeded.

This similarity, as well as cultural and civilizational affinity is eagerly used by other donors that engage Polish experts in their programmes and fund study visits to Poland, like it has happened in the Swiss programme DESPRO or like it is going to happen in the programme U-LEAD.

Support form

As for projects referring to supporting reforms, strengthening competences and changing attitudes, the methods used are of key significance. The qualitative and quantitative research shows that the most effective method have been study visits to Poland. It is a form which is much more effective than trainings or preparing expertise reports. It results from several factors:

- Paradoxically, in the case of the study it was easier to get to decision makers - top rank officials or politicians – than through trainings or expertise reports. The attractiveness of study visits makes such persons be more willing to participate.

  'It is like this, top officials come, often those authors of the reform and during this study visit….., so it's not that sort of paper is made called 'expertise report specially for…', but they come, have meetings in several state institutions and ask the right questions building their knowledge, We won't forget about it as it very important and it is for me more important.'

  'Extremely utile and practical project. Nonetheless, its implementation depends –to much extent- on personality features and the level of influencing people who take part in it. Because of this it would be a good idea to invite governmental officials who can exert an immense influence on the decision-making process.'

- The visit programme must be adjusted to the specific recipients' needs – therefore, the preparation of the visit and the selection of institutions and people whom the visit participants are to meet are of great importance. It means that the visits should be organised by entities which know the needs of Ukrainian recipients very well and which have good contacts in Poland.
- Contacts with practitioners and a possibility of getting acquainted with solutions in person – it allows to actively gain knowledge, to ask about details, and mostly to convince the visit participants that such solutions do work.
- Study visits allow to break resistance, distrust and scepticism of the participants as for new solutions – it is the easiest form of finding 'ambassadors' of new solutions.
- It is ideal when the visit is an element of a more extensive programme, as well as an element of developing and implementing solutions. For example, within the MNE project: *Support to the education system reform* study visits were the main project element and on their basis Polish experts prepared a set of recommendations in each area. However, the project was too short to support the visit participants in implementing the solutions developed on spot, after the visit was completed. As a result, the achieved effects were probably lesser.

Taking account of positive experiences related to study visits and the opinions of numerous respondents, it can be stated that the capacity of this training method could be additionally strengthened by using more engaging and longer –lasting support forms, such as e.g. internships or job-shadowing.

Contacts with practitioners

Representatives of the Ukrainian party have often pointed out that a positive assessment of different support forms, trainings, workshops, study visits depend very much on the participation of people with practical experience in implementing similar solutions in Poland.

Role of Polish experts

The attitude of Polish experts to putting knowledge across was of great importance for the projects. An effective method was presenting Polish experiences, indicating what did work and what did not. However, the ultimate solutions in effective projects were worked out by the Ukrainian party and consequently, new solutions were better fitted in with the Ukrainian specificity. Also, it reduced the

risk of turning down the proposed solutions for fear of 'polonization' and due to maladjustment of Polish templates to the Ukrainian realities.

Project disintegration

To some extent the impact obtained could also have been determined by project disintegration. An example can be the MNE projects implemented in parallel: *The New Ukrainian School* (implemented by the CED a unit subordinate to the MNE) and *Support to the education system reform* implemented directly by the MNE. Such a separation of the programmes impeded coordination and obtaining synergy impact. It seems that in the future it is justifiable to support such ambitious and complex ventures as the education reform within one multiannual project which could have separate components.

Inclusion of public figures from partner countries in projects

The fact that public figures took part in many projects was also of key importance to the success of their implementation. The Minister or Under-secretary of education, the President of the Committee of Supreme Council for education and science, representatives of education authorities or representatives of central and local authorities participated actively in study visits, trainings and seminars, which was a great motivation and support to other participants.

Capacity of SF Pl Office

The factors identified above had also an influence on the impacts of the SF PL Office activity in Kiev. However, some aspects with regard to the Office work are so specific that it is worth highlighting them.

- **Lack of clear concept as for office activity and management, as well as insufficient communication with the MFA** – to much extent the activity of the Office was based on competences of the person responsible for running the office. After personal changes were made, the Office mode of operation was changed as well. At this stage an institutional weakness was revealed (great vulnerability to personal changes). Additionally, there was not open communication with the MFA as for expectations from the Office or the impact obtained, particularly in the situation of the significant change of political context in which the Office worked. Also, the problem was how the Office was monitoring. Reports were incomplete as they presented only statistical figures and did not include analyses of the efficiency of initiatives taken or analyses of the outcomes of the Office presence in Kiev, as well as directions of changes in the functioning.
- **Lack of coordination function of the Office** – although the Office was (apart from the Embassy) the main PDA actor in Ukraine, it hardly coordinated the implementation of all projects, e.g. those implemented by ministries. What the Office particularly lacked in was transfers of information on projects in Ukraine, e.g. on Polish-Canadian cooperation or on other projects implemented by the Polish party in Ukraine. Improved information transfer of greater engagement of the Office in promoting the impacts of Polish activity could have brought significant image impact or could have contributed to increased public awareness of initiatives taken by Polish donors.
- **Insufficient resources** – available funds were insufficient for renting premises for the Office or for business trips. It shows that the activity of the Office might have been underfunded.
- **Lack of institutionalised office** – the Office was not registered in the Ministry of Economy and therefore it did not have legal personality. It was not very problematic in everyday activity, however it was a barrier in case the Office might extend the scope of initiatives.

Closing down the SF PL Office in Ukraine resulted in breaking a network of contacts established with Ukrainian partners and limiting opportunities to participate in events which are held in Kiev. At the same time participation of Office representatives in meetings with donors in the area of self-government reforms has been minimised, which might hinder cooperation with other donors. It negatively influences maintenance of the sustainability of the Office impact. Also, it is worth stating the decision on closing down the Office was not preceded by a thorough cost-benefit analysis. Finally, there were no attempts to launch any amendments in the Office activity.

II.5.2. POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL BARRIERS

Supporting major reforms in Ukraine causes the projects to depend – to much extent - on political conditions. They can be an important factor fostering obtaining impacts (e.g. the support of Prime Minister Groysman's to the decentralisation reform based on the Polish model, or the support of Minister of Education Lydia Hryniewicz to using Polish experience in the education reform), but they also can be a significant barrier for obtaining the expected impacts. The most spectacular example is blocking changes in the Constitution, which were necessary to implement the self-government reform developed with participation of Polish experts.

> 'the riskiest projects are those which directly concern implementation of a specific reform developed, because if a project concerned: the improvement of sewage and waste management and talking about e.g. how one can improve technologically a purification plant or how to raise residents' awareness, well, here nobody is waiting for the reform in Kiev and this projects is as if…and if a grant recipient shows the logic of the project and it is complete, then actually there are no big substantive changes. There aren't big changes there, this external factor does not get there.'

It shows that involvement in large, important reforms in Ukraine can bring a spectacular success (e.g. support to the education reform), but it also poses a risk of failure (e.g. support to the decentralisation reform at the central level). An alternative is to accept this kind of risk or to focus on technical projects, in which political risk is lesser.

It is worth mentioning that political risk has also an influence on projects implemented at the local level. An example can be implementation of participatory budgeting, which was a success mainly due to the support of local politicians (and including participatory budgeting in the political platform). Without this element the project impact could have been much lower. The experiences of Polish projects show that a factor reducing political risk is organising study visits with participation of decision makers, which helps to get their support for the proposed changes.

As for social factors, it is necessary to point at scepticism of some support recipients towards new solutions, including prejudices to Polish or international experiences (our situation is different, international experiences do not matter), a passive attitude of some members of working teams in communes or poor activity of local office representatives. In the course of project implementation they became more and more active and their attitude changed from passive into participatory in the process.

> 'At the very beginning representatives of government administration weren't open to cooperation, but that barrier was quickly eradicated. No prejudice was observed as for treatment of specific ideas, apart from personal lack of preparedness to new forms of activity.'

> 'One of the factors limiting the efficiency of initiatives is a negative attitude of the Ukrainians to foreign experiences, whereas the Poles contempt a possibility of effective introduction of their experiences in Ukraine.'

In such cases, an important thing is to get to the most sceptical environments with the message which fits in with their needs. An example can be representatives of academics in Ukraine, who are very critical about the education reform proposals. In this case the earlier mentioned study visits would be helpful. Also, building contacts among academic circles (although in this respect cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education would be advisable) could prove to be justifiable.

The main organisational barriers in implementing projects are: among other things, delays in starting project implementation, which results from a long-lasting grant competitions. It translated into time limitations in the implementation of projects and consequently, some of them had to be modified as for their subject matter or schedule.

As PDA projects are usually short-lasting, hence the support scope is considerably limited and it is of on-the-spot character (e.g. organisation of study visits, trainings, workshops), whereas initiatives related to supporting the reforms or launching democratisation processes at the local level need longer-lasting ventures supported by Polish experts. Taking the above into consideration, it should be said that such support should include not only development of some solutions, but also assistance in their implementation and then monitoring how they are used. The support of this kind would increase the support relevance (the support could fit better in with the recipients' needs by adapting to changing circumstances and introducing corrections in case difficulties or natural regress appear) and its effectiveness(longer-lasting support would allow to consolidate the functioning of the new solutions) as well.

An example can be projects that concern strengthening social councils. In the project duration the councils implemented their own plan of actions, defined at the stage of establishing the council in the given site, as long as they were supported by project mentors. The moment the budget ran out and the partner organisation had to reduce its initiatives, the activity of the councils declined. It shows that that in the case of newly-established councils the pilot project duration should be longer than half a year. As noticed by one respondent:

> *'Because for half a year it was in fact fighting against bureaucracy to set up such an entity and only after it could function. And here we have deficiency 'cause this impact could have been better.'*

As for some projects, the Ukrainian party had their own way of coping with such situations. They invited Polish experts to Ukraine but within other projects, funded from other sources. Such solutions were used in the case of working out the curriculum for primary education.

Also, short project durations considerably influence the capacity of Polish organisations. It hinders employment and maintenance of stable staff and, as mentioned before, personal contacts are extremely important in view of the projects. Very tight project implementation schedules also make it difficult to build relations with other donors and strengthen the image of Polish projects.

II.5.3. INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

In the opinion of Polish project promoters, elements of innovative solutions do not often appear in PDA projects. However, from the point of view of Ukrainian partners and beneficiaries, the innovation assessment is considerably different. First of all, Ukrainian recipients regarded the subjects raised in Polish projects as new and consequently, transferred knowledge and experience is also thought to be novel. As one respondent stated: **'***Decentralisation itself is a new subject: in Ukraine nobody has any experience in this area.'* The examples presented below show that innovation is also reflected in modes of implementing projects, e.g. by cascade trainings or using IT tools.

As for the project: *School Academy of Entrepreneurship-3,* it was pointed out that innovative project initiatives were: including almost whole Ukraine in it and extending project initiatives aimed at shaping the key competence-entrepreneurship and innovation to other non-economic entities as well. Cascade trainings which comprised a vast territorial range and which were organised in 18 regional teacher training centres are also innovative. In years to come the trained coaches and leaders will animate a different kind of initiatives aimed at supporting teachers in systemic school implementation of the publication *Lessons with entrepreneurship in the background.* So far in Ukraine there have not been so comprehensive, systemic educational projects concerning the key competence – entrepreneurship and innovation.

Another innovative project was *Innovative university and leadership,* which assumed launching to the higher education system in Ukraine modern management technology, including European know-how to be used in Ukrainian educational practice. It was aimed at approaching the Ukrainian education system to fulfilment of recommendations and standards of the European Higher Education Area. The implementation of the project resulted in developing micro-projects, some of which were used for formulating new regulation provisions. An important role is played by these micro-projects, which have not functioned so far in the higher education system, i.e. the system of inter-Ukrainian student mobility or the development of interdisciplinary studies (similar to inter –area studies) in Ukrainian teacher's colleges.

The project concerning implementation of participatory budgeting, as such, turned out to be innovative in several aspects. First of all, the subject of participatory budgeting – previously unknown in Ukraine- was a novelty. For the first time citizens were included in budgetary planning. This subject was also novel as compared to initiatives of other donors. In fact USAID implemented a project on participatory budgeting, but it was limited to launching an educational IT tool and actually it did not give citizens a chance to decide about the self-government budget.

Innovation was also identified in the context of implementing a project without beneficiaries. In Cherkasy it was decided to use an electronic form of voting for projects. Also, the officials gave up treating officially registered domicile as the necessary requirement to vote (it was enough to confirm the place of residence). Beneficiaries also pointed out that the project was innovative due to a lack of earlier experiences in cooperation with citizens. The adopted form of project implementation was also novel. The idea was not only to implement the tool, but also to support a certain process, providing a structure within which beneficiaries will make their own decisions on participatory budgeting.

In the case of the project: *The New Ukrainian School*, a new electronic platform was used to provide communication within a group of experts and to popularise the project outcomes. The works on the new curriculum revealed the need to automate the process of standard preparation. Thanks to one coach, Ukrainian partners are now developing an IT tool which allows to create educational and training programmes based on background documents. The project was also an inspiration for preparing a tool to monitor the impact of the pilot version of implementing the curriculum.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The factors determining the obtained impact are: familiarity with Ukrainian realities and a contact network, cultural and civilizational affinity of Poland and Ukraine, contacts with practitioners, an attitude of Polish experts to the transferred knowledge, a skilful inclusion of decision makers and public figures in projects.

2. The efficiency of the SF PL Office activity in Ukraine was decreased by a lack of clear concept as for office activity and management, lack of coordination function of the Office, insufficient resources, lack

of institutionalisation, as well as insufficient communication with the MFA

3. The most effective form of support was study visits to Poland

4. Involvement in large, important reforms in Ukraine can bring a spectacular success (e.g. support to the education reform), but it also poses a risk of failure (e.g. support to the decentralisation reform at the central level).

5. As for social factors, it is necessary to point at scepticism of some support recipients towards new solutions, including prejudices to Polish or international experiences or a passive attitude of support recipients.

6. The main organisational barriers in implementing projects are :among other things, delays in starting project implementation, which results from a long-lasting grant competitions

7. As PDA projects are usually short-lasting, hence the support scope is considerably limited and it is of spot-like character (e.g. organisation of study visits, trainings, workshops).

8. Innovation is reflected in raising new – in the opinion of the Ukrainian party- subjects, as well as in the modes of implementing projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Initiatives related to supporting the reforms or launching democratisation processes at the local level demand longer perspective and support from Polish experts; this support should include not only working out certain solutions, but also assistance in their implementation and then monitoring their applications.

2. It seems that in the future it is justifiable to support such ambitious and complex ventures as the education reform within one multiannual project which could have separate components.

3. It is advisable to earlier complete the competition and notify the funds allocated to project implementation.

4. While designing interventions, it is worth taking account of factors increasing the support efficiency, i.e. organising more frequent study visits, involving decision makers and public figures in projects, engaging Polish practitioners.

III. RESULTS OF SWOT ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY

STRENGHTS	WEAKNESSES
o High level of aid relevance at both strategic and operational levels o Consistent and cohesive support in the area of education reform o Very positive reception of Polish support among aid recipients o Great significance and high level of programme effectiveness at the local level o Well visible changes of attitudes and awareness among participants after project completion o Good familiarity with Ukrainian realities resulting from the experience and earlier contacts of Polish organisations with Ukrainian partners o Practical dimension of projects and solutions proposed within them o Relatively high level of support impact sustainability o High level of sustainability of projects which resulted in building institutions or social structures o Participatory model of project implementation o High level of project innovation in the opinion of the Ukrainian party	o Too small spot-like projects and great support dispersion o Lack of broader range of project impact (mainly local impacts) o Too short a project duration o Lack of extensive diagnostic and implementation components within projects o Unused support capacity with reference to the decentralisation reform o Lack of continued initiatives of high utility and effectiveness o Unsatisfactory level of initiative coordination with other donors present in Ukraine
CHANCES	THREATS
o Cultural and civilizational affinity, including joint historic transformation experiences o High level of engagement and determination of the Ukrainian party in taking advantage of Polish transformation experiences o Active contact network between Poland and Ukraine, resulting from territorial and cultural affinity o Poland's participation in EU programme U-LEAD	o Low level of social capital in Ukraine (low trust level) o Lack of strong institutional Polish background in Ukraine o Lack of strategic approach to supporting reforms in Ukraine, which means a selection of specific support areas, concentration of initiatives on selected areas, as well as planning these initiatives in a longer term with taking account of initiatives at the national, regional and local levels. o High level of political risk (uncertainty of reform directions, military threats)

To sum up the Polish programme of development aid in Ukraine with regard to supporting the main systemic reforms, it should be stated that the programme was characterized by a high level of overall relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. However, its detailed assessment is more varied and ambiguous and it depends on the support area.

In the case of decentralisation reform, the outcomes have mainly a local or spot-like dimension. It seems that the primary capacity for obtaining an impact on the type and scope of changes at the systemic level has not been fully used as for decentralisation. However, the Polish support has had a greater impact on complex and systemic changes in the area of education reform. In this case it is possible to expect a broader long-term impact comprising the whole country.

Nevertheless, it has been observed that in all support areas a number of valuable outcomes (described in this report) were obtained at the level of specific outputs, as well as at the level of harder-to-measure impacts related to changes in attitudes and awareness. The latter are particularly desirable because they translate into launching and consolidating long-term processes of socio-economic development, democratization and building civic society in Ukraine. The programme has also contributed to the improvement and consolidation of Poland's positive image as an example of transformation success and as a country willing to share its knowledge and experience. However, it is necessary to admit that this impact was of individual and local character due to limited financial and operational capabilities of the support.

The programme relevantly fitted in the needs of the Ukrainian party both at the strategic (needs related to Ukraine's strategic objectives and to the scope of systemic reforms) and at operational (high relevance confirmed by the qualitative research results) levels. Nonetheless, with regard to a response to the needs it is necessary to make some corrections, including particularly those related to the necessity of extending diagnostic modules at the project level.

It should be expected that the social changes triggered by the programme implementation will be sustainable. It refers particularly to the ventures resulting in the establishment of sustainable institutions and development of sustainable social structures, e.g. active and formalized cooperation networks. In this respect, projects within which only educational and training initiatives were taken, without taking account of instruments fostering the maintenance of impact sustainability, pose a risk.

The research results show that the support success at the project level is determined mostly by: relevantly addressed needs, a practical dimension of proposed solutions and a participatory character of implemented ventures, familiarity with Ukrainian realities - resulting from territorial and cultural affinity, active cooperation networks between Polish and Ukrainian organisations, practical competences of Polish organisations and a high level of engagement of the Ukrainian party.

Despite the following: a limited programme impact range; limitations and barriers, often independent of the Polish party (e.g. a lack of consistence in implementing the decentralisation reform or low social capital in Ukraine); necessity of making certain amendments in the programme (e.g. improving aid coordination, creating institutional background, decreasing support dispersion, lengthening project durations and strengthening diagnostic and implementation elements)**, aid initiatives taken by Poland and aimed at supporting Ukrainian systemic reforms should be definitely assessed as positive. Due to its high socio-economic and political capacity, as well as short-and long-term support impacts –observed within this evaluation-the Polish development aid programme in Ukraine should be continued and extended.**

IV. TABLE OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No	Conclusion	Strategic recommendations	Addressee
1.	The most efficient projects implemented under the PCDSPS are those that trigger the process of social change contributing to democratisation of life. Although projects with such capacity have been identified, it is worth stating that their impact range was mostly local mostly due to fragmentation of the intervention.	In order to improve PDA efficiency with regard to supporting the decentralisation reform it is advisable to consider implementing a smaller number of projects with larger budgets and concentrated on selected thematic areas, which could trigger a social change. (Chapter II.2.1., p. 27)	MFA
2.	Deficiency in a strategic approach to supporting the reforms in Ukraine hinders an increase in the efficiency of PDA in Ukraine, which translates into excessive support dispersion and insufficient coordination of initiatives at the national and regional and local levels.	Increased PDA efficiency would be fostered by strengthening a strategic approach to supporting reforms in Ukraine, which means selecting specific support areas, concentrating initiatives on the selected areas, as well as planning these initiatives in a longer term with considering initiatives at the national, regional and local levels. To ensure the effectiveness of initiatives taken, it is necessary to simultaneously take care of flexibility and adaptation of initiatives to changing circumstances and to stay open to new areas and innovative ventures. Combining these two, apparently contradictory approaches allows to obtain high effectiveness of initiatives taken. (Chapter II.2.1., p. 27)	MFA
3.	Obtaining impacts, including synergy impact, is hindered by a lack of effective coordination between projects implemented in one support area and a discontinuity of project initiatives where it is justified	It is advisable to continue PDA support wherever discontinuity of project implementation could result in a loss of obtained impacts. In view of this, it is recommended to continue or even intensify the support in the two key areas: decentralisation and education reform. In a longer perspective, mechanisms fostering continuity of the initiatives which have proven to be a success should be introduced. In order to do it, it is recommended that projects should be assessed at the end of their durations in terms of their development capacity and that favourable scoring bonus points should be introduced – in a subsequent competition - for continuing projects or contracts on project implementation in specific areas. To obtain synergy impact, it is important that Polish project implementers should strengthen coordination of initiatives in the given support area (e.g. through suitable ministries). Such initiatives should be taken as early as at the stage of diagnosing needs and planning projects. (Chapter II.2.2. p.)	MFA/ministries

4.		Coordination of initiatives with other donors is insufficient; it is due to: among others, a lack of continuous Poland's presence in Kiev at the implementation level (such as SF PL Office), insufficient activity of the Embassy, project dispersion and short project durations	It is worth considering a use of the existent channels of coordinating Polish initiatives with other donors (e.g. a group of donors in the given support area in Ukraine) with the aim of avoiding overlapping ventures and searching for opportunities to unify efforts to achieve synergy impact. It is especially significant not to work out in parallel different model solutions in the case of launching advisory support to the development of new operation models and then to their implementation. Taking account of an intense activity of donors in Ukraine and the necessity of continuous coordination of initiatives with other donors, it is recommended to institutionally strengthen the PDA presence in Ukraine, which could be done by setting up a formally registered and sufficiently funded permanent Office. Running the Office could be outsourced, however it is advisable to take account of considerable changes in organisation of its activity (for more information see: case study- SF PL Office) and in the mode of communication and supervision of its activity. (Chapter II.2.2. p.)	MFA/Embassy
	Conclusion		**Operational recommendations**	**Addressee**
5.		Although the Polish support to the education reform has brought a lot of measureable outcomes, the efficiency and effectiveness of this support could be strengthened by increasing cohesion and duration of implemented initiatives. The conclusions on the education reform implemented in Ukraine indicate that the improved initiative efficiency would be fostered by better recognition of recipients' needs and greater emphasis on the familiarity of representatives of the Ukrainian party with practical aspects of the education system functioning in Poland, on introducing (by Polish experts) elements related to on-the-spot visits, and on taking account of representatives of science sector as a project target group.	It seems that in the future it would be justifiable to support such ambitious and complex ventures as the education reform within one multiannual project which could have separate components. It is recommended to base such projects on an in-depth analysis of needs, which would take account of different stakeholders' perspective (it is suggested that the very first initiative taken within a project should be a diagnosis of needs). Also, it is advisable to put more emphasis on the support to reform implementation in Ukraine (present initiatives focus on developing documents, e.g. curriculum). It could involve providing Polish experts' support to implementing, monitoring and assessing the implemented reforms in Ukraine, as well as working out prospective amendments. Within projects it is worth enabling representatives of the Ukrainian party to get acquainted with the realities of Polish education in practice, which could be achieved by visits to Polish schools, internships, and job-shadowing. It is also recommended to include in projects academics dealing with education science, whose present attitude to the reform is reluctant. (Chapter II.2.1. p.)	MFA/MNE

6.	The most relevant ventures were preceded by a complex diagnosis, including on-the-spot-visits, which were characterised by a high level of flexibility with regard to the assumptions in the process of project implementation	It is recommended to enable project promoters to detail the project concept at the primary stage of implementation, following on-the-spot visits and contacting prospective project recipients. It should particularly concern the projects/subjects which are implemented in Ukraine for the first time. It is important to constantly monitor the reforms implemented in Ukraine and to conduct interim in-depth analyses of the demand for the Polish support in the areas which will be identified as those with high capacity of Polish development aid. It is essential for identifying areas in which it is worth promoting Polish experiences. As a result, it would be possible to increase Poland's presence in new areas, not so popular among many donors. The monitoring results should determine the shape of development aid programmes in Ukraine. It should particularly concern new areas, although in justified cases it can also refer to the areas which are already included in Polish development aid.	Project promoters/ MFA/ Embassy
7.	The factors determining the achieveed impacts-identified within the evaluation research- are: capacity of Polish institutions, Beneficiaries' contact with practitioners, and high level of expertise transferred by polish experts, skilful involvement of decision makers and public figures in projects in order to increase the range of initiative impact.	While designing interventions, is worth taking account of factors increasing support efficiency, such as organising more frequent study visits, involvement of decision makers and public figures in projects, engaging Polish practitioners. (Chapter II.5.1. p.) Projects should be implemented by Polish organisations which have a practical experience in both the project subject matter (particularly implementation experience – i.e. organisations which have implemented what they recommend') and cooperation with partners from the Ukrainian party. (Chapter II.3. p.)	Project promoters/ MFA
8.	The most sustainable projects are those which have contributed to the establishment of sustainable institutions or social structures (e.g. active networks of contacts)	Project assumptions and objectives should be aimed more at supporting and establishing sustainably empowered institutions and procedures (e.g. formal civic participation procedures), as well as at sustainable social structures (e.g. formalised networks of contacts). (Chapter II.4. p.)	Project promoters
9.	The main organisational barriers in implementing projects are :among other things, delays in starting project implementation, which results from a long-lasting grant competitions	It is advisable to earlier complete the competition and notify the funds allocated to project implementation. (Chapter II.5.2. p.)	MFA

10.	The content regarding the projects implemented is properly presented, however, as for the mode of publishing information on the above mentioned websites, no minimum standards have been adopted, i.e. the adopted form and scope of presenting information depends on the approach of the entities taking part in project implementation. It negatively influences obtaining image impact.	In order to improve clarity and recognition of the Polish PDA support, it is suggested that the approach to presenting information on the aid should be more uniform. In order to put the above mentioned assumptions in the impact, it could be advisable to consider working out guidelines for project promoters, which would include minimum requirements regarding the scope and mode of presenting information on websites, as well as good examples taken from the experiences of other donors/other Polish projects. Also, it could be a good idea to take account of organising trainings for project promoters in this respect, including e-learning as well. With a view to making it possible to monitor the visibility of information on Polish projects in the future, it is also suggested to modify the template of reporting form so that – like in the case of the projects implemented within the Poland-Canada Democracy Support Programme, financed by the governments of Poland and Canada – it will contain a field referring to IT technologies used within the project and to information on the project in the media. (Chapter II. 2.2., p. ….)	MFA/SF PL

V. LIST OF DIAGRAMS AND CHARTS

VI. APPENDICES

Appendix 1. List of projects undergoing an in-depth analysis

Appendix 2. Case studies

Appendix 3. Report on benchmarking.

Appendix 1. List of projects undergoing an in-depth analysis

1.	336/2016	The New Ukrainian School*	2016	Ministry of National Education	Lviv Regional In-Service Teacher Training Centre
2.	521/2015/ADM2015	Support to the education system reform in Ukraine	2015	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
3.	PKWD-14-2015	Participatory budgeting as a Chance for broadened citizens' activity and real partnership with the authority**	2015	Foundation of Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation PAUCI	PAUCI Foundation from Kiev
4.	PKWD-31-2015	Active Social Councils II – support to cooperation of society with territorial self-government and central administration in Ukraine	2016	Foundation OKNO NA WSCHÓD	Regional organisation of the Cherkasy Oblast "Committee of Ukraine's Voters"
5.	PKWD-28-2015	Decentralisation in Practice II. Poland's experience in decentralisation and self-government education for *hromada* leaders in 7 regions of central Ukraine	2016	TERRA HUMANA	ТОВАРИСТВО ЛЕВА (Lion Society), 2. CRG Perspektywa (NGO Perspectiva),
6.	n/a	Activity of SF PL in Kiev/ Organisation of study visits, trainings and internships*	2015-2016	Solidarity Fund PL	