

MINUTES

European CIGS Network – Capacity Building working group meeting

7 September 11:30-13:10 CET online at Zoom

Participants: Amelie Palle - CISU (DK), Josje van de Grift, ErnstJan Stroes, - Wilde Ganzen (NL), Pieter Santens - Wereldhuis West-Vlaanderen (BE), Dominika Zareba - Fundusz Partnerstwa (PL), Martin Fielko - CLI (DE),

Topic: **quality assurance for CIGS capacity building**

Agenda

1. Welcome and check-in
2. Open questions from last working group meeting on cooperation with local and regional authorities
3. Short country reports on the topic quality assurance for CIGS capacity building

Consider the following questions for your reports:

- *Trainings on which topics are most important for CIGS in your country?*
- *Are these trainings usually offered by capacity builders specialized in CIGS needs and trainings, or by general training providers offering programmes for a wider public (e.g. business schools for project management, accounting, etc.)?*
- *Based on your experience, do you have examples of good practice training/capacity building programmes that you can share with CIGS members?*
- *Do CIGS need to pay for their own capacity building themselves or is there (co-)funding available? In the latter case, who is offering capacity building funding?*
- *Are there quality assurance measures in your country specifically targeted to CIGS needs e.g. special certifications of trainings or organisations who take care that training contents are specifically useful for CIGS? If such measures exist, are they locally, nationally, or even internationally (e.g. ISO) recognized?*
- *Would you be interested in setting up a European framework to streamline quality assurance for CIGS capacity building?*

4. tentative: news from the Erasmus+ project application on the topic of quality assurance
5. Summary and check-out

Notes

Open questions from last working group meeting on cooperation with local and regional authorities:
No open questions.

Short country reports on the topic quality assurance for CIGS capacity building:

The situation in five countries/regions have been reported and discussed:

Netherlands (report from Josje and ErnstJan)

There are two main providers of capacity building for CIGS: Partin – more focusing on skills and all CIGS, and Wilde Ganzen themselves – more focusing on capacity building and quality CIGS as target

group. Most relevant topics for capacity building include: fundraising, registration, good quality support of Global South, facilitating skills, awareness raising (also for local partners), advocacy. In general, a beneficiary centred approach is used for capacity building. Two online platforms are in place for capacity building: Toolkit on framing & communications: <https://www.framevoicereport.eu/>, and Learning platform on local fundraising & mobilising support: <https://www.changethegameacademy.org/>. Quality assurance is taking place at two levels: externally by accreditation by university of applied sciences or CIVICUS as a watch dog. Internally through feedback and follow up measures after trainings. Foundations finance the trainings; in most cases they are free for participating CIGS. To create more interest and ownership in capacity building measures, competitions to apply for them are connected.

Denmark (report from Amelie)

CISU has the role and the mandate of being the main capacity builder for CIGS that covers the whole range. Some other orgs exist for particular interests. Funding for the measures come from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), incl. needs from advisory sessions, measures feedback, and specific requirements by MoFA. Topics include e.g. project planning and implementation, accounting, partnerships and localisation, funding, climate change, building strong democratic institutions. Moreover, learning visits / study tours are organised. Quality is assessed externally through the MoFA monitoring and HK(?) verification (national quality assurance institute). More and more online capacity buildings formats are offered, e.g. through open access online platform by Danish Church Aid, e.g. <https://fabo.org/llab/preventing-sexual-misconduct>. Most trainings are free for CIGS, sometimes there is a small fee attached to raise motivation to participate. CISU trainings are not mandatory for CIGS for getting funding.

Poland (report from Dominika)

The overall situation of capacity building for CIGS in Poland is more chaotic than in previous country reports, there is not one specific org to provide trainings. There are some foundations who are specialized in specific topics. In the 1990s there were many trainings, but in the 2000s and 2010s people got tired of trainings. After the pandemic there is a big new demand in Poland that are community orgs, how to build and run them. A best practice example is Fundusz Partnerstwa's Partnership Academy on this topic. Quality assurance takes place through: surveys, which revealed that topics like fundraising, how to build partnerships, how to run campaigns, soft skills and how to tackle crisis situations were much demanded, as well as local heritage, environmental topics, enhance and strengthen women leaders as more specific topics. The evaluation after the workshops showed that a good mix of hard and soft skills, networking, sharing best practices, bigger scale views, mentoring instead of leading were very much appreciated by participants. Externally, partners from other Central European countries started to use the approach in their countries, e.g. in Czech Republic, in future also Ukraine and Belarus. Most trainings were in-person meetings on-site, but there are also online trainings available. On funding, the current national government is very problematic. Most funding comes from the EU and other European donors such as e.g. Norway. The trainings are offered for free in Poland and are not mandatory for funding applications. The Czech partner added small fees to its trainings.

Belgium / West Flanders (report from Pieter)

A federal government funding programme for capacity building was in place in the past but doesn't exist anymore. Trainings sessions are organised on the provincial level on a regular basis by orgs like 11.11.11. They are free for participants, so there is funding in the background (sources need to be verified by Jacques). Wereldhuis West-Vlaanderen itself uses a very demand-driven specific approach for capacity building. Peer to peer exchanges that bring people together, they are open without a set

agenda, informal way to know more about the projects and how they are going. Quality assurance through talks and coaching before orgs apply for funding, while during projects through reports, sometimes even travel on-site (but impossible to cover all orgs and projects, trust the orgs is the approach). Topics within the open approach are very specific and include e.g. online fundraising (especially during pandemic), how to grow vegetables (new trend), education system in DR Congo, framing of South partners, filming and editing on smartphones.

Germany (report from Martin)

More general topics like management and accounting are offered by general training providers like business schools (better quality, but expensive), or specialised training providers for CIGS (cheaper or free). Specialised topics like fundraising or volunteering by specialised training providers like e.g. betterplace academy (<https://www.betterplace-academy.org/>) or the House of Foundations (<https://www.hausdesstiftens.org/>), sometimes even large companies as part of their corporate volunteering programmes. CLI is specialised in topics such as leadership and project management. The common case is that CIGS pay trainings on their own. There are free or very low-priced online offerings through foundations, corporates, or government agencies. Quality assurance measures: certificates are very important! But there are no general guidelines on that. General trainings sometimes are run according to general frameworks like ISO or TÜV or university credits. A federal accreditation for "Bildungsurlaub" (training vacation) is also possible, but needs to be done in each of the 16 federal states to cover whole Germany. With this accreditation, learners get up to 5 days extra off their regular work, and providers get additional funding. In general, no framework for CIGS capacity building exists. CLI is lucky enough to have its one training on partnerships being mandatory for orgs applying for the partnership funding title at Engagement Global (EG, government agency of the BMZ Ministry of Development Cooperation). Quality assurance there is organised similar to the Danish MoFA example in annual exchanges and feedback reports, as well as demands reported by CLI to EG, and requirements EG gives to orgs like CLI who provide specific CIGS trainings.

News from the Erasmus+ project application on the topic of quality assurance:

At the moment of the meeting there was no update on the small-scale partnership project that CLI (DE) and Fundus Partnerstwa (PL) applied for, as the Germany agency NABIBB was moving offices. In the week after, the following message reached us:

We reached a score of 81/100 points and are eligible. However, there were so many applications that we could just be put on the waiting list and get no immediate funding.

We asked on which position we are and how likely it is that we still get funding from this call. The answer was that we are on the 3rd position, and this should be quite well positioned to get funding once there are repayments or additional funding available within this year. Of course, they cannot promise anything.

So, our proposal is to keep the place on the waiting list and hope that additional money is coming, and we get the chance to kick-off end of this year. As we have anyways planned most of the activities in 2024, this should be no big problem. And as the deadline for the next call is 4 October and thus too short-term notice to apply with an updated call. However, if we should be unlucky and don't get the funding until the end of the year, we will hand in an updated application in the spring call in March 2024.

Summary:

The exchange was very useful and should be extended (to other countries/regions, but also within the ones discussed) to learn from each other and increase quality of capacity building. Hopefully, we get the funding from Erasmus+ to do exactly that.

There was no time to discuss the next meeting time and topic. Maybe discuss and fix date and topic in next coordination meeting.