

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

A STUDY ON COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCACY
IN ARMENIA: THE MEASURING AND MAPPING OUT OF OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

Advocacy is commonly defined as the process in which a group or groups apply a set of skills and techniques for the purpose of influencing public decision-making. In the recent years the advocacy campaigns on a local level have become an efficient tool for community development and for achieving good governance. The observation of recent trends in developmental studies also shows that citizen participation, one of the forms of which is citizen-led participation, is not only a policy sought by development and donor agencies, but also a practice that should be enhanced by states to foster democratic governance. In 2012, Armenia joined the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority. Under the commitments acquired by the document the Armenian shall provide enhanced guarantees for citizen participation in local communities. This event notably shows that Armenia is has set on the track of the worldwide path of directed to enhance the citizen participation as a measure of democratic progress. However, initially the practice of community-based advocacy was imported in Armenia by donor and development agencies. The study is an attempt to measure and map out the outcomes of the community-based advocacy campaigns in Armenian regions.

INTRODUCTION

The recent trends in development studies indicate that enhancing citizen participation in policy-making is becoming not only a priority for different international organizations, but also is a prerequisite for a democratic state. In states, where people have enough knowledge, are aware of their rights and are capable to influence policies, the democratic performance is usually much higher. One of the most effective ways of citizen participation is the community-based advocacy. It is widely accepted, that this type of advocacy is more salient and its impact is more effective and measurable on a local level, than on a national one. Likewise, Adams argues that citizens are more capable to influence policies on a local level. Through realizing this ability they become more engaged in local policy-making, contributing to its shaping in other ways than voting. Protests, referendums, public hearings, rallies, etc., all are forms of active citizen participation. Citizen-led advocacy, or as Adams also calls it citizen lobbying, is one of the most active forms of participation in public affairs by the community (Adams, 2006). Under this type of participation, citizens use pressure methods, they set specific agendas and goals and strive for their achievement in different ways, seeking for a sole aim – influencing a local policy.

As a valid and internationally recognized tool, advocacy is defined as *“the process in which a group or groups apply a set of skills and techniques for the purpose of influencing public decision-making”* (Chapman & Wameyo, January, 2001). In the recent years many scholars, NGO representatives as well as international donor organizations, have acknowledged that “project-centered” actions aiming at the accomplishment of specific goals of a certain project, are being more and more undermined and are becoming less effective. Many studies measuring the impact of advocacy efforts taken by different NGOs suggest that the latter are often driven by their agenda and tackle issues as defined in their programs. Moreover, these strategies are more designed to work on a national and even an international level – the NGO representatives work with power structures in order to directly influence policies on a national level, and cooperate with international organizations in this vein, respectively. In the meantime, the direct beneficiaries of the majority of

these efforts, for which huge amounts of grants are accorded by donor organizations, are the ordinary citizens, who often remain “isolated” from the process. Therefore, the need of revisiting advocacy policies has emerged worldwide.

“*Rights-based*” or “*people centered*” advocacy is the new shift in the strategies of most of the developmental organizations, and it is being more and more coined in studies on citizen participation. The main idea lying under this approach is that the direct beneficiaries, i.e. citizens who would be immediately impacted by a certain policy, must be participate in designing and reaching their own development. This, first of all, presumes that advocacy should not only be organized on a national level, mostly through government lobbying, but its efforts should also concentrate on local communities and local governments. Through empowering and facilitating people with necessary knowledge and tools, the organizations mobilize the communities and make their voices heard for the policy-makers, be that local or national officials. In fact, raising the transparency and democratic governance system in general is an imperative for a successful advocacy campaign and must go hand in hand with the process of impacting and changing specific policies. Without a systematic and hollitic change, the one-off or even long-term projects will be a mere imitation of change, underminig endeavors of an organization for a long-term reform agenda. It is undeniable that the citizens know the best what they need and what issues are the more salient for them, and engaging them in the advocacy process, is supposed to enhance the efforts of the advocacy organizations and make them more coordinated with community needs.

As a country in transition, which has recently gained its independence, Armenia has been in the focus of many international donor organizations, such as World Bank, Counterpart International, IMF, World Vision, etc. The intervention of these organizations in the 1990s led to an unprecedented growth of local NGOs; trend is continuing as of today. According to the data provided by the National Statistical Service of Armenia, as of December 2012 there have been 3781

NGOs registered in Armenia (Armenia, 1999). Nevertheless, as the case study of the Armenian NGO sector, conducted under the CIVICUS project in 2009 in Armenia suggests:

The infusion of donor funds and the focus on civil society strengthening throughout the 1990s led to an unprecedented and exponential growth of NGOs in Armenia. Although donors have recently attempted to expand the definition to include more actors than just NGOs, in practice civil society has often been equated with the development and growth of professionalized advocacy or service delivery NGOs, committed to pursuing a normative liberal agenda. This narrowing of the definition of civil society has been referred to as the “NGOisation” of civil society (International, 2010).

Being committed to their and namely the agendas of their donors, the Armenian NGOs rarely engage the local community members in their project, not to say empower and facilitate them with necessary knowledge and skills. However, since the international NGOs (some of which are also operating in Armenia, such as Counterpart International, World Vision, etc.) have started giving higher priority to community-led advocacy, this developmental approach is being willy-nilly transferred to Armenia. Enhancing the capacity of community citizens, empowering and equipping them with necessary tools for proactive advocacy for influencing local (but also sometimes national) policies, is one of the main priorities of these organizations.

This study is an attempt to examine the effectiveness of the community-based advocacy in Armenia in influencing and impacting public policies and addressing the issues of salience for the community. Given the time and resource limitations, the object of examination will become the local policies (despite the fact that some advocacy campaign at a local level address such issues that are solved through national policies) and the local issues, certain communities of Armenia face and strive to change. The study hypothesizes that community-based advocacy alone is capable enough to influence and change local policies. For the purpose of the study, we measure the effectiveness of citizen-led advocacy through 1) the existence of necessary legislative framework for citizen participation in decision-making, which subsequently creates spaces for citizen-led advocacy; 2) the

level of engagement of ordinary citizens in advocacy efforts; 3) the impact of advocacy campaigns on a local policy. The study is equally seeks to identify the outcomes of the community-based advocacy campaign, based on the experience of specific local communities. We suggest that if the advocacy campaigns may not directly lead to changes in local policies they may have other results. What might be these outcomes and whether they are negative or positive is one of the main questions the research will strive to answer in order to prove or disapprove the abovementioned hypothesis. In this vein, throughout the study answers to the following questions are sought: what types of policies citizens usually address, what are the tools they apply in their advocacy efforts and what are the main obstacles they face during this process. Through the mixed research methodology, which will be thoroughly described below in the respective chapter, the study will concentrate on several communities of Armenia and the advocacy endeavors of their local communities. Upon the examination of these cases, the study will try to draw out some general trends observed on the example of these cases, and suggest some recommendations for further improving the effectiveness of community-based advocacy in Armenia.

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Beyond the universally accepted basis features that characterize a democratic state, i.e., free and fair elections and constitutionally prescribed set of political rights, to be considered as "a high-quality democratic state", a country should be inhabited with citizens, properly enjoying social and cultural rights. According to O'Donnell, "democracy is ultimately based not on voters, but on citizens." (Guillermo O'Donnell, 2007).

There has been and there is still much debate on the notion of citizenship. These debates have galvanized in the recent years, when the traditional liberal dimension of citizenship is being questioned and more and more human rights organizations are striving for inclusion and engagement of citizens into the day-to-day policy-making. In this traditional dimension, which is

widely accepted by the Western political thought, the notion of "citizenship" is attached to an individual, who enjoys a set of rights granted by the state. In this state of affairs, the individual is the owner of his rights, seeks for their promotion and protection and participates individually in policy-making for his/her own benefits. As Gaventa argues, as such, the participation of the individual in politics is largely seen through the lens of political and civic participation, " e.g. to vote within a representative democratic system, to form associations (such as parties) and to exercise free speech" (Gaventa, 2002). Some scholars, however, question the effectiveness of this kind of participation, and argue that acting individually may be a disincentive for participation. Thus, being skeptical of their ability and capacity of influencing policy and decision-making, and having limited resources on their own, some citizens may choose to become "free riders" (Adams, *Citizen Lobbyists : Local Efforts to Influence Public Policy.*, 2006). In a study, depicting the reasons why American citizens abstain from voting, Leighly, among the myriad of causes for non-participation in voting, stressed the imbalance among the cost and convenience of voting and the expected utility from balloting, the former considered to be exceeding the latter (Leighley, 1995). However, if on national level an individual citizen may abstain from participating, having doubts about the impact he/she may have on policy-making, the picture is rather different on a local level. Adams argues that the "free rider" bias is mitigated on the local level, since the ability of one citizen to make a significant difference on a local level is greater than on a national level – "unlike voting in which participation is limited (citizens can only vote once in each election), there is no formal limitation for participating on a local policy issue" (Adams, *Citizen Lobbyists: Local Efforts to Influence Public Policy.*, 2006, p. 22). In the meantime, citizen participation in local politics encounters another important problem – in local politics community members are more inclined to an "exit" option and they more frequently opt out from participation, leaving their community rather than striving for change in it (Hirschman, 1970). In his study, Hirschman analyzes the possible responses by the members of political or economic organizations (e.g. school, company,

state) when the later ones undergo a decline in quality or benefit to their members. The two options identified by Hirschman are “exit” or “voice”. On a community level, this is translated by the citizens either by moving to a neighboring city (“exit” option) or by getting engaged in local policy-making through raising their voice (“voice” option) (Adams, *Citizen Lobbyists: Local Efforts to Influence Public Policy.*, 2006).

Starting from the 1990s, there have been several shifts in development studies, which have given rise to the shaping of the new concept of “citizenship”. The major shifts were the emergence of the “good governance” and “citizens’ voice” concepts. These have boosted new debate on the ways of citizens’ participation on local decision-making process, bringing the direct beneficiaries – poor and marginalized citizens, directly into politics and the decision-making processes (Gaventa, *Introduction: Exploring Citizenship, Participation and Accountability*, 2002).

These new trends and their implications in both academic scholarship and developmental project studies are discussed below. It is, however, important to first take a glance on the academic works that define the notion of social capital, which provides ground and ensures civic engagement and participation (Putnam, "Social Capital and Public Affairs", 1994). Social capital – being argued as a panacea for the collective action problem – is widely referred to as “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, "Social Capital and Public Affairs", 1994).

On the example of American democracy, Putnam, in his famous and groundbreaking study, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital", tracks the process of American civic engagement since the 1950s and argues that the social capital among American citizens is “eroding”. Drawing predominantly from the evidence collected from over 500 interviews, Putnam claims that American citizens become disengaged from political involvement. In the meantime, in this and several other works Putnam stresses the importance of social capital and its role in democracy-building (Putnam, 2000). Another empiric study on this relationship and the

importance of community engagement in democratic state-building, was conducted by Putnam in one of his first studies, "Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy" (Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1992). In a comparative study of 20 Italian regional governments, Putnam draws the differences of the regional governments' efficiency and efficacy, claiming that the lack of civic tradition, civic communities and horizontal bonds between citizens has contributed to the failure of governance in the Southern cities of Italy, meanwhile the active citizen engagement and dense civic networks have led to the prosperity of the Northern states. Based on this study, Putnam also concludes that social capital is self-reinforcing and cumulative – "successful collaboration in one endeavor builds connections and trust-social assets that facilitate future collaboration in other, unrelated tasks" (Putnam, 1994, p. 10). Putnam further suggests that "social capital is not a substitute for effective public policy but rather a prerequisite for it" (Putnam, 1994, p. 18). He further argues that social capital facilitates collective action, which is often undermined by the "tragedy of commons", explained in the example of Hardin's farmers. Putnam questions, the above-argued liberal classical thought, which is designed to enhance the opportunities of individuals and makes the following call "we have to make our political system more responsive, especially to those who lack connections at the top, we must nourish grassroots organization" (Putnam, 1994, p. 16)

All these arguments bring us to our initial statements about the new trends in "citizenship", which Jones and Gaventa distinguish as communitarian thinking (Jones & Gaventa, 2002). "Placing an emphasis on inclusive participation as the very foundation of democratic practice, these approaches suggest a more active notion of citizenship: one which recognizes the agency of citizens as 'makers and shapers' rather than as 'users and choosers' of interventions or services designed by others" (Gaventa, Introduction: Exploring Citizenship, Participation and Accountability, 2002, p. 4). Gaventa argues that in the past, the gap between citizens and institutions, which should be fulfilled in a deeper democratic state, was sought to be fulfilled by

citizen participation or the strengthening of the accountability and responsiveness of government. While the former provides forum for poor and marginalized people to participate in decision-making and policy shaping, through deliberations, consultation and mobilization, through the latter new forms of institutions are established for ensuring good governance. However, in a very recent debate these two approaches work in an equation focusing on both inclusive and participatory citizen action and responsive and accountable government. In order to have strong state and strong civil society, participatory democracy and responsive government should be present as 'mutually reinforcing and supportive' (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001). In fact, community participation brings citizens closer to the state where citizens use the created spaces for "citizenship participation" beyond the ballot box, and they become more active in seeking responsiveness of the state. To exclude adverse effects, such as creating more distant relationship with the state, the state, in its turn should be responsive and accountable. The new thinking on citizen participation goes even further recognizing the right to participate in the social, economic decision-making process as a human right (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001). This rights-based approach of citizen participation is supported and utilized by many social and political scientists, as well as organizations. Article 3 of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development provides,

"States have the right and the duty to formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting therefrom." According to Article 8, *"States should encourage popular participation in all spheres as an important factor in development and in the full realization of all human rights."* (UN Declaration on the Right to Development, 1986).

The Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority, states in its Article 1.

“The States Parties shall secure to everyone within their jurisdiction the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority.”

“The right to participate in the affairs of a local authority denotes the right to seek to determine or to influence the exercise of a local authority's powers and responsibilities.” (Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority, 2009)

Lister suggests:

the right of participation in decision making in social, economic, cultural and political life should be included in the nexus of basic human rights (...). Citizenship as participation can be seen as representing an expression of human agency in the political arena, broadly defined; citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents (Lister, 1998, p. 228).

According to Ferguson people cannot realize their rights to health if they cannot exercise their democratic rights to participation in decision making around health service provision (Gaventa, Introduction: Exploring Citizenship, Participation and Accountability, 2002).

The rights-based approach of citizen participation is also adopted and used in the policy of some development organization. Thus, for example, the new community-based advocacy policy of the World Vision NGO, which among other countries is currently put in practice in Armenia, is constructed on a rights-based approach. The Citizen Voice and Action works from a rights-based perspective. A rights-based approach focuses on those who are most excluded, and measures success on how effectively the rights of the most marginalized people have been upheld. It is based firmly in the belief that poor and marginalized people everywhere have rights and responsibilities (Citizen Voice and Action: Guidance Notes, 2009).

It is therefore widely accepted that the community participation in politics is a value-laden for social and economic development of a country, leading to a deeper democracy-building. In a very recent study Gaventa and Barrett investigate the outcomes of citizen engagement analyzing a non-

randomized sample of 100 research studies of four types of citizen engagement in 20 countries (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010). Through a qualitative, namely meta-case study method, the researchers observe the outcomes of citizen engagement and participation projects and policies, and answer to the question whether these outcomes contribute to strengthening the democracy in a specific state. The study reveals that 75% of the coded outcomes of the study are positive and range from the construction of citizenship, strengthened practices of participation, the building of responsive and accountable states, or more inclusive and cohesive societies. However, 25 percent of the cases have had negative outcomes – “disempowerment and a reduced sense of agency, or to new knowledge dependencies, or re-enforced exclusions due to new forms of awareness; participation is perceived as meaningless, tokenistic, or manipulated; sometimes engagement leads to building responsive states and institutions, other times it faces bureaucratic ‘brick walls’; failures to implement or sustain policy gains; reprisals, including violence, from state actors, against those who challenge the status quo; greater sense of exclusion, generated from new spaces of participation”. An important conclusion made in the study which could be somehow equally perceived as a limitation to it, is that generalizable conclusions in such kind of studies cannot be drawn, however the patterns emerged as a result of the study may become subject for further research. One of the interesting patterns observed by the authors is that all the differences of the outcomes revealed by the study were mostly due to two factors – type of citizen engagement and the nature of political context. Not making precise and absolute conclusions, since the cases explored have also disclosed negative outcomes, although their balance is not so big, the study does not reject the contribution of citizen engagements for democracy-building and development. Finally based on extensive evidence from various cases, Gaventa and Barrett propose and advance a new research question in the field of citizen participation to be answered in the years to come:

... the issue is not simply to ask ‘what difference does it make?’ but to understand further the conditions under which it makes a positive difference. Rather than simply measure the

contribution of engagement to development and democracy, we must focus also on the quality and direction of the differences which are made, and how they are attained. Answers to these questions should occupy researchers for many years to come (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010, p. 60).

Gaventa and Barrett, based on the experience of 20 countries, identify four types of citizen engagement (1) participation in local associations; 2) participation in social movements and campaigns; 3) participation in formal participatory governance spaces; 4) multiple approaches, which employ several of these strategies. In a case study on the nature and effects of the citizen participation in Santa Ana community of Los Angeles, USA, Brian Adams distinguishes four approaches for influencing the policy-making by citizens (Adams, 2006) . In the first case, *citizens act as watchdogs* and are not politically engaged, have little interest in public affairs, and consequently do not participate extensively. When *citizens act as collaborative problem solvers* they mobilize to collaborate with policy-makers on solving issues that the community faces. However, since in this type of participation the citizens do not use the tactics of pressure and confrontation, the potential of advocacy is much less than in the third case of *citizens as lobbyists*, who are proactive, use pressure tactics, participate in agenda setting and advocate for shaping and influencing policies. Finally, the least active patterns of participations are observed when *citizens act as pawns* – rather than engaging themselves in decision-making, they follow the elites and the agenda set by the officials, or *ideological activists* – who participate for pushing ideological agendas, rather than specific goals. As a result of his case study, Adams demonstrates that citizens of Santa Ana act as lobbyists – they engage in specific neighborhood issues and are rather proactive in agenda setting.

In thinking about types of policy interventions for minimizing environmental hazards in the communities, Forester and Techketil suggest the some forms of participation and integration of negotiation in it. Under the most effective form, also called as “democratic deliberations”, there is high level of voice inclusion and participation with effective negotiations. This form could yet be

attributed to the advocacy approach, where apart of participation; citizens exercise pressure for reaching their goals (Paleo, 2009).

Perhaps, the Brian's citizens-lobbyists are the most likely to engage in advocacy actions. As a result of the study in Santa Ana community, he finds that the citizens' actions could be more described as advocacy efforts, since the citizens themselves set goals, identify strategies and pursue these goals for reframing policies. Brian also states that the issues addressed by the citizen-lobbyists are not selected based on their salience but on the direct impact their solution may have for the community. Thus, in the majority of cases people organize advocacy campaigns for policies that may directly influence their lives and which will have an immediate impact, rather than on issues which may be of higher salience but the results of which would be visible in a long-run.

When talking about advocacy, as one of the main tools of citizen participation, Samuel argues that "public advocacy has become a bandwagon that everyone is clambering on to" (Samuel, 2007, p. 615). Stemming from his own example of advocacy implementation in India, Samuel accepts that it has largely contributed to the social transformation in India and to the adoption of social justice legislation. At the same time, Samuel differentiates between public and people-centered advocacy. If the former is seen as a set of peaceful actions to redefine, realign and change unjust and unfavorable policies, the latter embraces a broader scope and seeks for an overall social transformation, through which marginal groups will gain power and be vested with enhanced rights. It is however clear that both types of advocacy serve the poor and marginal and strive for change in their lives. In all the cases, the effectiveness of advocacy, be that public or people-centered, is preconditioned by the fact whether it is aligned on both micro and macro level. Proceeding from the Indian example, Samuel shows that the more the grassroots and the marginal people – direct beneficiaries of the campaigns – are engaged in advocacy, the more it is credible and effective. The author suggest "reclaiming advocacy", i.e. engaging the direct beneficiaries, namely grassroots in the realities and not attributing advocacy to professional elites, which

concentrate more on the macro-level. For engaging people in advocacy, he recommends to “(re)-learn the people’s language”. Thus, Samuel among other factors, such as resistance of unequal power relations, engaging state institutions, creating “spaces” for advocacy and equipping citizens with necessary skills, identifies the necessity of “bridging micro-level and macro-level policy initiatives”. In a different scenario, the public advocacy faces the danger of being misaligned from its initial goals of promoting the rights of marginalized and becoming a tool in the hands of professional elites.

The latter argument is equally supported in a workshop paper that provides an overview of advocacy and citizen participation efforts, prepared by 49 people across the world - Latin American, Asian, Middle East, African and other countries. The workshop participants question the legitimacy and the level of representation of advocacy campaigns driven around the world. They mainly point out that by the intervention of professional organizations in the spaces defined for advocacy, the advocacy efforts often lack legitimacy, since they do not necessarily strive for the goals of social transformation but rather for the goals that derive from the organization’s agenda. At the same time, even though the NGOs claim to be representative of all the people, they often find themselves underrepresented. Hence, once again a strong need for engaging people themselves in the advocacy efforts is emphasized. (Clark, 2001).

Perhaps, the new vision of the concept of advocacy in developmental studies, had conditioned the reshaping and reframing of advocacy efforts of different NGOs, including international NGOs operating in Armenia. As already mentioned, World Vision Armenia is now actively involved in raising community-based advocacy through its new Citizen’s Voice and Action Guide, which integrates the notion of transformative advocacy, where the citizens are engaged for advocating for their rights.

In assessing the state of Armenian civil society in frames of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index, the main contributor to the study Counterpart International Armenia, suggests that the Armenian civil

society organizations sometimes are often heavily dependent on international funding and therefore seek to implement their agendas, including in their advocacy efforts, rather than solving issues of general public interest, unless they coincide with the abovementioned agendas. Meanwhile, the study also claims that in local communities a culture of citizen participation and voluntarism exists - "Many residents often take part in these initiatives even if they do not personally benefit from the initiatives, mostly as a sign of solidarity with their co-villagers" (Counterpart, 2010). This could be perceived as a major, although not sufficient, determinant for successful advocacy.

At the same time another study by an Armenian NGO (Communities Finance Officers Association (CFOA)) which explores the level of local citizen participation in Armenia, reveals that in the understanding of kinship and networks mutually cooperating with each other, citizen communities are quite active in Armenia, especially in rural communities. Nevertheless, while analyzing the legislative framework, the CFOA states that it provides few spaces for citizen participation and advocacy. The study differentiates between passive and active types of participation. Whereby, the main aim of the first type is to inform and hold the citizens aware of the ongoing decision-making processes without their involvement, in the second case special conditions are created for engaging people in policy-making. Based on the analysis of the RA Constitution, Law on Local Self-government, Law on Local Self-government in Yerevan, Law on Budgetary System, Law on Legal Acts, and Law on Urban Development, the study argues that the legislative framework provides mainly spaces for raising the awareness of citizens (e.g. the requirement imposed on local authorities to disseminate the agendas, the protocols of the community council meetings, the decisions, hold open sessions, Q&A sessions between community council members and citizens), but not engaging them directly in decision-making. The major type of active participation enshrined in the law are the local referenda on salient issues for the community, however no

referenda has been conducted ever since the establishment of the local self-government system in Armenia (Tumanyan & Shahbazyan, 2011).

This study helps to understand that officially the state creates few spaces for community advocacy in Armenia, and these spaces should be created or the existing ones should be properly used in order to engage the people directly in advocacy.

There is very limited number of studies that measure the effectiveness of advocacy and in general of citizen participation in Armenia. In a very rare case study, implemented by Counterpart International analyzes the environmental advocacy and its influence on policy-making. Through expert interviews, the study of the most active advocacy campaign in Armenia, reveals a major shortcoming in it – the advocates are active in responding to burning issues, instead of being persistent on each policy issue and engaged in all the initiatives. “Proactive rather than reactive measures will render the whole process more strategic”, the study concludes. It also makes another important conclusion, based on the examples of the campaigns studied – wherever the advocacy efforts have sought to mobilize support of local communities they have been more successful, rather than in cases where the campaigns were driven by mere environmental organizations and groups (Counterpart, 2010).

RESEARCH METHODS

To measure the efficiency of local advocacy efforts in Armenia a stratified sample was selected and tools of a qualitative research method, particularly case study were applied. The time and resource limitations have not allowed for conducting a thorough and longitudinal case study in some specific local community. This would have allowed us to make a deep analysis of the nature and character of citizen engagement with the policy-making process. However, since the study strives to measure the effectiveness of only one specific form of citizen participation on a local level, i.e. community-based advocacy, the research tools used in the study, do not undermine the validity of the study,

however further and a deeper research in the subject would allow to make more generalizable conclusions on the topic.

Thus, to test the hypothesis and to answer the research questions, qualitative research methods were applied. The cases of three local communities were examined. The choice of the cases was conditioned upon two basic factors, whether the city or the village have an active and vibrant community and whether there have been any successful cases of advocacy campaigns for influencing policies. In this vein, the following local communities were included as an object of the study: one of the most active and the second largest city of Armenia, Gyumri (Shirak marz), the village of Lukashin (Armavir region), which despite the small size of its community has good records in terms of advocacy campaigns, as well as the city of Dilijan (Tavush marz), the population of which is also engaged and has made several advocacy efforts. The choice of the latter two communities was also conditioned by the fact that the local government of the cities, as well as the groups of their active citizens effectively cooperate with donor organizations. Namely, the scope and the nature of their cooperation with the Counterpart International Armenia, was also reviewed in the study.

Data for the study were mainly collected through in-depth interviews conducted by a semi-structured questionnaire with open-ended questions. The findings were revealed upon the content analysis of these interviews. A preset questionnaire was used during the interviews (see Annex 1). However, when topics required further discussion space was provided. The interviews were conducted with active citizens and local authorities, as well as representatives of NGOs working with the observed communities, local government experts. Further the data obtained from the interviewees were compared and analyzed for reflecting upon two main issues: a) the level of engagement of ordinary citizens in advocacy efforts; b) the impact of advocacy campaigns on a local policy.

For revealing whether the legislation of the Republic of Armenia creates ensures enough space for citizen participation, including advocacy campaign, or the citizens should seek for unofficial means,

a content analysis of the appropriate legislation was conducted, and the data gathered was analyzed to answer whether the appropriate legislative framework, as a variable in the study, could influence the effectiveness of citizen-led advocacy.

The tools of a case study approach used in the study, were used with the intention to explore the how and why questions, rather than to provide statistical and quantitative data. This might have not given a statistical significance of the study and the possibility of making statistically-supported conclusions. However, bearing in mind the danger of broad generalization (given the specific context under each community); the study has revealed some persistent patterns which with enough degree of caution could be used to describe the situation with local advocacy in Armenia, and make some valuable conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 1

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ENSURING SPACES FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCACY

This chapter will examine whether the legislation of Armenia provides enough spaces for active citizen participation and what types of it are reflected in the legislation, which according to the internationally accepted standards is a right to be granted by the state to its citizens. For this purpose the following legislative acts were analyzed: Law on Local Self-Government in Yerevan (2009), Law on Local Self-government (2002), Law on Budgetary System, Law on Local Referendum and Law on Urban Development. The analysis of the laws and the findings revealed therein are made and classified in the context of the basic forms of citizen participation – partaking in local elections, voting for officials or running office, or directly engaging in policymaking through public meetings, council meetings, protests, etc. For the purpose of the study only findings providing ground for the second type of citizen participation will be presented. The right to participate in local self-governance system is first and foremost ensured in the main law of Armenia. The Constitution of RA, Article 30, reads as follows:

Eighteen-year old citizens of the Republic of Armenia have the right to take part in the elections and referenda as well as the right to take part in the public administration and local self-governance through their representatives chosen directly and through the expression of free will.

As we may not, the right provided by the constitution predominantly refers to the first type of citizen participation, and only one part of the article “right to take part in the public administration and local self-governance ... through the expression of free will” provides ground for citizens’ advocacy.

Interestingly enough, there is a considerable difference on the regulation of citizen participation in the Laws on Local Self-Government in Yerevan, Law on Local Self-government, the former providing the community with enhanced tools for advocacy rather than the latter. The main ground

under, which citizens may partake in local decision-making processes within the Law on Local Self Government is their right to participate in Community Council meetings (Article 14) and their right to be informed about the holding of these meetings (Article 12₁).

In addition to the open meeting of the Community Council of Yerevan, Law on Local Self Governance in Yerevan provides for a broader spectrum for the second type of citizen participation, which create official spaces for advocacy campaigns:

1. Under Article 21 of the Law, at a demand of a member of community council managers of administrative districts of Yerevan have to secure a furnished room or a hall to such member of community council at least monthly to organize Q&A sessions for Yerevan citizens and holding public meetings (translation of the Law derived from the study of Community Finances Officers) (Tumanyan & Shahbazyan, 2011).
2. Under Article 39 of the Law, Adoption of decisions, messages and announcements of Yerevan community council may be initiated – in addition to the members of the community council, fractions and Yerevan Mayor – by no less than 1 percent of citizens entitled to participate in elections of members of the community council. Such initiatives are discussed at sessions of community council no later than within four months (Tumanyan & Shahbazyan, 2011).
3. Under Article 35 of the Law, with the objective to clarify and/or explore any issue on local self-governance, that is of social interest, any fraction of the Yerevan community council can, once per year, initiate and create an “expert commission”, which will operate until the issue is clarified but no longer than six months. Sessions of such commissions shall be open to the public, but community council may opt for sessions behind closed doors as well.
4. Under Article 38, at a regular session of the Yerevan community council, at the least quorum of one-third of the members, discussions around issues of social and civil interest may be held.

5. Under Article 39, with the objective to obtain perceptions of population on issues of civil interest within its powers, the community council can hold public hearings, as well as appoint a local referendum in accordance with the legislation, the results of which will not be mandatory for implementation.

The 2007 RA Law on Local Referenda states that local referenda can be initiated not only by the community head or the council, but also by citizens who have the right to partake in these referenda. The citizens willing to initiate a referendum, may form a group of 5 persons and submit a request for holding a local referendum to the electoral commission of the given community (Article 7). In fact, the right to petition a local referenda is provided under both the Laws on Self-Government and Self-Government in Yerevan. Nevertheless, the exploration of the articles of the laws made above clearly demonstrates the large gap existing in the two legislative acts in terms of securing a solid ground for active citizen participation, which might be a prerequisite for conducting effective advocacy campaigns. As Cornwall and Gaventa suggest, the citizen participation beyond the ballot box makes the government more responsive (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001). Likewise, if the government itself guarantees such spaces for participation, the citizens may become more proactive, including in their advocacy efforts.

The gap between the provisions of the two legislative acts should be bridged, specifically now when Armenia has ratified Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority. The protocol, the provisions of which become mandatory for the ratifying state, binds the states to take measures for “necessary to give effect to the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority.” These measures amongst other include, procedures for involving people which may include consultative processes, local referendums and petitions and, where the local authority has many inhabitants and/or covers a large geographical area, measures to involve people at a level close to them; procedures for access, in accordance with the Party’s constitutional order and international legal obligations, to official documents held by local authorities; measures for meeting the needs of categories of persons who face particular

obstacles in participating; and mechanisms and procedures for dealing with and responding to complaints and suggestions regarding the functioning of local authorities and local public services, Article 2 (Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority, 2009).

CHAPTER 2

STUDY OF ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

Case 1 : Lukashin Village

The village of Lukashin is situated in 44 kms far from the capital of Armenia, Yerevan. It is located in the region Armavir. The territory of the village makes 10.6 the population is 2601 people. The proportion of men versus women makes 1276-1325, accordingly.

The village of Lukashin became object of observation given its uniqueness from many other communities in terms of active citizen participation. This fact has attracted the attention of many donor and development organizations, which are equally active in the community. The Armenian think-tank International Center for Human Development has entered the community back in 2005, when it launched its program, “Participatory Democracy in Action”. The main idea of the project is to enhance citizen participation in the policy-making process of Armenian local communities. The Town Hall Meeting mechanism, as one of the most effective and vibrant models of facilitating public participation in public policy and raising citizen awareness, is applied to achieve the aims of the project. In this regard, the ICHD intervention in the Lukashin community was fruitful and produced some visible outcomes . As the Head of Education and Training Unit at ICHD, Ashot Khurshudyan stressed, *“The case of Lukashin differs [from other communities]. We have held trainings there and a group representing citizens and the municipality was created. The group is supposed to spread the practice of participatory democracy in the community.”*

“Lukashin is one of the front-runners in this process”, noted Mr. Khurshudyan.

Another development agency that works with this community is the Counterpart International Armenia. However, the tools and mechanisms of the two organizations considerably differ, even though they aim at a single goal – enhancing participatory democracy. In the case of ICHD, no financial resources are provided to the people for solving issues they raise at the town hall meeting,

ICHD's contribution is limited to the transferring of knowledge and skills to community members for conducting advocacy campaigns and influencing decision-making. Meanwhile, not only Counterpart International creates spaces for participation (a group of 10 active citizens of the community was established to advance and advocate for the interest of the community), but it also supports the implementation of several community projects.

In all the community development projects, Counterpart uses the following mechanism: survey of the citizens to reveal the urgent issues of the community, drafting possible scenarios for their solution and discussion of these scenarios at community gatherings. As a result of these gatherings, the public votes one of the possible scenarios for the accomplishment of which funds are allocated both by the local budget and Counterpart.

The study of the community and the content analysis of the interviews with the citizens have revealed the following issues the Lukashin residents face (the issues are listed according to their significance, starting from the most salient):

- Construction of the main village road,
- Renovation of the water supply routes,
- Lightening of the streets,
- Reconstruction of the kindergarten,
- Reconstruction of the municipal pool.

The citizens of the village, or at least the most active ones, have been conducting advocacy campaigns for all the abovementioned issues. Still, only a part of them has found solution. The community problems that considerably affect resources, remain mostly unresolved, since the local budget cannot support such expenses, while the budgets of the donor organizations do not envision such amounts. Likewise, in Lukashin the issue of the main village road, like the one of water supply routes, albeit active citizen-led advocacy, are unresolved. *"The village head works good, if there*

are necessary funds, he will do everything [to hear the voices of the citizen]”, said one of the residents. “We give priority to those issues, for which we know there are enough resources and funds”, says another active resident. “We usually advocate for those issues, which seem to be more realistic to be resolved”, a citizen stressed.

Meanwhile, the advocacy campaign by the Lukashin residents for the renovation of the kindergarten and the public pool attained its goals with the partial support of the Counterpart as well as allocations from the budget.

Case 2: Dilijan City

The city of Dilijan is situated in 99 kms far from the capital of Armenia, Yerevan. It is located in the region Tavush. The territory of the city makes 10.6 square/km, the population is 15.700people.

The proportion of men versus women makes 8217-19394, accordingly.

As opposed to Lukashin, which is a rural community with a small population, Dilijan is a city, with 5 schools, 6 kindergartens and a capital budget of 301085.1 mln AMD.

Moreover, unlike Lukashin, where Counterpart International is the only donor organization, in Dilijan along with Counterpart various development agencies are operating, such as: USAID, Save the Children UNDP, IFAD, GIZ; Social Housing Foundation; Armenian Branch of Save the Children Federation.

In general, the study shows (based on content analysis of interviews with community members and analysis of Counterpart International's community gathering protocols) that the main issues existing in Dilijan according to their significance are the following (starting from the most significant):

- Low service quality of public transport,
- Inefficient water supply,
- Lack of cultural and entertainment centers.

Nevertheless, none of these problems has been properly addressed either in the 4-years development plan of the city, or in the budget of the community.

One of the advocacy campaigns that has had successes in the city aimed at the reconstruction of the city kindergarten. This campaign, which did not demand as much as resources as the abovementioned issues, was successfully accomplished through the funds provided by Counterpart International and some allocations from the 2012 city budget.

Case 3: Gyumri city

Gyumri is the second largest city in Armenia and the capital of the Shirak region in the northwestern part of the country. It is located around 126 km north of the capital Yerevan. As of the 2009 official estimate, the city had a population of 146,400.

In general, the city of Gyumri, unlike the abovementioned two communities, has a quite developed civil society in the face of its active community-based organizations. “Asparez” Journalists Club of Gyumri, “Shirak” NGO are among the most active CBOs, besides such organizations, as World Vision Armenia, has its regional offices located in Gyumri.

The first advocacy campaign observed in the city was devoted to the online broadcasting of the city council meeting. According to Article 14 of the Law on Local Self-Government, the meetings of the city council are open for public. As the local NGOs and citizens insist this article does not restrict them to demand that the public meetings are broadcast online. Under the governance of the former Mayor of Gyumri, Vardan Ghukasian, the advocacy campaign, which was coordinated by the CBO “Asparez” Journalists Club of Gyumri, met the resistance of the authorities. However, with the coming to power of the new Mayor, Samvel Balasarian, the citizens voices were given adequate response and since June , 2012 the public meetings of the Council are broadcast online. As the study shows, particularly based on the interviews of the CBO representatives, this campaign did not demand any material resources on behalf of the campaign, however it was being persistently antagonized by the former Mayor, purely because of the lack of political will. As many citizens

mention, the former Mayor, was not responsive to the citizens' voices, did not anyhow negotiate with them or take their claims into account. Despite, the higher level of engagement of the Gyumri citizens in local governance, (as opposed to the two other cases studied), in most of the cases this did not lead to a responsive government - in some cases due to lack of financial resources, in other- of political will.

One such campaign, which remains unaccomplished is addressed to ensure the effective citizen participation in the budgeting process. The Law on Self-Government provides tools for participatory budgeting in Armenia. Under Article 53 of the Law community members have the right to participate in the discussion of the budget by the council, moreover their voices should be taken into account.

Nevertheless, in case of Gyumri citizens are, in fact, deprived of any possibility to partake in the budget-making process and to effectively raise their concerns. They are invited to participate in the Council meetings, where the budget is approved as mere "guests" and they do not have any influence on the budget. The citizen engaged in public policy-making, and namely the local NGOs, have been striving to ensure their effective participation in the budgeting process. Nevertheless, once again due to the lack of political will, impedes them to achieve any significant results in their efforts. However, as the Head of the "Asparez" CBO Levon Barseghian, who is also a member of the City Council, mentioned that they are hopping to achieve some results in the upcoming budgeting year.

CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY: INFLUENCE AND OUTCOMES OF COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCACY

Hypothesis 1 Community-based advocacy alone is capable enough to influence and change local policies.

One of the important prerequisites for effective citizen-engagement, (we measure effectiveness by the level and quality of engagement) is the presence of spaces provided for citizen-participation. These spaces may be formal, i.e. prescribed by the law, or informal – created by the people. Many scholars, including Gaventa, Putnam, believe that the more the state secures the right of the people to participate in local governance, the more the society is likely to make use of this right. In the case of Armenia, this hypothesis is partially true. The content analysis of the legislation illustrates that the Armenian legislation, albeit with some reservations, does ensure mechanisms for citizen participation, however given the common gap between law and implementation, this may not always lead to effective citizen participation and ensure the success of advocacy campaigns in terms of influencing policies. Hence, a positive answer to the first research question on the existence of formal spaces for participation does not necessarily contribute to influencing directly the local policies, thus additional data are needed to prove the first hypothesis. In fact, as the study of advocacy campaigns demonstrate, simply having a space for citizen engagement or participation in decision-making or campaigning enshrined in a law, does not necessarily produce positive practices of advocacy in terms of changing policies. The effectiveness of advocacy campaigns, in terms of its impact and results achieved, may not solely be attributed to the presence of formal spaces. As the study shows, the citizens' awareness and sense of empowerment is a more dominant factor leading to their engagement and effective advocacy campaigns. The two of the three cases observed,

particularly in Dilijan and Lukashin, illustrated that the sense of empowerment and agency among citizens is increased, when they know that there are enough resources to attain a policy sought by the campaigning. These resources, being in many cases provided by donor organizations, bring us to the following assumption: the support of donor organizations lead to enhanced citizen engagement in public decision-making and thus to the emergence of advocacy-campaigns. When citizens have confidence that there are enough financial resources to “hear their voices”, they are more willing to mobilize in advocacy campaigns. At the same time, the quality of lessons “learnt” and the achieved success may produce positive outcomes in terms of emergence of new advocacy campaigns.

In general, a common pattern is observed in the cases studies – the advocacy campaigns have a direct impact on decision-making and public policies, whenever there are enough resources to carry out these policies. This comes to partially prove the study’s first hypothesis that community-based advocacy is capable to influence and change local policies. However, a major reservation should be made - the level of influence is highly contingent upon the financial stability of the community and the existence of external support, as the case of the Lukashin and Dilijan showed.

Hypothesis 2 Community-based advocacy campaigns may not directly lead to changes in local policies they may produce other outcomes

The analysis of the cases on the other hand suggest that the failure of advocacy campaigns does not mean that it does not entail other intermediary outcomes. The latter assumption was hypothesized in our study. With significant limitations, given the small sample, we revealed that community-based advocacy may contribute to some intermediary outcomes, which are presented and categorized into two groups – negative and positive (see *Table 1*).

Table 1

1. Positive	Enhanced trust	Awareness	Engagement	Collaboration
2. Negative	Exclusion	Reduced agency	Dependency	Alienation

Positive Outcomes

In all the cases studied, the major problem hindering problem for citizen mobilization and successful advocacy campaigns, was the lack of trust towards any positive change. As many people told, they were frustrated and did not believe that their voice may be heard and some change will occur. However, the study also showed that this ***trust was being revitalized and strengthened*** through the efforts primarily of donor organizations and active citizens. A general observation may be made - the donor and in general developmental organizations, not having a direct goal of strengthening trust of citizens towards their governments do in fact carry out this mission. Engaging people in dialogue with policy-makers and striving for spaces of their participation may boost the citizens and get them out of the enduring apathy they have been going through. *“All the members of the community are beneficiaries [of advocacy]”*, says a community member.

“Initially it seemed unrealistic [successful advocacy] now when people see some work is being done, trust is revitalizing,”; “The community is working”, “I, personally, have gained much knowledge”, Alvina Hovhannisian, 31, the coordinator of the active citizen group, established by Counterpart’s project spoke about the community-led advocacy projects. Nevertheless, she also stressed that in general “people have lost their trust”, and “this process is new; its results may be visible later”.

Except for the case of Gyumri, where ***citizen awareness and engagement*** was not only fostered by the donor organizations, but also by the CBOs, people in Dilijan and Lukashin unanimously agreed that the skills and knowledge they acquired were mostly due to the projects of donors, implemented in their region. However, if the widely accepted strategy used in developmental

studies suggest that citizen awareness should lead to citizen engagement, which in turn leads to construction of citizenship, inclusive societies and responsive and accountable governments, then in case of the three communities (with major limitations this could be generalized to the whole Armenian society), only the first two outcomes were frequently observed, inclusive and accountable governments being still a goal for the future. The examples of our case studies, however, show that the citizen awareness is not only due to the skills and knowledge imported by donor organizations, but also by to the advocacy campaigns they engage in. In the communities' studied, some of the citizens often joined the campaigns in response to a felt need, or an action, which in turn created new knowledge necessary for further action and engagement. "Citizen engagement does not occur because people are fully knowledgeable and aware, but rather involves such initial steps towards participation which can serve to create deeper awareness. This awareness may be of one's rights and responsibilities, or of technical issues important to more effective engagement, or of alternatives to the status quo; or, indeed, some combination of all three" (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010). This pattern was equally evident in our study. Thus, within our sample, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that knowledgeable and aware citizens are one of the most important sets of positive outcomes produced by citizen-led advocacy.

Another intermediary positive outcome that advocacy campaigns bring is the deepening of network and alliances, which are more capable to effectively collaborate with the government. In most of the cases, the campaigns for solving a community problem brought together its supporters. These people find each other on the plea of a certain campaign, like in the case of online broadcasting of Gyumri, but begin to further build long-term relationships. The collaboration or networking between citizens was evident in all the cases studied. At the same time, we have to note that these networks did not emerge automatically. In case of Dilijan and Lukashin, they were mostly established through the efforts of donor organizations, namely

Counterpart International. These new civic networks, appear to be successful and being more collaborative communities are more capable to influence local policies. Moreover, the evidence of the three communities shows that in these alliances, people are more comfortable to raise their critical voices and strive for their desired policies. At the same time, it should be noted that only in one of the three communities observed, a case of “citizen-lobbyism”, as coined by Adams, was observed. Particularly, only in Gyumri, citizens used pressure tactics, such as rallies, public statements, etc., to influence the public-decision making. In the two other cases, the citizens are more of collaborative problem solvers, and they work together with the authorities to resolve the community issues. This was most striking in the example of Lukashin, where the leader of the citizens’ active group was the secretary of the Mayor.

Negative Outcomes

Apart of the positive outcomes, advocacy campaigns may produce in Armenian communities, in the cases observed, they also contribute to some negative outcomes, albeit their intensity is significantly less. The following outcomes, are mapped out:

- Where in some cases advocacy may enhance the networks and alliances of people, it may also lead to the sense of exclusion between citizens (gap between “active citizen groups” and the rest of citizens). Thus, there is a ***sense of exclusion*** among ordinary citizens and the groups of citizens, who are more knowledgeable thanks to the skills gained from donor organizations and the members of these groups. Because people are less aware and therefore less confident, they find themselves disinvited and excluded from some actions and advocacy efforts.
- In some of the cases, the community members involved in only such campaigns, which were supported by the donor organizations. This in its turn draws out a negative outcome - the ***sense of dependency*** on the funds of donor organizations. People set the agenda for the campaign in line

with the preferences, agenda and program budget of the donor organizations, and not based on their vital needs. Thus, in some cases, namely this is more typical for small communities with small budget, the advocacy efforts are predetermined and constructed upon the funds the donor organizations may provide, and do not emerge automatically.

- As a consequence of the abovementioned outcome, the citizens being dependant on the donor organizations often misinterpret the role of the latter ones and expect them to act more of a government body, rather than a facilitator between them and the government. People sometimes forget that their demands and claims should be addressed to and responded by first of all to the local government and not the donors. Thus, the role of the government as a service provider, which should be accountable to the citizens, is sometimes diluted and people get alienated from it. This was mostly evident in the case of Lukashin, where citizens knew that their claims to the local government, which was by the way quite responsive and collaborative, would be senseless since it did not have enough funds.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

There are of course a number of implications from these findings for activists and policy-makers as well as for donors and development agencies seeking to build vibrant communities and achieve success and positive outcomes in advocacy campaigns in Armenia. It take note that the conclusions and observations made should be generalized cautiously, given the small sample of the study. However, the patterns and observations revealed throughout the study

The following are conclusions about the results of the advocacy campaigns and recommendations towards achieving the major goal of community-building and citizen-participation.

Forms of citizen participation, that have been mainly imported by donor organizations in Armenia, show essential positive outcomes, therefore it is recommended to the central government officials to institutionalize these forms, creating more formal spaces for citizens participation. This recommendation is especially timely, given the ongoing debates on the necessity for decentralization reforms. In fact, as the international experience, as well as the studied cases show, people more readily participate in spaces already provided by the government, rather than in those for which they have to strive.

LSGs should be more open and ready to hear the voices of citizens. Their collaboration (one of the positive outcomes of CB-advocacy) is mutually beneficial. Engaging citizens and their expertise in decision-making increases the legitimacy of the LSG's decisions, enhances the trust of citizens towards the local authorities, which is on an extremely low level in Armenia. People equipped with higher level of trust and confidence, will be more critical, which in turn, will lead to more accountable governance. Engaging in participatory activities, as it was above demonstrated, can also increase social capital. Putnam suggests that when people are embedded in social networks and interact with others, their trust of others will increase, which in its turn may lead to a more accountable government (Putnam, 1994). Although we do not possess enough data to conclude that the citizen-led advocacy contribute to the accumulate social capital, we can however suggest that the enhancement of community-based advocacy brings to creation of networks and alliances (a positive outcome demonstrated above). We saw that people join other citizens to pursue their political goals and this is a form of enhancing social capital.

Donor organizations should be loyal to their politics of engaging citizens to strive for their own development. Their advocacy efforts should have holistic approach and micro-level activism should be bridged to macro-level policy initiatives, and not to a single project goal. This means that donor and developmental agencies should have two basic goals set: short-term and long-

term. By achieving their short-term goals of changing some policies, through citizen empowerment they should seek for an overall development and improvement of the social life of the community, which could be contingent upon an accountable and effective governance. This path should not be deterred.

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