

Terms of Reference

UNESCO and UNDP Online community accelerator initiative.

Territory coverage: Kyrgyzstan

DEADLINE: December 17, 2021 18:00 Bishkek/Almaty time

I) Rationale and overall purpose

The role of civil society organizations (CSOs) is essential for generating innovative local solutions addressing social and economic development challenges and implementing them. In the context of the COVID-19, the use of CSOs has also become part of the mainstream practice to mobilize resources, ensure social accountability and good governance. According to "The impact of COVID-19 on civil society in Eastern Europe and Central Asia"¹ (2020), over 70% of the respondents feel that in the pandemic there has been greater public appreciation for the work of CSOs (social trust). 62% of respondents believe that CSOs can play a key role in the national response to COVID-19 (community resilience). Though 67% CSOs reported that they were not ready to cope with the COVID-19 disruption in their ways of doing community works.

First, Civil Society Organizations are facing the shrinking space of civic engagement resulted from the COVID-19. Majority physical activities of CSOs have been halted. Community leaders expressed their vulnerability towards societal instability, pandemic crisis, and rapid change of technologies. Despite the use of technologies is on demand, digital solutions for community development appear to be underutilized.

Second, the existing capacity of CSOs can no longer meet the needs of the new normal. There is a new normal of community development with a significant growth of online citizen activity. The increasing scale of social networks and the rapid speed of information transfer have "shifted the paradigm of citizen expression". In order to listen to citizens' voice closely and deliver faster public services, capacity building for Online Communities becomes more urgent than never! Following skills are rated as the most needed by CSOs in the report²(2020):



By saying this, equipping CSOs with necessary skills can potentially promote the horizontal social cohesion³ among community members. Meanwhile, CSOs have capacity to forge and maintain cooperation between citizens and local governments for a shared vision on community development, which is reflected in the vertical social cohesion dimension⁴.

¹ Helena Arntz & Daria Alexeeva, (October 2020), "The result of the regional survey: The impact of COVID-19 on civil society in Eastern Europe and Central Asia", *AFEW*, retrieved from <https://afew.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/COVID-impact-survey-report-AFEW-International-2.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ Horizontal dimension of cohesion is "society-centred, involves cohesion among citizens. Exhibit trust and a sense of interdependence and common destiny", cited from UNDP (February 27, 2020), *Strengthening social cohesion: Conceptual framing and programming implications*, retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/publications/strengthening-social-cohesion-conceptual-framing-and-programming-implications>

⁴ Vertical dimension of cohesion is "state-centred, it relates strongly to the inclusivity of Government and its institutions", cited from UNDP (2020).

Third, CSOs are in need of building capacity not only to engage community members online, but also to use technology and media responsibly to nurture a safe online environment. Using the citizen-generated data, Online Communities can detect early warning of conflicts, hate speech, violence, even extremism, that could seriously disrupt social cohesion and jeopardize peacebuilding.

The proposed solution, "**Online Community Accelerator**", is an initiative to accelerate community-led development impact amidst the COVID-19 through effectively communicating online, engaging community members online, equipping CSOs with digital capacity to advocate and mobilize resources online. Most importantly, it is missioned to strengthen social cohesion through building a safe, equitable, responsive and participatory online community.

Links with 2030 Agenda

This initiative is aligned with the following global and national strategic documents:

1. "**United Nations COVID-19 socioeconomic response framework**" fifth pillar:
Promoting social cohesion and investing in community-led resilience and response systems.
2. **UNESCO Action plan on reproachment of cultures 2013-2022:**
 - Promoting mutual understanding and reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity as well as supporting reconciliation efforts;
 - Building a framework for commonly shared values which fosters social cohesion;
 - Disseminating the principles and tools of intercultural dialogue through quality education and the media;
 - Fostering dialogue for sustainable development and its ethical, social and cultural dimensions
3. "**UNDP Kyrgyz Republic Strategy Note 2021 Programmatic priority**":
 - *Incubation and implementation of catalytic initiatives to boost UNDP's development impact;*
 - Achieving transformational change for marginalized and vulnerable groups, including
 - UNDP Social Cohesion programming offer developed with a strong focus on women, youth, and civil society;
 - Sustained support to community resilience to the risks of violent extremism;
 - Capacity building on social cohesion co-designed with AcCLab support in pilot communities.

II) Assignments:

Against this background UNESCO Almaty is inviting interested organizations and individuals to submit proposals for training and mentoring support to "Online community accelerator initiative".

Overall **objective** is to provide capacity building intervention (including both the Training & Mentorship programs) to six civil society organizations (CSOs) to effectively communicate online, engage community members online, advocate and mobilize resources online.

Other tasks include:

- support to the CSOs in launching their online community campaigns
- establish a learning network of Community of Practices (CoP) to promote digital civic activism together with UNESCO/UNDP and potential national partners.

Under the overall authority of the Director of UNESCO Almaty and the direct supervision of the Project coordinator, UNESCO Almaty, the contractor will lead and coordinate the following activities:

Outcome No.1. Social cohesion is strengthened through building a safe, equitable, responsive and participatory online community.

Output No.1.1: Civil society organizations (CSOs) know how to effectively communicate online, engage community members online, advocate and mobilize resources online

Activities

- To develop the capacity building program for CSOs in consultations with UNESCO and conduct training workshop in online format (12 sessions to be conducted from the mid of January to mid of February 2022);
- To develop mentorship program and provide mentorship to CSOs (12 sessions from the mid of January to mid of April 2022)
- To support CSOs in launching online community campaigns, which are targeted to strengthening horizontal (society-centred) and/or vertical (state-centred) social cohesion. Online civic activities will be monitored and online community impact will be tracked.
- To support UNESCO and CSOs to arrange Unconference where CSOs trained can share their knowledge, experience and network (April 2022)
- To act as co-moderator during the Unconference event.
- To submit final report to UNESCO with recommendations on capacity building and mentorship program and results of the online campaigning of CSOs.
- To submit all learning materials to UNESCO Almaty in original version (translation is not needed).

III) Approach:

The following issues should be considered when leading the Project work in cooperation with UNESCO Almaty:

- UNESCO Almaty will provide overall guidance on project activities and approve relevant activities/revisions to the original timeline (please see below) and budget
- The Contractor is encouraged to publicize all key activities and submit narrative reports/articles, including in local languages, and photo/video materials to UNESCO Almaty in a timely manner (no later than 1-2 days after the event and at least one week before the event)

IV) Deliverables

- The "Online Community Accelerator" Training and Mentorship programs based on the needs assessment are designed and delivered.
- Assistance to the Experimentation team in developing Pre-/Post-intervention surveys and in the portfolio of experiments to validate hypotheses is provided.
- Support in launching online campaigns and mentoring throughout the period of online campaign.
- All learning materials (originals) to be provided to UNESCO (no translation is required)
- Recordings of training and mentoring sessions (separately) to be provided to UNESCO Almaty.
- Moderation of the Unconference (final reporting event) to be conducted.
- Final report on training and mentoring program to be submitted upon all activities within the ToR implemented;

V) Timeline

Proposed timeline and activities

Period	Activity
Mid of January 2022 to mid of February 2022	12 online training sessions for CSOs
February –April 2022	Three-month Mentorship Program (12 sessions) is provided to participant CSOs to ensure their learning quality and realization of online campaigns. Mentors provide support to Experimentation.
End of April 2022	Participation as co-moderator of the Unconference event, where CSO present results of their online campaigns

VI) Budget

Please include a realistic budget in USD, including taxes and bank transfer fees.

VII) Requirements

For this assignment the Consultant (Trainer/mentor) is expected to have:

- Extensive experience in designing training program;
- Subject matter expertise in development of training and mentoring programmes;
- Good familiarity with training and mentoring practices, especially in online format;
- Strong moderation and facilitation skills;
- Understanding of social cohesion related themes, media and information literacy concept and skills development practices;
- Strong proficiency in English, Kyrgyz and Russian languages.

To apply, please submit the application form (in Russian or English) to Ms. Aizhan Kydyralieva at a.kydyralieva@unesco.org with a subject “**OCA trainer/mentor 2021 call**” no later than **17 December 2021, 18:00 Bishkek time**.