

## Summary of BAPP-Estonia 2006 Activities

### *External Environment*

#### **Principles governing state funding of civil society organizations**

In 2006, the Network of Estonian Non-Profit Organizations (NENO) continued its BAPP-funded work to develop criteria, principles, and potential mechanisms for funding of civil society organizations (CSOs) from public sources.

During the second half of 2005 and first half of 2006, a consultant hired by NENO prepared a draft of recommendations to improve the transparency of state funding allocation mechanisms for civil society organizations. NENO also introduced the draft at 15 regional meetings of CSOs held all over Estonia during April and May of 2006. In early summer, the draft was also approved by the EKAK Joint Committee. Based on this initial draft, NENO developed an action plan for 2007. In addition, NENO also held meetings with higher officials (e.g. chancellors and vice chancellors) of various ministries to ensure their support for the proposed changes in the current practice of funding of CSOs from government sources

The results of NENO's advocacy work in this area (together with other organizations) include the following:

1. Development of civil society has been included in the Ministry of Interior's 2008-2011 development plan as a strategic priority. This enables the Ministry to introduce concrete programs to address this particular priority starting from 2008.
2. The Ministry of Interior is in favor of changing the Government of the Republic Act and set out the development of civil society as a direct area of responsibility of the Minister of Regional Development.
3. At a meeting with the chancellors of Estonian ministries, it was agreed that it is necessary to analyze the possibilities of reorganizing the current Gambling Tax Council into a so-called "civil society endowment".
4. A number of ministries have elaborated principles of involvement of CSOs into policy development processes.
5. One of the recommendations of the draft is that in allocating funding to CSOs, there should be unified criteria in all public sector institutions. Funds should be allocated either as project grants, core grants or as contracts for goods or services and preferably by multi-year agreements.
6. One of the recommendations also stipulates that ministries should make public all funding opportunities, criteria, and deadlines through a single portal. The State Chancellery is currently working on a public participation portal. NENO is working to ensure that funding information is also made available through this portal.

#### **Implementation of EKAK**

The government-civil society cooperation platform known as the Estonian Civil Society Development Compact (EKAK) was adopted by the Estonian Parliament in 2002 (see previous annual reports for further details).

The aim of this initiative is threefold:

- Targeted support to organizations engaged in EKAK implementation on the national level through specific project grants;
- Support for the development and implementation of local "EKAKs";
- Building public and political support for the NGO sector and civic participation (through activities targeted at building public support, visibility in mainstream media, lobbying, etc.).

In 2006 BAPP awarded four project grants for various initiatives that are related to EKAK and its implementation:

*e-Governance Academy*

Over the course of last year, the Estonian State Chancellery has been working together with a group of CSOs on the establishment of Good Practice of Involvement of CSOs into policy development. The Practice sets minimum standards of policy development and legislative drafting processes that public sector institutions must follow. To facilitate the application of the Practice; the State Chancellery is currently working to develop an Internet-based public participation portal. e-Governance Academy has been actively involved in the development of this portal and has also analyzed international practices of e-participation. In November of 2006, e-Governance Academy organized an extremely popular conference on e-democracy where the prototype of the portal was introduced and actively discussed by the participants.

*Kodukant Pärnumaa* (member organization of Estonian Village Movement Kodukant in Pärnu county)

The aim of the 2006 program was to discuss the possibilities of participation in local decision-making processes in nine localities in Estonia. In one day seminars, issues like the use of Internet for participation purposes, whether decision-makers are open to public opinion, and how to participate in decision-making on the local level were discussed. To date, the training program has been completed with close to 200 participants from various localities. As a result of the training, local NGOs, municipalities and other local leaders have launched various initiatives targeted at improving cooperation between the people and authorities. In 2007, Village Movement Kodukant will put together a manual with best practices for interested communities to follow as well as introduce opportunities for peer learning and mentoring.

*Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations (NENO)*

In 2006, BAPP provided support for two EKAK related projects carried out by NENO. The first initiative was a pilot project in which two municipalities were selected, in order to test the Practice of Good Involvement of CSOs described above. In these municipalities, an issue of local concern will be identified and efforts will be made to address it by using the standards articulated by the Practice. The results of the project will serve as a model of cooperation between local governments and the public that can be replicated in other municipalities. To date, NENO has finalized the process of choosing

the municipalities where the pilot project will be implemented. The actual project will be launched in early 2007.

The second NENO initiative was an effort to develop, together with other CSOs, a “Manifesto of Non-Governmental Organizations”. This was viewed as important, given the upcoming parliamentary elections in March 2007 and the clear need to consolidate and strengthen the voice of the nonprofit sector. The Manifesto was officially introduced at the end of January, 2006. Prior to that, NENO held individual meetings with the majority of political parties running for the election and the initial feedback has been generally positive. Of particular note is the fact that some political parties have proposed the introduction of a 1% income tax allocation mechanism in their program proposals concerning the development of civil society. In addition to the meetings with political parties, NENO also published a special supplement in two major Estonian dailies dedicated to the Manifesto. The next supplement analyzing the programs of political parties and the activities (and inactivity) of the state in relation to civil society development is due at the end of February 2007. Parallel to that, NENO will be organizing a public hearing of all major political parties.

After the elections, NENO together with its partners will work with the incoming coalition in order to ensure that measures foreseen by the Manifesto get included in the coalition agreement. This undertaking is jointly financed by BAPP and OEF.

### **Civil Society Generation**

This project, initiated in 2004, is part of BAPP-Estonia’s strategy to facilitate and support the emergence of a new “civil society generation” -- young people that take responsibility for societal development by participating actively in the life of their communities and country. This initiative is coordinated by BAPP, but includes a wide range of other stakeholders and funders, including the Ministry of Education and youth organizations.

In 2006, the following activities took place:

- Participation in the process of civic education curricula development (which was slowed in 2006 due to the upcoming parliamentary elections in 2007, and the somewhat unexpected resistance of the Ministry of Education to the reforms) ;
- Increasing the awareness of teachers on modern ways of promoting civic education by organizing a summer school for civic education teachers;
- Competition for joint projects between schools and civic organizations and dissemination of best practices within the framework of National Citizen Day on November 26, 2006;
- For the second consecutive year, organizing of the Acknowledgement of Estonian Volunteers. On December 10, 2006, the President of the Republic of Estonia, as patron of the event, expressed his appreciation to 50 volunteers from all over Estonia.
- Preparation of the terms of reference for a policy paper *Current State and Future Development of Civic Education*.

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In 2007, BAPP will be working to produce the above-mentioned policy paper and to establish a Democracy Council (formerly known as Council for Democracy Education) whose task will be regular monitoring and development of proposals to improve the state of democracy education and democratic practices in Estonian society.

### ***Institutional Development***

#### **Multi-year Institutional Grants to NGOs**

The aim of BAPP's multi-year institutional grants program is to develop a core group of strong, professional NGOs that act in critical issue areas, such as human rights, women's issues, environment, community, and civil society development.

At the end of 2005, BAPP awarded multi-year institutional grants to nine organizations for 2006-2007. All organizations that received grants have actively (and visibly) participated in policy development processes in their respective fields of activity and have focused on strengthening their financial sustainability. For instance, Estonian Village Movement Kodukant participated in the preparation of legislative acts related to the implementation of national policy on rural development and agriculture, as well as in the development of the national budget strategy for 2007-2010 in the field of regional development. In addition, the institutional support from BAPP has helped Kodukant to initiate smooth transition in their senior management, and attract new competent staff. Kodukant has also been successful in applying for grants from new funding sources, including EU funds which provide much larger grants than local sources.

As another example, with BAPP's support, the Estonian Patients' Advocacy Organization has been able to make its day to day work more efficient by taking advantage of internet communications technology. In addition, it recruited a new staff member, a lawyer who is working to make the organization's work in protecting patients' rights more systematic.

#### **Grants to Advocacy Organizations**

The aim of this grantmaking program, which has operated since 2001, is to improve the capacity of advocacy organizations, including their ability to represent their constituencies effectively. In 2006, BAPP Estonia continued to support advocacy-focused initiatives. One example is *Avatud Vabariik*, an NGO which has been monitoring the preparations for e reform of non-Estonian language general education and engaging non-Estonian students and their parents in policy discussions. The organization has made several study visits to Latvia to learn about their experience in the area of minority education reform. Due to the political situation and upcoming parliamentary elections, the education reforms that originally were supposed to be implemented starting in 2007 have been halted until further notice. However, the organization has gained valuable experience in policy development and will continue with this work in 2007.

## *Civic Engagement and Cross-Sector Cooperation*

### **Civic Action Program**

The aim of this program is to increase civic participation and social capital on the grass-roots level.

In 2006, BAPP awarded 23 grants in the total amount of \$17,835. Grants ranged from \$500 to \$1,200 and were awarded to community groups for a variety of initiatives to increase grassroots participation in local decisionmaking processes, including community meetings on local planning issues, and youth forums. The detailed list of 2006 grantees is available at [http://www.bapp.ee/news/et/arhiiv/2006-05-03\\_103210/](http://www.bapp.ee/news/et/arhiiv/2006-05-03_103210/)

Although the program has been successful and popular with hundreds of grass-root groups proactively tackling issues that are important for their communities, and engaging thousands of people in their activities since 2001, BAPP has decided not to continue with this program in 2007. It was viewed as more important, in the final year of BAPP's grantmaking, to focus on the sustainability of a smaller group of key civil society organizations.

### **Community Philanthropy Development**

In 2006, BAPP Estonia continued its community philanthropy program, which was initiated as part of the Pan-Baltic Community Philanthropy Project in 2001. To date there are three community foundations (CFs) and one community philanthropy support center, Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation (CTC), in Estonia. Two out of the three foundations, the Viljandi and Peipsi CFs, are active.

In 2006, Peipsi CTC organized joint meetings of the community foundations to discuss their strategic objectives and fundraising strategies, provided individual consultations, and organized a high-profile conference to promote and disseminate information about CFs and their activities. Peipsi CTC has also assisted the CFs in establishing a network of local volunteers as, at this stage of development, none of the community foundations can afford more than one part-time paid staff member.

Of the existing community foundations in Estonia, Viljandi CF is well-established, conducts regular fundraising campaigns, as well as regular grant competitions. It has not been that successful in securing direct funding from the corporate sector, but the foundation acknowledges the importance of this issue and works on this on a regular basis.

Both Järva and Lake Peipus Community Foundations are still in their early stages of development. The activities of Järva Community Foundation were somewhat halted in 2005 due to significant changes in their Board and the situation has not progressed much in 2006. Lake Peipus Community Foundation is run by a volunteer and has conducted a

couple of proactive projects related to the environmental sustainability of Lake Peipus and the surrounding region.

### ***Other Activities***

#### Media Program

The aim of this initiative is to make civil society and nonprofit sector- related issues a part of everyday discussions about policies and decisions affecting society, and to encourage NGOs to become part of that discussion, to reach out to the media, highlight their activities, and raise important issues with their constituencies.

In 2006, BAPP continued to support the publication of a monthly supplement called *Greengate* to two major Estonian newspapers. *Greengate* discusses issues such as sustainable development, environmental protection, civic participation, development cooperation, and globalization. At the end of the year, BAPP decided to contract an independent media and consulting firm to assist BAPP in developing a strategy for communicating civil society values and issues to the general public as well as to government public. In addition, the firm will monitor public opinion and will provide assistance in integrating civil society issues into public discussions and events.

### **Professional Development & Training**

In 2006, BAPP continued to provide its grantees and other individuals and organizations active in civil society development with advocacy and leadership training, as well as support for other professional development activities. Most notably, a grant was provided to NENO for an advocacy training program targeted at umbrella organizations that participate in national-level policy development process. As a result of the program, there is now a sizable group of leading NGOs that have both theoretical and practical advocacy knowledge that they can use in their policy work.

In its final year of grantmaking, BAPP will not continue this program, particularly as other funding opportunities for NGO advocacy training have emerged.