

AGORA: a vehicle for supporting and strengthening local governance mechanisms

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KEY FEATURES

- **Support improved local governance planning frameworks and service delivery**
- **Holistic understanding of relevant governance systems at the local level**, including formal and informal systems, showing functionality of public services and capacity building needs
- **Community engagement and empowerment**, by actively involving local stakeholders and communities in aid and development projects decision-making processes, fostering ownership and accountability
- **Improved collaboration and inclusivity**, by facilitating coordination among stakeholders and reducing spatial disparities by targeting underserved communities, ensuring greater access to services and opportunities

ADDED VALUE

Taking an evidence-based, participatory area-based approach allows AGORA to strengthen local government planning and delivery, improve local coordination, and foster dialogue between local authorities and communities.

Case studies

Supporting local authorities in Niger's Diffa region



Through the Shimodu project, Acted, IMPACT Initiatives (IMPACT), Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe supported local authorities in six *communes* (admin. 3). The area-based assessments (ABA) provided a basis for evidence-based participatory planning, in addition to generating useful information about the territories, and in two *communes* served to the replanning of the local development plans. Moreover, coordination between local authorities and exogenous aid and development actors was facilitated. IT kits were also distributed, in addition to trainings dispensed by Niger's local authorities training centre (CFGCT), tackling decentralisation, project management, *commune* administration and local finances. Lastly, an international exchange seminar was organised with local authorities from an AGORA project in the Central African Republic on institutional capacity building. Participating local authorities formulated recommendations, particularly for aid actors, who they were also able to directly engage with and advocate to.

Fig 1: CFGCT training of *collectivités territoriales*, IMPACT, June 2021



Fig 2: Handover ceremony for IT equipment to the mayor's office in Chétimari, Acted, September 2020



Supporting Central African local authorities



Acted and IMPACT partnered with Concern Worldwide, COOPI, Oxfam, and Free Press Unlimited for a large-scale multistakeholder recovery project in the southeast of the Central African Republic. Covering eighteen localities across five *préfectures*, the action aims to strengthen the relationship between the State and its population through peacebuilding efforts and livelihood projects. Based on ABAs of each locality's (centre of the municipality) needs and dynamics and the mapping of socio-economic catchment areas, community members actively contributed to identifying multisectoral priorities. These insights formed the basis for tailored local recovery plans, which now serve as important coordination tools for local authorities, humanitarian, and development organisations. Additionally, local authorities received training, office equipment, and engaged in workshop with counterparts from Niger to share expertise and exchange best practices in aid coordination and management.

Figs 3-6: International NER-CAF exchange seminar, IMPACT/Acted/ Groupe Huit, December 2021



Supporting local authorities in eastern Ukraine



Acted and IMPACT implemented a project aimed at bolstering local capacities for evidence-based planning and enhancing decision-making processes in Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts* (admin. 1). This endeavor was part of a broader effort to support the UN Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme in eastern Ukraine, responding to the effects of the conflict. The project focused on empowering local authorities at the *hromada* level (admin. 3) in the context of the decentralisation reform by providing them with access to high-quality information for informed planning. IMPACT profiled 23 *hromadas* and generated a variety of information products consolidated into an interactive web dashboard to inform the development of local plans. Additionally, the project featured a capacity-building component aimed at enhancing local authorities' competencies in information management and GIS for evidence-based decision-making. Expanding upon this approach, a collaborative Humanitarian Development Nexus pilot was launched in 2021 by Acted, in partnership with IMPACT, Right to Protection, Danish Red Cross, and Ukrainian Red Cross Society in Olhynska, Volnovahka, and Myrne



hromadas (Donetsk *oblast*) to shift the provision of humanitarian services from external aid organisations to local authorities and civil society organisations. Leveraging IMPACT's *hromada* mapping and profiling, the consortium worked towards implementing an integrated, locally driven humanitarian response, particularly investing in improving social protection systems, risk reduction and preparedness, water safety planning and reinforcing vital infrastructure.

Fig 7: Overview (Bakhmut *hromada* profile), IMPACT, October 2020

Figs 8-13: Barriers to service provision (Bakhmut *hromada* profile), IMPACT, October 2020

*** As reported by facilities key informants from social, administrative, health and education services