



PR2 – INTERACTIVE AND NETWORKING TOOL STATE OF THE ART & BEST PRACTICES IN CYPRUS



Developed By:





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1. Introduction

Non-profit organizations and foundations in Cyprus, as in all around the world, have an important role to play. At the moment, in Cyprus, there are three types of non-profit organizations; non-profit companies, foundations/institutions, and clubs/societies. Depending on the aforementioned categories, these organizations are regulated by different laws. Non-profit companies are registered under the Companies law (Cap 113), whilst foundations and clubs are registered under the Clubs and Foundations Law [Law 104(I)/2017]. According to Cyprus's tax department, almost 450 non-profit organizations and foundations are registered as charities on the island.

The main areas of focus of this kind of organizations in Cyprus are human rights, culture, youth, economic development and environmental protection. Another sector that these organizations are particularly active, is peacebuilding, due to the fact that the island is divided since 1974, and through various activities they bring together Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Their importance lies in the fact that they not only provide the space for groups and individuals to work together and express their voices, but also due to their role as watchdogs, service providers, raising awareness and mobilizing the public to take actions. The impact of these organizations can be seen through their advocacy where they fill gaps left by the government and the private sector, the improved welfare of some people belonging in vulnerable groups such as refugees, and through the establishment of better monitoring and better practices in the environmental sector.

2. Barriers and Supports for Foundations

Present desk research identifying barriers and supportive mechanisms foundations face in your country e.g. (legal and tax barriers, as well as language and competences) that hinder the operation and impact of these organizations or about good practices and measures that taken to eliminate or reduce those challenges.

The biggest problem that non-profit organizations and foundations face in Cyprus, is the lack of funding. Without the necessary funding, they cannot organize their activities and they face difficulties in sustaining their programs in the long term. The majority of these organizations rely on small funding or grants with limited duration either from the government or from other international organizations, which makes them not financially sustainable.

Moreover, these organizations have limited resources and lack capacity in terms of staff, technical expertise or infrastructure. Therefore, it is challenging for them to effectively work and carry out large-scale initiatives whilst also engaging in advocacy activities at a national and international level.

Even though the contribution and importance of these organizations is widely recognized by the government, on many occasions, the latter does not provide them with the necessary resources and support they need to carry out their activities. One example can be considered the bureaucratic obstacles they face when they interact with governmental bodies, such as long waits for processing grant applications or complications in receiving the necessary permits to continue their operation.

Furthermore, legal and regulatory barriers can reduce their ability to operate, specifically when it comes to securing licenses, permits, and obtaining legal entity registration. Without having the aforementioned documentations, they will not be able to apply for funding opportunities, collaborate with other organizations or participate in advocacy.

Another issue that these organizations come across, is fragmentation and competition, since a lot of small organizations work on similar issues. This has serious implications because there is a duplication of effort, as well as competition for the already limited funding opportunities, leading to less effective coordinated responses to problems that arise. Additionally, due to the differences in organizational culture and priorities of each organization, it is even more difficult for them to collaborate and share information.

The political situation on the island also poses challenges for these organizations. In particular, the ones working on bicomunal topics, come across strong opposition from other groups who oppose to their work. Organizations working for the protection of environment or for the welfare of refugees face similar problems.

Even though various barriers for non-profits and foundations in Cyprus exist, there have been efforts to tackle those by many different actors through the implementation of diverse actions.

In order to address the limited resources and technical expertise of these organizations, many initiatives are organizing training programs and capacity building activities which can also serve as opportunities for networking among them. These can be related to project management skills, advocacy, fundraising, development of internal organization procedures, and even more specific topics depending on the situation, target group and status of each organization.

When it comes to governmental support, there have been some actions done to buck these organizations' operation, with one of them being the establishment of a governmental department (ANEL) that is responsible for promoting the development of civil society organizations. Moreover, a new law has been adopted in 2017 in order to simplify the process of registering non-profits and foundations, making it easier for them to apply for governmental funding opportunities.

As mentioned above, these organizations often face fragmentation and competition, but there have been efforts to establish better collaboration and coordination among them. The creation of networks and spaces for networking, both through online platforms and through physical spaces such as the "civic space" and the "NGO support centre", has helped these organizations to share useful information and resources. By interacting through these online and physical spaces, new partnerships can be formed, and organizations are encouraged to come into contact with other relevant stakeholders as well.

Similar to other democratic countries, in Cyprus, non-profit organizations and foundations have the opportunity to engage in advocacy and do awareness raising activities to promote their areas of action and gain support from decision makers and the public. These activities can include the organization of events, the development of campaigns, and the utilization of social media to publicize the work they are doing.

Support from other international organizations is also available to the local ones, through the provision of funding, technical assistance and other topics related to their work. In many cases, these opportunities have helped local organizations overcome difficulties and challenges they had faced, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic where almost everything required digital skills in order to operate.

The European Union is also vital for the operation of non-profit organizations and foundations in Cyprus, due to its provision of funding opportunities for programs and initiatives. One of these funding opportunities is the European Social Fund, which aims to promote employment skills, social inclusion and combat poverty, by providing financial support for projects implemented by non-profit organizations and foundations. Activities occurring through this program include awareness raising campaigns, advocacy, community development projects, education, and training. Other European programs that are very helpful for these Cypriot organizations are the Civil Society Facility (CSF) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) which can fund projects related to democracy, promotion of human rights, and capacity building activities for non-profits and foundations. Finally, The European Union is very actively engaged in a dialogue with Cypriot organizations, focusing on the building of trust and cooperation between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

3. Good Practices

GOOD PRACTICE 1	
Name of the Good Practice	Launching of e-shop to raise funds just before Christmas
Name of the Provider	BirdLife Cyprus
Short Description (50-70 words)	Birdlife Cyprus is non-profit organization working towards the conservation of birds. Just before Christmas, this organization launched an e-shop to raise awareness and funds for the organization. The e-shop sells 'birdy' gifts such as a range of organic cotton t-shirts featuring designs by local artists, a custom Buff, bird pin badges, fluffy toys and more. The organization promoted their e-shop by sharing photos of their products though sponsored posts on social media.
Level (Regional, Local, National)	National
Tools/Resources/Services	website, social media, pictures, products
Link/Website	Organization's website: https://birdlifecyprus.org/ E-shop website: https://shop.birdlifecyprus.org/en/ Link to social media post: https://www.facebook.com/BirdLifeCyprus/posts/pfbid05exmktmDBd5tpgQMyWvM2z2r8PPXaXzaKAVNXMgVngu3RWxvG4GV4ya2xu9Azfd7l

GOOD PRACTICE 2	
Name of the Good Practice	Fundraising by attracting donations through a tax deduction opportunity
Name of the Provider	Friends of the Earth Cyprus
Short Description (50-70 words)	Friends of the Earth Cyprus is a non-profit / charity organization that is working towards climate justice. Before the end of the calendar year (which is the deadline for the filing of the tax return form by the Cypriot citizens), the organization made a social media post explaining why donations to their organization are tax deductible, and could help their organization to have more successful campaigns. The post also mentions that donations from corporations and individuals that pollute the environment or violate human rights are not accepted.
Level (Regional, Local, National)	National
Tools/Resources/ Services	Social media, law for tax deduction
Link/ Website	Link for the post: https://www.instagram.com/p/CmYx7SIN_1E/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y= Organization's website: https://www.foecyprus.org/

GOOD PRACTICE 3	
Name of the Good Practice	Storytelling through animation video
Name of the Provider	Ecological Movement Cyprus
Short Description (50-70 words)	Ecological Movement Cyprus is an environmental non-profit organization which participated in a campaign about the conservation of the Akamas peninsula, an area of high importance when it comes to biodiversity and natural beauty. In order to raise awareness about the issue and promote the organization's vision of the area, they collaborated with two other organizations from the same sector, to create three one-minute animation videos, which were shared through social media. Each video showed a different aspect of the issue, along with the suggested solutions.
Level (Regional, Local, National)	Local
Tools/Resources / Services	Social Media, Animation Video
Link/ Website	Link to videos: https://www.facebook.com/EcologicalMovementCy/videos/511914300593972/

GOOD PRACTICE 4	
Name of the Good Practice	Storytelling through video with professional actor, showing everyday problems around mobility
Name of the Provider	Terra Cypria
Short Description (50-70 words)	Terra Cypria is a local environmental organization with mobility being one of the issues they are aiming to address. In order to do that, they developed different scenarios based on real life problems concerning mobility (buses arriving late, traffic congestion, lack of bicycle lanes) with the last scenario being the organization's vision of the future. The scenarios were then developed into a video, with a professional actor being the protagonist. The relevant ministries and stakeholders were also tagged on the social media post.
Level (Regional, Local, National)	National
Tools/Resources/ Services	Social media, video, professional actor
Link/ Website	Link to the video: https://www.facebook.com/terracypria/videos/607659317111444 Organization's website: https://terracypria.org/el/

GOOD PRACTICE 5	
Name of the Good Practice	Storytelling through infographic cards
Name of the Provider	Unite Cyprus Now
Short Description (50-70 words)	Unite Cyprus Now is a non-profit organisation that promotes actions in support of peace and the reunification of the island through a negotiated settlement. In their website, they have developed an innovative way of showcasing their demands by having a section called “21 reasons why we must unite Cyprus now”. This section consists of 21 infographic cards, each one with a small image and a short text, but when the cursor is placed over them, the card flips, indicating a more detail explanation for that reason.
Level (Regional, Local, National)	National
Tools/Resources/ Services	Website, infographic cards that flip
Link/ Website	Link for this section: https://unitecyprusnow.org/why-unite

GOOD PRACTICE 6	
Name of the Good Practice	Storytelling through Reels
Name of the Provider	Zero Food Waste Cyprus
Short Description (50-70 words)	Zero Food Waste Cyprus is a non-profit organization aiming to prevent food from being thrown away. By involving young volunteers, they collect food that would otherwise be wasted from two fruit markets (one on the Greek Cypriot side and one on the Turkish Cypriot side) and then re-distribute it to everyone in need. They promote their work by creating short and catchy reels where they showcase every step of their actions.
Level (Regional, Local, National)	Local
Tools/Resources/ Services	Reels, social media
Link/ Website	Link to Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/ZeroFoodWasteCyprus/about

4. Conclusion

This report has reviewed the current situation on the legal status of non-profit organizations and foundations in Cyprus, as well their involvement in advocacy and awareness raising in the topics of human rights, culture, youth and the environment amongst others. The different barriers that these organizations face during their operation have been discussed, along with the various opportunities that are available for funding and capacity building to support them. The European Union's contribution in the provision of funding for these organizations is of high importance, however governmental barriers hinder the opportunities of receiving funding at the national level. Finally, this report has showcased six innovative best practices about storytelling and fundraising applied by non-profits and foundations in Cyprus, including the creation of videos and infographic material which are promoted through the utilisation of social media.

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