



Centrum für soziale
Investitionen & Innovationen

Centre for Social Investment

UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
Zukunft. Seit 1386.



CSI ADVISORY SERVICES | PROJECT REPORT

Joint Civic Education

**Analysis of the Impact of a Community
and Democracy Education Programme
in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia
and Turkey**



This report was elaborated by Dr. Volker Then, Dr. Robert Münscher,
Carsten Eggersglüß and Rüdiger Knust
Centre for Social Investment, Heidelberg University

Overview

1	Creating impact in society: The Theory of Change of Joint Civic Education	4
	1. The approach: Theory of Change analysis	4
	2. Theory of Change - Part 1: Country Programmes The Impact-Chain of the <i>Country Programmes</i>	5 5
	3. Theory of Change - Part 2: Junior Facilitator and Mentor Training The Impact-Chain of the <i>Junior Facilitator and Mentor Training</i>	6 6
	4. Theory of Change - Part 3: Social Leader Forum The Impact-Chain of the <i>Social Leader Forum</i>	7 7
2	Impact in person: Interviews with successful alumni from Joint Civic Education	9
	1. Overview of the interview approach	9
	2. Alumni reflections on positive aspects and important parts of <i>Joint Civic Education</i>	9
	3. Alumni suggestions for further development of the programme	11
3	Conclusion & recommendations	12
	1. A convincing strategy model for social value creation	12
	2. Key insights for future focus: the potential of programme interconnections	13
	3. Testimonies of much experience and a history of doing-well	13
	4. Options for deepening evaluative efforts in the future	14
	5. On the way to impact monitoring and improved networking	14

Preface



Joint Civic Education aims to foster social change in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia (North Caucasus) and Turkey, the Caucasus Region, providing capacity building for young people and facilitating cooperation among civil society professionals. *Joint Civic Education* has been initiated by the Theodor-Heuss-Kolleg, a programme of Robert Bosch Stiftung and the non-profit MitOst Association in 2010. *Joint Civic Education* splits up into three different components:

- **Country Programmes:** The first type of *Joint Civic Education*'s programmes takes place on a national level. There are five Country Programmes for young activists and people who are generally interested in social topics.
- **Junior Facilitator and Mentor Training:** The second *Joint Civic Education* programme activity aims to develop facilitating and mentoring skills. Alumni who have successfully passed one of the five Country Programmes or the cross-border Social Leader Forum have the opportunity to receive trainings to become a facilitator or a mentor of the Country Programmes on their own.
- **Social Leader Forum:** The Social Leader Forum is a more elaborate cross-border offer for professionals and activists who want to intensify and professionalise their own commitment and to create a regional network.

With the aim to evaluate this programme, *Joint Civic Education* got in touch with the Centre for Social Investment (CSI) of Heidelberg University – a central academic institution of the Heidelberg University, cooperating with the economics, social science, law and theological faculties.

This report presents the results of this collaboration. In a first step, the CSI team applied the *Theory of Change* approach. We first analysed *Joint Civic Education* and identified the programme's underlying values, vision and intended impact. In a second step, we conducted seven additional in-depth interviews with alumni of *Joint Civic Education*. In these interviews, the impact assumptions of the programme were challenged. Portraits of the interviewed alumni can be found throughout this report.

The study results in a strategic insight into the potential of the *Joint Civic Education* programme, and shows a number of both fascinating and enthralling illustrations of how it actually achieves this impact. Moreover, the results provide a sound foundation for the implementation of monitoring activities or further in-depth evaluations of key parts of the programme.

1 Creating impact in society: The Theory of Change of Joint Civic Education

1. The Approach: Theory of Change analysis

The *Theory of Change* helps to make explicit how an organisation actually works – and how it might achieve its social impact. The *Theory of Change* analysis is a vehicle for identifying the “causality chain” of how the activities of an organisation help to obtain the organisation’s goals.

The *Theory of Change* analysis considers different layers of goals: *Short-term goals* represent direct results, also described as “output”. They are directly linked to or influenced by the “input”, i.e. the activities of the organisation. The second layer consists of the *programme-goals*. These goals describe the benefits, which are created by organisational activities on a more general level. They might also be influenced by other organisations, activities or actors. The third layer describes the *long-term goals*. This level describes the vision of the organisation:



What kind of social impact or social change does the organisation want to contribute to? These goals are highly influenced by other variables.

Joint Civic Education splits up into three core activities. We therefore analysed the *Theory of Change* of all three programme. In the following we give a description and interpretation of the *Theory of Change* for each programme.



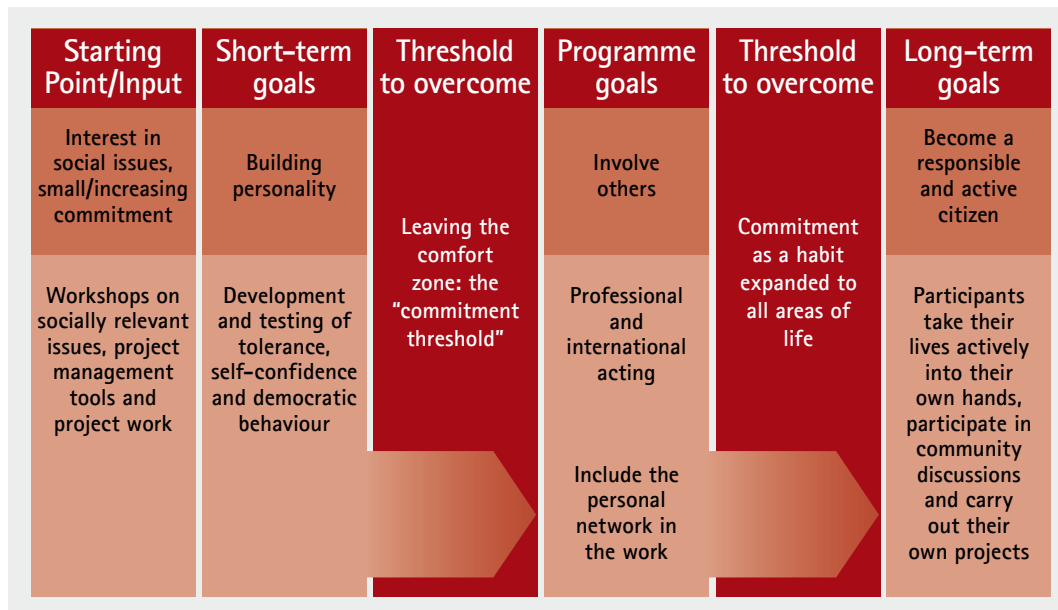


Fig. 1: Impact-Chain of the Country Programmes

2. Theory of Change – Part 1: Country Programmes

The *Country Programmes* address persons who are generally interested in civil society topics. In terms of capacity building participants receive input on topics like project management and general assistance on how to find cooperation partners and funding. Later on they get the chance to apply their knowledge to a project of their own. At the *Reflection Meeting*, the formal ending of each of the *Country Programmes*, the participants get the chance to reflect about their experience of realising their project. In addition, they present their perspectives for further engagement within civil society.

The Impact-Chain of the Country Programmes

Applicants of the *Country Programmes* are interested in commitment for civil society – but most of them do not have a further interest in the topic. Only a few of them work for organisations or have been in touch with organisations so far. With the programme and its input *Joint Civic Education* creates a profound knowledge of how commitment in society works and how projects can be successfully started.

And we know that this is only one part: The most important fact is that participants learn about the specific value of being active and engaged in their respective society. The values of the *Joint Civic Education's* programme undoubtedly help them to think, work and discuss in open and tolerant surroundings.

From the start of the programme to its end, during one year of an intensive contact with *Joint Civic Education*, with the other participants and the training, the participants develop from a person who is interested in civil society to a person who is an active part of it – this is the impact-chain of the *Country Programmes*.





3. Theory of Change – Part 2: Junior Facilitator and Mentor Training

Having gone through one of the five *Country Programmes*, the participants now get the chance to use their skills to work within *Joint Civic Education* and further develop their skills and share their knowledge. Everything the alumni of the *Country Programmes* should know and live up to now has to be implemented into a seminar setting. For facilitators and mentors it is not enough to know about civil society but to train others to become an active part in society. Learning to share the experience is the main goal of the facilitators and mentors programme.

The Impact-Chain of the Junior Facilitator and Mentor Training

In order for participants to start the programme, they must have already completed either a *Country Programme* or have had other experience in social commitment. Hence the *Facilitator and Mentor Training* leads them to and operates at a higher level than the *Country Programmes*. With different trainings and seminars as well as practical learning sessions, participants will be placed in the position to support the development of the participants of the *Country Programmes* in a sustainable way. The content of the work is an important aspect here. It is also important to set an example and to convey that only the personal commitment helps to develop a society and is therefore worthwhile.

The impact-chain does not only refer to the fact that the future facilitators and mentors help participants of other programmes in their personal development. The facilitators and mentors themselves have taken important developmental leaps: they have detected that they are an important part of the public discussion and can also trigger initiatives themselves and become active opinion leaders – as for others, a positive example.

Feqan: You can be given the fishing line. To catch a fish depends on you.

He studied „International Cultural Relations“ at the State Art Culture University. One of his numerous activities is being the director of the NGO “Support for growth of modern youth development“.



He first came in contact with *Joint Civic Education* through a simulation game called CRISP. At that time he had already established his own organisation.

Through participating in the *Cross Border Programme*, which is the forerunner of the Social Leader Forum, he was looking for partners and considered this a very good way to get to know relevant people in the region.

Additionally he took the chance to take part in the junior facilitating training.

This year he is a facilitator of the country programme of Azerbaijan, where he can apply the skills he gained from his career in *Joint Civic Education* so far and is working as a multiplier for the programme as well.

The most important aspect for him has been his exchange to Stavropol, Dagestan where he conducted his study visit. NGO's do not have a big tradition in his part of the country and in Azerbaijan in general and one of the most important aspects he learned during his stay abroad has been how to activate persons around him to become a real leader in his own community.

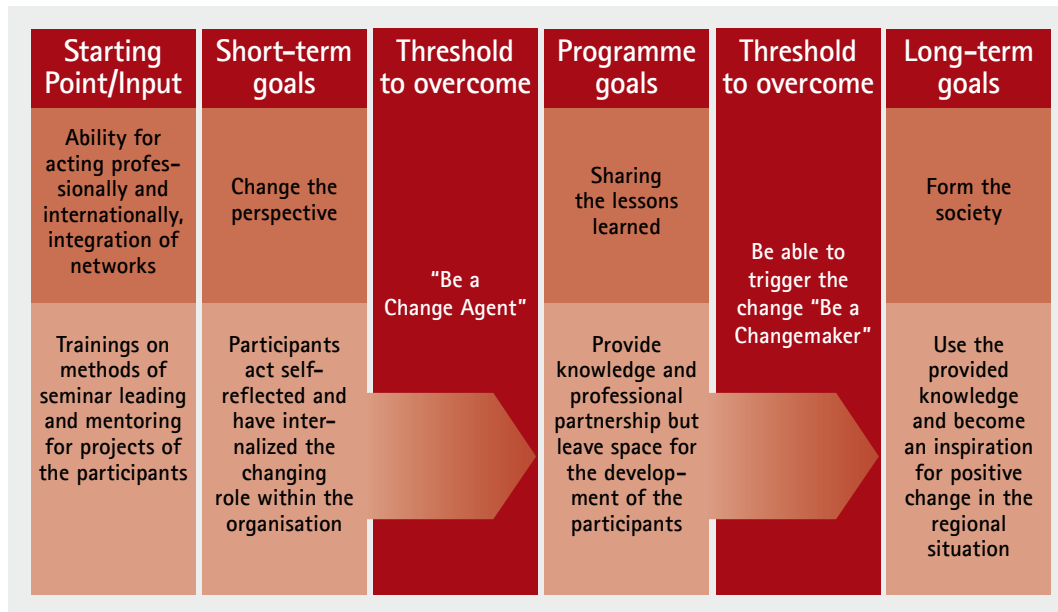


Fig. 2: Impact-Chain of the Junior Facilitator and Mentor Training

4. Theory of Change – Part 3: Social Leader Forum

The *Social Leader Forum* consists of two meetings, which take place in the Caucasus region. In between these meetings study visits in a neighbouring country are organised between the participants of the forum. The *Social Leader Forum* is the successor of the *Cross-Border Programme*, which has been piloted in 2010.

The Impact-Chain of the *Social Leader Forum*

The *Social Leader Forum* is a major driver for innovation within *Joint Civic Education*. As the name illustrates, the programme currently aims at people who are already working on an outstanding and professional level for civil society initiatives. Be it that they lead their own organisations or projects, work for NGOs/NPOs as an employee or



Anna: Getting to know the stranger in the neighbourhood

Anna studied German and English linguistics and works as a trainer for a peace building organisation bringing together young people from Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan.



She became active several years ago: Not influenced by the family or friends, just by getting aware of the problems of the region and the fragile peace in the Caucasus.

For her conflicts between countries are not problems of the people, they are problems made by politicians. For this reason peace can be achieved by personal contact and cooperation of the people within the region. For her it is important that the people in the region live together peacefully and are able to think critically and reflect as well what other people or even politicians say.

Because of her commitment she got in touch with *Joint Civic Education* and is active ever since.

pursue their objectives as activists on a voluntary basis but partly make their living in the public or business sector.

Based on the name of the programme, it is easy to realise what the objectives and impact are: The alumni of this programme are able to provide leadership or integrate social aspects into everyday life as a leader. Even more important is the term „forum“: The *Social Leader Forum* has a strong network character and encourages the participants,

who come from across the Caucasus, to work together more intensively beyond borders.

The participants will learn from each other and get to know the situation in other countries (study visits). Aside from the actual learning effect on different issues and methods, the contact and exchange and the consequential understanding of the others supports a long term peace process in the region – and this is the main aim of *Joint Civic Education*.

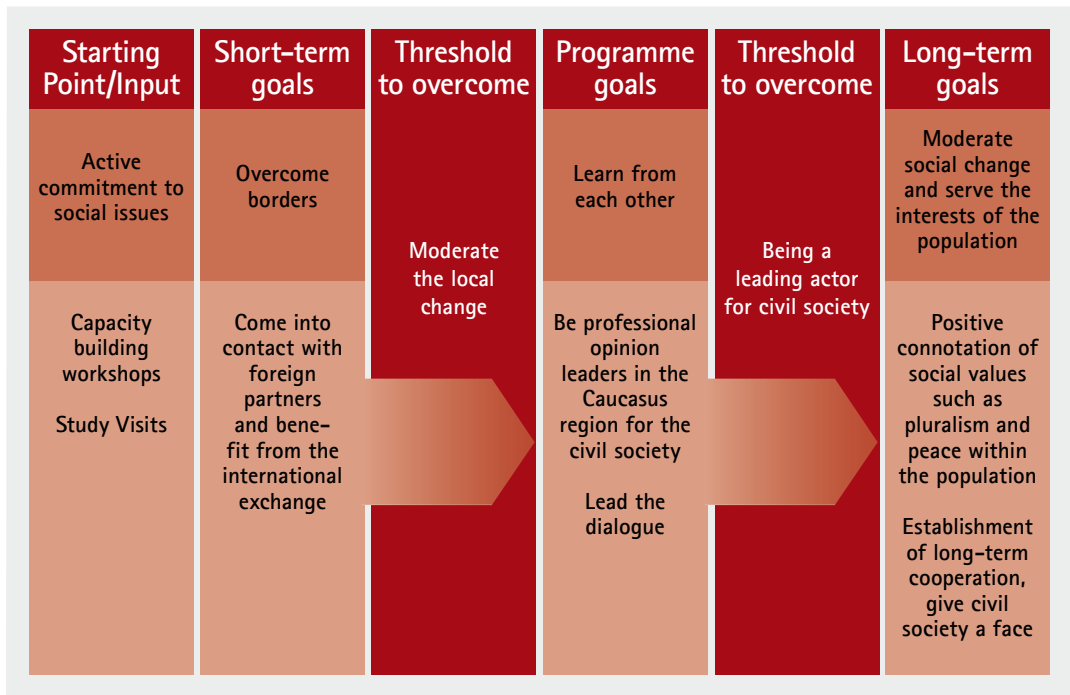


Fig. 3: Impact-Chain of the Social Leader Forum

2 Impact in person: Interviews with successful alumni from *Joint Civic Education*



Having worked intensively on evaluating *Joint Civic Education's* strategic approach for impact creation, we needed to ask: Is it possible to find real-life cases illustrating the fact that these impact assumptions hold true? The best way to determine this was to conduct interviews with alumni of the programme.

1. Overview of the interview approach

In collaboration with *Joint Civic Education* we identified suitable candidates among the alumni of the programme, who were “successful” from the point of view of the *Joint Civic Education* team. The alumni were supposed to be able to potentially illustrate the different ways of impact creation. They also had to be available for an interview during the course of the study.

Altogether, we conducted 7 in-depth qualitative interviews. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and processed by qualitative analysis. The structure of the interviews: All interviewees

were asked to answer a number of questions about their personal background (origin, training, professional experience) and the origin of their involvement or interest in civic engagement.

In the following, we summarise the main aspects of the interviews. This contains the main aspects of *Joint Civic Education* in general, including the programme's setting, the facilitators and mentors as well as tools and methods.

Finally, we give a résumé of the interviewees' advice on how to further develop the programme.

2. Alumni reflections on positive aspects and important parts of *Joint Civic Education*

A research analysis on comparable programmes has indicated that *Joint Civic Education* is quite unique in the region in terms of its objectives and target audience. The alumni we interviewed confirmed this view.



General positive aspects

- Long-term partnership with participants
 - Participation in the programme, opportunity to become a mentor/facilitator and become part of the organisation themselves
 - Participants believe, that they are really important for *Joint Civic Education*
- Innovative workshop design
 - Use of creative and affirmative rather than cognitive methods

- *Joint Civic Education* shows that they believe in the skills of the participants
- *Joint Civic Educations* helps to discover the benefits of:
 - Respect different cultures
 - Respect different opinions
 - It is good to be different and there are different truths

All alumni who have been interviewed mention the very special atmosphere and setting of the programmes.

- *Joint Civic Education* is international
 - After taking part in *Joint Civic Education* it is easier get in touch with people from abroad
 - The programme connects people from different countries
- *Joint Civic Education* creates a perfect space for discussion and how to think critically

The facilitators and mentors are also important for the personal success of the alumni.

Lali: Showing perspectives in a sustainable way

Holding a bachelor degree in Informatics Sciences, Lali is currently working full-time for an NGO in the Georgian city of Batumi, the “Centre for education and employment”.



After finishing school she realized the personal and professional opportunities that derive from becoming active and developed a serious interest in the area of civic activism. From the first day on she had the feeling she could rely on the persons within *Joint Civic Education* and described them as friendly and with a warm attitude.

The most important aspect for Lali has been to learn how to write and implement a project, how to do it in general. Her communicating skills with different people, ranging from the local government to actors of civil society to support a project have been improved as well. She realized

through this project experience that nothing is impossible.

Her project has been implemented in a region near Batumi. In general it is very rare in this community, that someone is working on a project on civic education or is providing seminars or trainings over there. Within the project they work together with school children who are almost leaving school, at the 11th or 12th grade.

Seminars are provided for them to find out what their talents are and how they can apply them after finishing school. Usually the profession of the parents will be chosen without considering other options. Are they aware of their talents? What do the students want? Is a university career an option? The aim of the programme is to overcome obstacles, the unconfident feeling they have inside. The project work is still continuing, helping young people to find their way in life.



This group of people mainly passed the programme as well – so they know the preconditions of the participants, their problems and challenges.

- Facilitators are very open-minded
- “Live up to” what they are saying and believe in what they are doing
- Are really interested in the ideas and problems of the participants, they are most rewarding
- Do not behave like teachers

Not only soft skills have been relevant for the success of the alumni. It was mentioned that several tools and methods had an influence on their work life and improved their overall commitment after the programme.

- How to establish an efficient project management
- How to clarify one’s own visions and strategies
- How to work effectively within a team

Positive teaching methods in the seminars have been mentioned as well.

- Simulation games for a better understanding of others perspectives and thoughts
- Internships/study visits (collegial exchange)
- Implementation of one’s projects to test the newly acquired skills

3. Alumni suggestions for further development of the programme

As a last step the interviewees were asked to make suggestions on how to improve *Joint Civic Education*.

The main suggestions can be summarised as listed below:

- Intensify the alumni work with former participants who are no longer actively involved in the activities of *Joint Civic Education*
- Own projects are too short – the initiated projects should be kept alive up to 2-3 years
- Improve the communication, the unique position of *Joint Civic Education* should be stated more obvious



3 Conclusions and recommendations

We suggest to consider five points which summarise the results of the study and formulate key insights and recommendations.

1. A convincing strategy model for social value creation

Our *Theory of Change* analysis has figured out a particularly convincing model for impact creation in society – reflecting the experience of an actor who has been active in the field for more than a decade. Like a successful social investor, *Joint Civic Education* is actively working on different links in the *Civic Education Value Chain* at the same time. They do so by intertwining their programmes: successful alumni of one programme activity (e.g. *Country Programmes*) qualify for



entering – jointly with others – another activity (e.g. *Junior Facilitator* and *Mentor Training*).

The different programme activities can thus be portrayed as jointly forming an integrated impact chain.

Rasul: Simulation game – be someone else

Rasul was caught by new presentation techniques: *Joint Civic Education's* programme is more innovative than other seminars he passed so far.

Especially within the so called *Simulation Game* Rasul made new experiences. In this game the participants slip into various roles: Christians play Muslims, Armenians play Turks, ... That sharpens the view on the situation other people live in. For Rasul the personal experience was the major benefit of the programme. This refers to this game and to his internship in Azerbaijan. There he worked for an organisation with a flat hierarchy: everyone was basically equal.

He got a strong impression of how an organisation could ideally work and that a strong team with

equal members could be most efficient and is able to develop the best ideas.

He even switched his own view on conflicts: With respecting each other and empathy groups can “use” upcoming conflicts to get to a better result in the end.

For Rasul it was important to learn: learn how to manage a project, how to get supporters and most important to become aware of his own vision. Everybody should be sure about what he does and the things that should be done. This learning was perfectly provided by *Joint Civic Education*: for Rasul it was possible to compare his own ideas and solutions with the ideas and solutions from other persons, even from other countries, and adapt them.

Sascha: Starting point for a career as a local cosmopolitan

When Sascha is looking back today, it seems quite funny: He, the lawyer and manager of an international operating Georgian company first left his home country only eleven years ago – to take part in a predecessor programme of *Joint Civic Education*.



Today it is normal for him to be in touch with people from all over Europe. Eleven years ago he only knew Georgia: He was born in Tbilisi, went to school in Tbilisi and even studied at Tbilisi University.

With the Theodor Heuss Kolleg things developed differently. What in 2002 started with a “nice vacation” really changed his life. At the summer seminar 2002 young people from 19 countries from all over Europe met in Berlin. They discussed the different challenges

in their society, their different opinions, and thoughts and shifted their view on the former life they lived. It was not only about respecting each other. They discovered the value of being different!

For Sascha it was clear to go back and stay in Georgia and work for more and an even better education and against the societal stagnation in these years. He worked for a student’s club providing seminars and networking.

Sascha is somehow a typical example for a well-educated person who is familiar with different opinions, cultures and people and believes in the power of the own people and society. He wants to help Georgia in becoming a respected member of the global society - so he stays, lives, works there and helps to shape the Georgian society as a local cosmopolitan.

Borders are only in your head!

Furthermore, *Joint Civic Education* manages to create an added value by having the participants from the *Junior Facilitator* and *Mentor Training* employed in the *Country-Programmes*. Not only does this provide a perfect training field for these young people to practice the mentoring and facilitating qualities they had just learned, but also helps *Joint Civic Education* to realise personnel cost savings while providing most useful services in the context of the *Country Programmes*.

Summing up, *Joint Civic Education* has systematically developed and adjusted its different programme activities to mutually reinforce each other and thus is able to offer a holistic approach for strengthening civic involvement in the region.

2. Key insights for future focus: the potential of programme interconnections

The development of the *impact creation model* and the identification of the value added from the intertwining of the programmes provides a useful reference for the future development of the pro-

gramme. There is still room for further development of the programmes and services, and ideas are plenty. Bearing in mind the strategic core of working on different elements of a value chain – also potentially with cooperating partners – will help to focus and assure actual impact creation.

3. Testimonies of much experience and a history of doing-well

The experience of *Joint Civic Education* as an actor in active citizenship education and the degree of elaboration of the approach is also reflected in the testimonies we collected in interviews with the alumni.

Plenty of signs show that *Joint Civic Education*, from the perspective of our interviewees, is doing well and their suggestions for improvement are rather small hints on an already high level. The biographies of the alumni who have been interviewed and portrayed in this report give an illustration of how the programme can have an effect on the civil societies of *Joint Civic Education*’s host countries.

4. Options for deepening evaluative efforts in the future

Given the results of the current study, important groundwork has been laid for the potential deepening of evaluative efforts for the future. There are different options to be considered for a more comprehensive impact assessment, which go beyond testing through qualitative interviewing. In particular, given the existing contacts with alumni of the programme, a more comprehensive survey among those alumni would suggest itself as a method to learn more about the effects of *Joint Civic Education*.

However, our general impression, which has become stronger during the study at hand, is that measuring the impact of *Joint Civic Education* or comparable programmes in general would represent a particularly challenging and complex endeavour – if it would be feasible at all. Given that *Joint Civic Education* aims to contribute to different links in the social value creation chain of civic education at once, any future evaluation efforts would probably have to agree on where to focus.

An obvious opportunity to focus on evaluation efforts consists in narrowing down study efforts to one of the three core programmes – *Country Pro-*

grammes, Junior Facilitator and Mentor Training or Social Leader Forum. Even then, due to the limited resources in any evaluation endeavour, a key requirement will be to agree upon the programme goals which shall be evaluated in detail. Given, for example, that alumni of *Joint Civic Education* do not necessarily deploy their newly acquired skills in civil society but might enter public administration or the economy, it needs to be clear whether such biographies are to be considered as within the key goals of *Joint Civic Education* or not.

The advantage for any future evaluating efforts, however, is the availability of the current study results, in particular the Theory of Change and the elaboration of the key impact dimensions, which are relevant to the work of *Joint Civic Education*. This provides a sound starting point to develop an adequate and quality evaluation design for a thorough check on the impact of any part of *Joint Civic Education*.

5. On the way to impact monitoring and improved networking

Whatever might be realised as deepening evaluative efforts in the future, the obvious direct conversion of lessons learned from this study into the





working routines of *Joint Civic Education* should include the use of the in-depth experience of the alumni. We are now able to describe in detail how the activities of *Joint Civic Education* are meant to affect the participants of the different programmes. This knowledge can be applied if *Joint*

Civic Education designs and conducts short surveys with participants of the different workshops. This would represent a major step into a more continuous social impact monitoring – and additionally might help to further support *Joint Civic Education's* alumni networking.

Diba: Found by Joint Civic Education

„My family is proud of me“ Diba describes with a friendly smile.

Born in eastern Turkey, Diba studied English literature in Kars before she took part in *Joint Civic Education's* programme. With the empowerment of *Joint Civic Education*, Diba shot a movie about the multiethnic neighbourhood in her home city. She interviewed people who have Turk, Kurd or Armenian origins towards their situation, beliefs and contact to other ethnic groups. On the way she struggled with public authorities and improved her skills in project management in a practical way. Finally she was able to reach her personal project goal: her movie was shown in the cinemas of her city.

A well-respected project!

Her self-esteem was strengthened and empowered her to make a step forward: She improved her English, started to learn German

and now studies in Poland. Today she really believes in her skills. This is a success story of an active young woman.

But what was so special for her personal development? Sure, *Joint Civic Education* teaches management tools like finance, project management or evaluation but even much more important was the “emotional aspect”: The open and free atmosphere created by the trainers of *Joint Civic Education* inspired and electrified her. “Everybody knows what democracy is and why it is so important. But with *Joint Civic Education* democracy became obvious, perceptible and was actually lived.”

Joint Civic Education was a gift for her. She did not look for such a programme but was lucky and feels to be found by the organisation.

By now she passed a *Junior Facilitator Training* to share her experiences and knowledge.



CSI

Centrum für soziale Investitionen und Innovationen
Centre for Social Investment