

Summary:

Evaluation of the Initial Capacity Building Programme for emerging institutions and civil society in Libya 2011-2013

"I learned when you face an obstacle, you find stronger solutions. You don't give up. The strongest point in the course was the visit to the airport: that really left a deep impression on us participants. We listened and heard the problems and then we sat down and made a plan. This was the best practical experience".

Training participant, Benghazi

This is a summary of an independent evaluation report commissioned by Common Purpose to evaluate the European Union supported "Initial Capacity Building Programme for emerging institutions and civil society in Libya". Common Purpose received nearly €2 million from the Instrument for Stability (IfS) to develop the management and leadership capacities of leaders/managers within emerging interim institutions and civil society in Libya between June 2011 and March 2013.

The evaluation relied on analysis of project documents, quantitative data drawn from Common Purpose's attendance figures and participants' course assessments, and more than 100 interviews with participants, staff and other stakeholders conducted on three missions to Libya during the course of the project. It concluded that the programme was well suited to post-conflict Libya and should be replicated in comparable situations.



Participant, NGO Leaders Course, Tripoli 2012

Background

One of the key objectives of the IfS is to respond rapidly to international crises and create the conditions for normal development to resume. Key priorities in Libya were to support new leaders as they emerged, with a particular emphasis on women and young people, and to act quickly in supporting newly emerging leaders.

Common Purpose submitted a proposal to the IfS in May 2011, just three months after the revolution had started in Benghazi in February. The Transitional National Council did not declare the country liberated until October of that year.

Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Impact

Common Purpose was highly successful in meeting the EU's objective of rapid intervention by adopting an approach of 'learning by doing'. The team deployed rapidly, starting to deliver leadership training in Benghazi as early as August 2011, winning trust and a high profile for both the organisation and the EU, largely on the strength of having offered visible, practical assistance very early in Libya's transition.

Leadership development, core management skills and expert advice provided through a combination of generic and bespoke courses, workshops and technical assistance were both timely and relevant.

All programme targets were exceeded: 1,692 people took part with a total of 4,622 days of training activities, 26% more than planned. Courses were run in Derna, Al Bayda, Benghazi, Misrata and Tripoli, attracting participants from across the country and an estimated 400 civil society organisations were reached. Sustained attention to gender balance resulted in an excellent female participation rate of 43%.

"Here in Libya they think that women can't manage or lead anything. That makes me angry. They think that women can't think, can't use their minds. Some participants said, "What brought you on the course, you think you'll be president? Dream on!"... I'm going to prove them wrong."

Training participant, Tripoli

“I watched these medical leaders quickly move from a group of individuals to an effective team within the three day course. The participants left with a clear action plan, prioritised goals and the relationships which will continue to grow over the next few months.”

Liz Thiebe, UK National Health Service, training expert on health sector course



Participants, Senior Leaders Course, Benghazi 2012

Key outcomes included:

- a fully developed proposal for the Labour ministry for a bespoke leadership development programme for the civil service, which has the potential for significant impact if adopted by the government. The process equipped senior managers with the principles and techniques of a collaborative approach to programme design;
- senior managers from the private sector, Benghazi institutions and civil society learned to cooperate across sectors, as well as to lead. Previously, many would have been loath to ask for assistance from others out of mutual suspicion or fear of being seen to be failing;
- a significant number of CSO leaders learned non-authoritarian ways of managing people and organisations and the leaders of some key CSOs felt supported in transforming their organisations;
- Common Purpose’s emphasis on core principles of cooperation and listening with respect led to joint initiatives by participants and also produced positive encounters across gender, age, geographic, ethnic and political divides;
- all women participants interviewed had gained confidence, particularly about speaking in public. Most felt they had gained organisational skills and were already putting them to use and many women participants had taken on new, more senior roles;
- almost all participants interviewed reported that they felt more confident, managed their time better, listened to colleagues more and respected their opinions, were more willing to ask others for help and worked more effectively in teams. Many participants said they had shared their learning with colleagues;
- younger participants felt more ambitious, yet more level-headed, their revolutionary fervour re-directed into constructive debate and active citizenship.

Three of the most ambitious initiatives by participants were women-led: to open 200 kindergartens nationwide, to retrain all teachers of English and to provide 3,000 ex-fighters with vocational training. Like other projects, however, these required government backing and were delayed by the lengthy process of electing and installing a new administration.

Key success factors for the programme included:

- close collaboration between staff of the EU (FPI and EU Delegation) and Common Purpose in the early stages of the programme;
- a consultative approach, without a pre-existing agenda.

More attention could have been paid to sustainability in the design and implementation of the programme. Participants were offered opportunities to consolidate or extend their learning, but take-up was low.

Key recommendations for future actions

- 1) the target of a large number of participants might be reduced in favour of focusing on the most senior leaders and on training of trainers in order to leverage capacity building and support sustainability;
- 2) in countries where women are expected not to travel unescorted, the EU should consider reimbursing the travel expenses of “chaperones” to maximise the number of women participants;
- 3) the procedural and administrative requirements of the EU should be reviewed to ensure that they are as simple and transparent as possible in order to enhance the flexibility and speed of the interventions supported;
- 4) the EU should ensure that lines of communication between those responsible for public relations facilitate the identification and promotion of good news stories when they emerge from projects.

Richard Williams, Independent Evaluator, Sept 2013

“I am a leader, and became even more of a leader thanks to Common Purpose.”

Head of civil society organisation and training participant in Tripoli