

CIVIC SPACE MENTORING PROGRAM

Civic Space Mentoring Program is designed to help both existing and new citizen's initiatives, and civil society organizations (CSOs), which work for public good and wish to improve themselves on certain issues, in setting priorities and enhancing their institutional capacities based on a strategic perspective. Its goal is to reinforce CSOs' problem solving and capacity strengthening skills around the issues they focus on. The Mentoring Program is one of the mutually complementary tools Civic Space offers to strengthen the civil society in Cyprus, such as trainings, thematic seminars and conferences, study visits, and the Grow Civic in-kind support programme.

WHAT IS MENTORING, AND WHY IS IT CRUCIAL?

Mentoring is different from consulting, training or coaching.

Consulting refers to the process whereby an expert supplies/transfers the knowledge and/or experience the organization needs on a specific issue.

Coaching entails the development of a skill the organization needs on a certain issue.

Training is about conveying/enabling the learning of a piece of knowledge/skill/opinion as per the agenda and contents specified by an expert/trainer, in line with the organization's needs.

Mentoring, on the other hand, refers to "learning how to learn", to strengthen the organization's capacity on a specific issue and based on the agenda specified by the organization itself.

Civic Space made mentoring, based on its "learning how to learn" approach, into a Program specific to Cyprus, (with a view) to achieve sustainable capacity strengthening of Cypriot civil society, and to enable experience sharing between organizations and activists. Thus, the Mentoring Program, while facilitating self-empowerment of CSOs, will also contribute to systematizing, expanding, and sustaining the mentoring-like solidarity networks that already exist among Cypriot CSOs and activists.

WHAT IS CIVIC SPACE MENTORING PROGRAM AND HOW CAN YOU MAKE USE OF IT?

The Civic Space Mentoring Program is designed as a **flexible and non-hierarchical process accessible by any CSO / initiative without discrimination, whereby participants deemed equal, learn from each other, rather than through a hierarchical relationship of teacher-learner.** While, an organization / initiative that receives mentoring will be learning how, when, and with whom it will be strengthening its capacity, and what to do for that purpose, the process will enhance the mentoring skills, strengthen the practice of the mentor, and allows the experience gained from other organizations to be shared.

Initiatives or organizations that request mentoring support from Civic Space will first take part in a preliminary meeting with 2 potential mentors from the pool of mentors. This meeting will help to



identify the priority areas in which the organization / initiative needs to work on to strengthen its capacity. Thereafter, the organization / initiative will be matched with one individual from the pool of mentors who will provide support to the organization / initiative in the selected strategic capacity area. The matching process will try and make sure to match the organization / initiative with a mentor who is experienced in the thematic field of work as well as in the area where the organization / initiative needs to improve its capacity.

The Mentoring Program is completely based on voluntary involvement. The mentors do not get paid for the support they will be providing in this context, whereas the organizations / initiatives involved get the mentoring support on a voluntary basis.

HOW DOES CIVIC SPACE MENTORING PROGRAM WORK?

Once matched, the organization / initiative and the mentor begin their meetings and engagement in accordance with the procedure, form, and time frames they decide. **The mentoring support is limited to a maximum time frame of 6 months, and involves an average of 8 to 10 hours of mentoring support per month.** The mentor and the organization / initiative will jointly decide on how, when, where, and with whom the support will be scheduled.

The mentoring process is based on trust, and unless jointly decided otherwise, the mentors respect and maintain the confidentiality of the information shared with them.

Once every three months, Civic Space holds meetings or discussions with the mentors as well as the organizations / initiatives that receive mentoring support, hearing their views about the process, and if/when necessary, provides recommendations for improvement. In case of any problem arising between the mentor and the organization / initiative, Civic Space will take necessary measures to support the development of a solution. However, in case the problem cannot be solved through these efforts, the mentoring relationship between the organization / initiative and the mentor might be terminated.

The mentoring process will be supported both with trainings and workshops to be organized by Civic Space and other CSOs, and with the involvement of other mentors from the mentor pool.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR MENTORING SUPPORT?

Any registered or unregistered civil society organizations, which meet the following criteria will be eligible for mentoring support:

- Operating as a registered (e.g. associations, foundations, non-profit companies) or unregistered citizen's initiatives working for public good;
- Having at least 5 active members;
- Committing at least 2 participants for continuous involvement in the mentoring process;
- Presence in Cyprus throughout the mentoring process;



- The decision-making mechanism and/or the whole team of the organization or initiative having the motivation, time, and capacity for capacity strengthening in the chosen issue area.

WHO CAN PROVIDE MENTORING SUPPORT?

Civil society activists who meet the following criteria can provide mentoring support:

- Having worked at least 5 years in a CSO or a citizen's initiative as an activist, volunteer, board member, staff etc.;
- Being able to volunteer for 8 to 10 hours per month, to provide mentoring support;
- Having the qualifications required to support the strengthening of civil society, in terms of approach and experience;
- Having attended the 3.5 days long Mentoring Training organized by the Civic Space.

WHICH CAPACITY AREAS ARE COVERED BY THE MENTORING PROGRAM?

Mentoring support is offered for the following capacity strengthening areas. Please contact us if you wish to enhance your organization's capacity in an area which is not listed below.

- Advocacy
- Dialogue, Conflict Management
- External Communication / Outreach
- Event Organization
- Financial Management
- Fundraising
- Internal Communications and Organizational Management
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Networking / Partnerships
- Organizational Information Management
- Project Design, Drafting and Management
- Risk Analysis and Planning
- Social Media Management
- Strategic Planning
- Working with Volunteers

