

FUTURE SEARCH FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN BELARUS

June 4-6, 2015

Purpose of the Future Search

Pact is gathering the third Future Search meeting for June 4-6, 2015 in Vilnius, Lithuania. The purpose of the Future Search is to generate a *realistic vision* of civil society in Belarus and outline *development scenarios* to follow, *actions* to undertake and *results* to achieve in the period of 2017-2022 in order to be more sustainable sector and influential force better serving country's development priorities and citizens' needs. Previous Future Search workshops' results will be used as a baseline/framework in order to see development trends and achievements as well as lack of progress if that is the case.

Introduction: Future Search

Future Search is the name for a 3-day participatory planning meeting that enables people to cooperate in complex situations. The method involves groups of 25 to 100 people (and sometimes even large groups) who through joint action develop a desired future for a community, organization, or issue. People from diverse backgrounds use Future Search to make systemic improvements in their communities or organizations, working entirely from their own experience. Future Search as an inclusive method lets people collaborate despite differences of culture, class, gender, age, ethnicity, language, and education.

Future Search in the Past

In 2006 Pact organized the Future Search Workshop as part of the Organizational Development Support (ODS) program in Belarus. Pact brought together a multi-sectoral group of 25 Belarusian NGO leaders, Pact and representatives of other implementers of international development assistance. The purpose was to analyze the challenges of Belarusian civil society, strategize their collaborative efforts and plan for their success. As a result of the workshop participants mapped the trends affecting the sector, identified their strengths and priority growth objectives, and articulated their collective ideal future. One of the outcomes was the design of a *Civil Society Leadership Fellows* program.

In 2011 Pact, a group of 35 representatives of Belarusian CSOs and 4 external groups (USAID, NDI, Forum Syd, and Solidarity Center) met for a Future Search event. During the meeting, Pact was able to clarify its role and facilitate challenging dialogue among the group. The results of the meeting suggested the focus of Pact's next programming cycle: **i) clarifying sectoral values and identity** – promote mission-driven approaches among CSOs and their increased visibility among stakeholders; **ii) building sectoral cohesion** – promote horizontal links between CSOs while applying sub-sectoral approach to better understand and support their development; **iii) building a constituency base** – promote more effective service delivery based on increased CSOs' outreach; **iv) advance CSOs' skills and approaches** – invest in institutions building and organizational development.



3 days

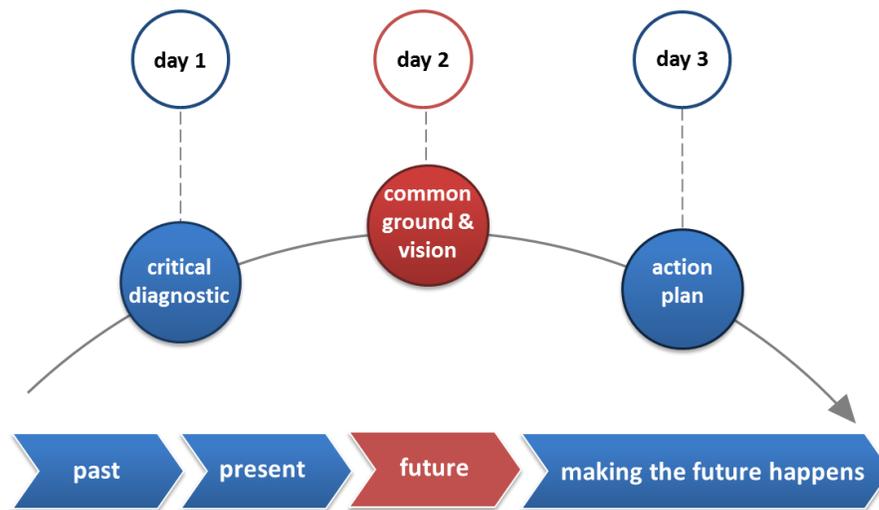
June 4-6, 2015

Vilnius

30 representatives of Belarusian CSOs

Objectives

- To analyze evolution of civil society, capture most important **challenges** and **problems** and explore core **trends** that are going to influence the sector in the future.
- To generate a shared **realistic vision** of the future and identify **key desired results** that are ambitious and achievable.
- To formulate **concrete actions** necessary to achieve the desired future and specific results.
- To identify **concrete ways that technical assistance can be channeled** to achieve the desired future and specific results identified during the event.



Future Search's Added Value

- Representatives and leaders of Belarusian CSOs invited to Future Search Workshop (FSW) will be encouraged to look beyond the border of their own organizations and sub-sectors they represent. FSW builds on the competence of participants and their diversity and can then best profit from the phenomena of collective intelligence: the result of the process has strong chances to be highly qualitative and very innovative. All the participants are seen as important stakeholders because they work in the sector, want to change it, knowing the sector specifics and challenges.
- Future Search is an open process which builds on the opinion of the participants and on their wishes. The process ensures fair conditions for deliberation and participation when each opinion is counted and participants are treated as the main actors of the process and creators of the results.

- Development scenarios and action plans to be developed using a *holistic* (connecting all key elements of CSO sector sustainability e.g. legal environment, organizational development, service delivery, public image, etc.) and *sub-sectoral approach* (considering different sub-sectors of Belarus civil society e.g. doers, thinkers, youth, gender, media, etc.). So, the *development scenarios and action plans* participants will work on are going to encompass all the idea they already have, these they will discover from each other and create together.
- The *specific and measurable desired results* as well as *concrete actions* necessary to achieve them, identified at FSW can provide guidance and source of insights for local CSOs, donors and implementers of technical assistance programs as well as for other stakeholders wishing to implement their future programs to advance civil society development in Belarus. Assessment of barriers and challenges concerning the future of civil society sector will clarify which problems/challenges can be collectively addressed versus those that really can not be notably influenced.
- FSW creates an opportunity for participants to place themselves in a strategic position to influence stakeholders' development agendas and sectoral development process in broader terms. Participants will meet many key stakeholders, be able to strengthen their own network.

Results

- The essence of the event in terms of a tangible output will be **a set of specific medium-short term results** and how they can be achieved, how measurable progress can be made towards them through **concrete actions** to be undertaken. Thus facilitation of the event, organization of group work, discussions and overall group dynamic will focus and keep everyone's attention on achieving that, while necessary minimal time will be spent on visioning and talking about realistic future to the extent to ensure participants know where they want to go when they plan to get there.
- The result of the three days of the workshop will be presented in an analytical report – a document designed according to the following structure: **i)** introduction overviewing the workshop purpose, objectives, process and participants; **ii)** brief analysis to what extent expected results of the workshop were reached; **iii)** evolution of civil society – major events that influenced the sector development over the last five years; **iv)** state of affairs in the sector – overview of key problems and challenges, positive and negative trends and lessons learned (activities and approaches that should be continued/expanded, as well as those that should be abandoned); **v)** presentation of specific and measurable results for the next five year period, based on a shared realistic vision; **vi)** description of concrete actions that should be undertaken to achieve desired results and future; **vii)** presentation of specific ideas for priorities, forms and channels of technical assistance to Belarusian civil society for the next five-year period.

The document is seen to be a valuable source for all relevant stakeholders' future programming. Given this workshop would be the third consecutive using the same methodology, it will give the

benefit to compare trends and achievements in order to build on those the future strategy. It is intended the document will be published for the benefit of the relevant stakeholders in an appropriate format and after necessary consultations.

Program

Day 1: Critical Diagnostic

session 1:	Introducing the Future Search Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming. • Introduction of participants and facilitators. • Presentation and explanation of Future Search methodology. • Clearing the expectations. • Discussion of the rules for good dialogue and deliberation.
session 2:	Looking back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Historical line' discovering major events in the past in the life of a) CSOs they represent; b) civil society sector. • One big mind map displaying core trends that are affecting civil society.
session 3:	The present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two mind maps displaying key good practices and problems/challenges in Belarusian civil society.
session 4:	Day 1 evaluation and conclusion	

Day 2: Generating the future and desired results for civil society in Belarus

session 5:	The realistic future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants' visions of desired realistic future is elaborated and presented in creative form of expression.
session 6:	Key desired results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A logical scheme displaying common desired medium-short term results that are ambitious and achievable, are formulated based on commonly identified core values.
session 7:	Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important milestones (action/group of action/event which explain the way the goals will be achieved) in this direction identified.
session 8:	Day 2 evaluation and conclusion	

Day 3: Development scenario and action plan for civil society in Belarus

session 9:	Shaping action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation and discussion of development scenarios and action plan for civil society in Belarus.
session 10:	How can technical assistance help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion of priorities, forms, channels and other aspects of technical assistance that can best support the desired future and results.
session 11:	Day 3 evaluation and conclusion	

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