COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTED IN CENTRAL, EASTERN AND SOUTHEAST EUROPE FROM 1996-2002

MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP INTERNATIONAL (MRG)

EVALUATION REPORT

REPORT TO MRG FUNDED BY SIDA EAST

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Contents

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Executive Summary

This Evaluation Programme assesses MRG's partnership programmes carried out in Central and East Europe and Southeast Europe in the period of 1996-2002 from various perspectives. Most programmes are assessed from the perspective of their efficiency, effectiveness and relevance. However, the emphasis on these and other evaluation dimensions varies across programmes based on identified needs and questions by MRG staff, local partners and direct beneficiaries. In the case of one programme, for instance, the foundations of a participatory monitoring and evaluation system are laid down.

This evaluation is primarily a participatory internal evaluation with various degrees of involvement by major stakeholders and with the input of two external evaluators as well as third party informants unconnected to the evaluated programmes.

Based on the findings of this evaluation, MRG's assessed programmes proved to be generally efficient and effective. They used their resources as planned in terms of outputs and they achieved their major intended outcomes. One of the most successful types of activities proved to be the advocacy and rights trainings. However, exceptions exist. In terms of outcomes for instance, single or one-off events, notably the workshops, did not perform well. They only partially achieved their objectives or, with the exception of one programme, networks were only poorly realised if at all. In addition, some of the issue-based and thematic MRG reports, most importantly the workshop reports, did not achieve their major advocacy objective and in general they remained underused by the target audience.

Whilst the MRG programmes generally performed well in terms of their outcomes, it was difficult to identify long-term and sustainable impacts – changes in peoples' lives. Overall, it can be said that those programmes contributed most to intended impacts which had the highest level of stakeholder participation in their planning, management and implementation as well as evaluation. In addition they were clearly grounded in local processes rather than being "events-based", that is organised around single events. The Roma programmes are examples of this.

There were examples of both positive and negative unintended outcomes and impacts. For instance, one positive result was the establishment of new NGOs by Roma trainees or the initiation of academic courses and research programmes as a result of participation in some of the MRG trainings or even workshops. The negative unintended results are mostly related to raised and unfulfilled local expectations, unclear terms of partnership and low stakeholder participation as well as non-involvement in local advocacy. Some of MRG's local partners and direct beneficiaries had the perception that MRG was not fully committed to the contribution of local impacts but was rather a self-serving NGO distant from local issues.

The findings of this Evaluation Programme were cross-checked in a comparative regional context and, based on the analysis of these findings, a modest set of shared criteria of effectiveness was considered primarily by NGOs who work in the field of inter-community co-operation and the protection of minorities. Finally, some conclusions were drawn and recommendations made for the improvement of MRG's programme work in general and evaluation and monitoring in particular.

1. Introduction

Local and international NGOs have been conducting a considerable number of programmes and projects in the field of democratisation and human rights including minority rights and inter-community co-operation in Central, East and Southeast Europe over the last decade. However, little is known about the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of these programmes. This is mainly due to a lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of their work by many human rights NGOs in this field. Nevertheless, even if evaluations exist, findings are rarely shared by and among NGOs, if at all. In addition, there are only a few comparative academic studies which summarise evaluation findings and lessons of NGO activities in the field of democratisation and human rights. Even fewer discuss and suggest practical methodologies and methods of evaluation and impact assessment which could be used by NGOs and in the non-profit sector in general[1].

To assess its own work and engage in a process of learning among NGOs working in the field of democratisation and human rights, Minority Rights Group (MRG) carried out a Comprehensive Evaluation Programme (Evaluation Programme) of its work conducted in co-operation with local partners in Central, East and Southeast Europe in the period of 1996-2002[2]. This programme started in July 2003 and was concluded in September 2004.

1.1. The Evaluation Programme

Following a preliminary research period, the final goal, purpose, and activities of the Comprehensive Evaluation Programme (Evaluation Programme) were decided in a meeting with MRG staff in London on 3 September 2003. As a conclusion of discussions in this meeting and based on findings of the research, it was decided that the goal and the purpose of the programme would be, as follows:

The ultimate **goal** of the programme is the improvement of the effectiveness and impact of democratisation and human rights programmes including minority protection and inter-community co-operation through sharing evaluation findings and improving evaluation methodologies.

The purpose of the programme is to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of programmes undertaken in Central, East and Southeast Europe over the last seven years against a broader comparative background in order to:
- (a) to review the internal and external validity of its programmes through a critical assessment of programme outputs, outcomes and impacts as well as of employed strategies for change
- (b) to assess the monitoring and evaluation methodologies and methods used within the framework of these programmes
- (c) to share and exchange experiences on evaluation findings with NGOs working in similar fields and consider the possibility of identifying shared criteria of effectiveness
- (d) to share and exchange experiences on emerging lessons on evaluation methodologies and methods with other international and local NGOs working in the field of democratisation and human rights.

It was decided that the programme will have three major stages, each comprising a set of activities as is summarised in the table below:

Programme stages	Activities
I. Evaluation of relevant MRG programmes	Undertaking the evaluations of: 1. Central and East European Initiative (1996-1999) 2. Minority Rights in the 21st Century: a Rights and Advocacy Training Programme for Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia (1999-2001) 3. Diversity and Democracy in Southeast Europe (1999-2003) 4.Intrinsic and Passport (1997-1999) 5.RIPPLE and RomaSEE (2000-2002)
II. Sharing experiences in a comparative context and cross-checking findings	- research on existing comparative evaluation materials in the field of democratisation and human rights - preparation of an international workshop on evaluation with NGOs working in the field of democratisation and human rights in CEE and SEE through interviews and networking on the issues - evaluation meeting on findings, methodologies, methods and shared criteria of effectiveness
III. Dissemination of findings	- finalisation of evaluation report - dissemination of evaluation reports to a wide range of audience

1.2   The terms of reference

Aims of the evaluation
It was agreed upon by MRG staff that the major aim of this Evaluation Programme is *learning* in that lessons would be drawn on past and present activities in order to plan future projects. Learning was coupled with the aim of *knowledge-generation* which would allow for the dissemination of findings to a wide range of audience more specifically similar NGOs, direct beneficiaries, donors and other stakeholders in the field of democratisation and human rights. In addition, findings will inform decision-making processes and the implementation of ongoing initiatives, hence the evaluation will also offer *management support*. *Accountability* was seen an aim of this evaluation primarily as accountability to partner organisations and direct beneficiaries rather than accountability to donors.

Levels of evaluation: efficiency, effectiveness, impact
This evaluation assesses the relevant programmes at three major levels including efficiency, effectiveness and relevance[3]. The review of the *efficiency* of programmes is carried out through the assessment of inputs in relation to outputs. This part of evaluation is the briefest one and it is based on a short summary of reported inputs and outputs. Issues of cost-effectiveness will not be discussed in the framework of this Evaluation Programme as no comparative data coming from similar NGOs could be found. The *effectiveness* of programmes is concerned about how far the delivery of outputs achieved the anticipated outcomes. However, this evaluation goes beyond the

assessment of anticipated outcomes and it also tries to map out unanticipated outcomes of programme activities including negative effects. This is the most emphatic part of this evaluation. Finally, the *relevance* of the programme is assessed through the impacts achieved as it is believed that the achievement of intended changes is only possible through relevance. This part of the evaluation is the most problematic one due to inherent problems of attribution in democratisation and human rights programmes, differences in interpretation of impact by the various stakeholders and the lack of established evaluation methodologies in this field of social change. Nevertheless, the possible impacts including unintended, positive and negative, will be looked at briefly and with due caution.

Units of analysis
The major outcomes and changes will be assessed at the level of individual participants, organisations, communities and, if relevant, changes at national, regional and international levels.

As a final note it has to be said that all findings at the different levels of intervention and units of analysis will be related to the intervention strategy or model of change[4] of the programme in question as it is believed that it is at the conceptual or design level where major learning and lessons for improvement occur.

The areas to be evaluated and key questions
The major areas of evaluation and key questions pertaining to these areas were primarily decided upon in an evaluation meeting convening interested and relevant MRG staff as mentioned above. In addition, partners and direct beneficiaries were asked about issues they would like to learn about in this evaluation process at the time of their involvement in the various evaluation activities and beyond. Based on questions and suggestions coming from MRG staff and partners and in line with the purpose and aims of this evaluation[5], the in-depth areas to be evaluated in this Evaluation Programme include:
- capacity building in training and advocacy and through partnership programmes
- effective intervention strategies and types of activities
- monitoring and evaluation as a process of systematic learning. In this respect, as a response to the evaluation findings and recommendations coming from the external evaluation of the 1st phase of the SEE Diversity and Democracy programme, the relevant MRG staff decided that instead of replicating evaluation it would plan and start the implementation of a participatory system of monitoring and evaluation of the 2nd phase of the SEE Diversity and Democracy programme.
- MRG publications, in lesser detail.

The end users
Based on the goal, purpose and aims of the Evaluation Programme, its prioritised end users are the MRG management and programme staff; the local partners including their management and programme staff; the direct beneficiaries of MRG's partnership programmes and the donors. Besides the prioritised end users, findings of the evaluation will be disseminated to a wider audience including international and local NGOs, intergovernmental organisations, national decision-makers and academia.

1.3.   Key principles and terminology

Human rights and democratisation programmes cannot go against the major principles of democracy and human rights in either their substance or processes. The best scenario is if these programmes, many of which are external interventions, become themselves part of the process of

democratisation[6]. This means that *participation* should inform all activities in this field including monitoring and evaluation. Participation is a key human right the realisation of which rests on the respect of essential democratic values including pluralism, negotiation, compromise and consensus. These values and principles are to inform this evaluation.

There are no well established methodologies for the evaluation of democratisation and human rights projects. This goes with a diverse usage of terms carrying different meanings in various contexts. To ensure clarity, a glossary of terms was developed. This glossary was used in all meetings and events within the framework of this programme and it has also informed this analysis[7].

2.   Methodology and methods

2.1.   General approach

The basic methodology of this evaluation is pluralist as opposed to technocratic in that it acknowledges and respects the different perceptions of the various stakeholders, including diverse perspectives on success and failure as well as impact. Consequently, this evaluation does not look for one scientific correct answer but rather it tries to map out the different lessons outlined by the various stakeholders. Hence, this report can only be regarded as an initiator for further reflection, dialogue and common action rather than a final answer to issues of concern. The methods used in this assessment are in line with this position inasmuch as possible[8].

Firstly, this evaluation combines the views of "insiders" with the perspectives of "outsiders", through a mixture of self-evaluation and the external review of all stages of this assessment. The insiders participating in this evaluation to various degrees are relevant MRG staff and the staff of local partners as well as direct beneficiaries. The outsiders are primarily two external specialists including a professional evaluator and a human rights lawyer previously unconnected to the programmes evaluated. They are in fact external expert reviewers focusing on two essential aspects of the evaluation process: evaluation standards and relevant policy and human rights analysis. In addition, the perspective of "outsiders" is further strengthened through the consultation of national informants who are in fact third party experts unconnected to these programmes or to the evaluation of these programmes. These experts were primarily consulted on the identification of possible impacts of MRG's programmes in a country or region.

Secondly, despite the fact that both quantitative and qualitative methods are used, the balance is clearly biased towards qualitative techniques. When used, quantitative findings are treated with caution and are cross-checked through qualitative data. It is believed that the measurement of quantifiable units can say little about complex and interrelated events in the field of democratisation and human rights. Furthermore, quantitative data communicate results in a fashion/style that does not necessarily give way to the pluralist challenge of single, "scientific" perspectives. As one colleague from Southeast Europe noted, the use of technocratic approaches has a powerful ***political*** connotation, as it reinforces authoritarian and top-down approaches instead of a more democratic negotiation and consensus on relevant lessons and solutions. It is therefore important that methods used reinforce the major goals of these types of projects: respect for pluralist democracies and human rights.

2.2.   Methodology and methods of the evaluation of programme components

Major methodologies and methods used in the evaluation of the various programmes are briefly set out along the following major characteristics:

- Who plans and manages the process?
- Role of stakeholders
- How success is measured?
- Approach
- Methods used

Programme	Who plans and manages the process?	Role of stakeholders	How success is measured?	Approach	Methods used
1. CEE Initiative	MRG internal evaluator with input from external evaluators and limited input from local partners and direct beneficiaries	Providing information and participation in data collection and analysis	Indicators are defined by MRG programme staff or identified by MRG internal evaluator	Predetermined by MRG internal evaluator but also adaptive to changing circumstances	Desk study, field trips, questionnaires, interviews, observation, discussions, email exchanges, telephone conversations
2. Roma programmes	Members of former projects staff of MRG and local partners and a selection of direct beneficiaries	Providing information and participation in data collection and analysis	Indicators are defined in a meeting by former MRG programme staff, select local partners and beneficiaries	Adaptive	Desk study, meetings, focus group discussions, personal and telephone interviews, observation, email exchanges
3.Development of a system of evaluation for the 2nd phase of the SEE Diversity and Democracy programme	Programme staff of MRG and of local partners and direct beneficiaries; indirectly donors.	Joint analysis of the programme and of the previous process of evaluation and joint elaboration of the new system	Indicators previously designed by MRG are revised and complemented with new indicators by relevant MRG staff and select local partners	Adaptive	Meetings, focus group discussion, observation, filed trip, email exchanges and telephone conversations
4. International meeting on evaluation and monitoring of democratisation and human rights programmes	MRG internal evaluator with input from other relevant MRG staff and participants	Provide information, analysis, share and disseminate findings	Indicators designed by MRG	Determined by MRG internal evaluator but also adaptive	Interviews, discussions, telephone and email exchanges, observation, formal and informal meetings

It is clear from this table that the evaluation of the CEE Initiative is the least participatory whilst participation is most intense[9] in the evaluation of the Roma programmes and the design of the

monitoring and evaluation system of the second phase of the SEE programme. Overall, the intensity of participation is far from being collaborative or empowerment. Much of this evaluation is consultative and at its best it approaches collaboration. It is hoped that this mainly consultative approach will increasingly move into the direction of collaboration and empowerment adopted at an organisational level.

Further details on the methodology and methods used will be briefly presented in the relevant sections.

3. Findings: outputs, outcomes, impacts

Whenever relevant, the presentation of the findings of the evaluation of the programmes in question is focused on the following major points:
- Brief description of the programme evaluated including its intervention strategy based on goal, objectives and activities
- Brief summary of evaluation methodology and methods used in the programmes in question
- The presentation of findings along the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the programme in question.

3.1. The Central and East European Initiative (CEEI), 1996-1999

3.1.1. The CEEI: brief description of the strategy of change including goal, objectives and activities

In 1995, a needs-assessment / feasibility study was commissioned and the findings of this study led to the development of the CEE Initiative in 1996. This programme was focused on Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Poland and Slovakia and was initially planned to take place over three years (1996-98). MRG's programme activities were formulated and conducted with other organisations based in the region[10].

The strategy of intervention of CEE Initiative
The *goal* of the CEE Initiative was the promotion of minority rights and co-operation between communities as well as the development of pluralistic democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. The major *objectives* were to: (1) develop the skills and expertise necessary for political participation and implementing existing standards, (2) encourage good practice in problematic areas through co-operative exchanges and joint problem-solving, and (3) increase information and understanding about the situation of minority groups and minority rights.

The programme was structured around three main activities to achieve these objectives:
(a) advocacy and rights trainings
(b) skills-exchange workshops
(c) publications

This programme was managed on three levels including the Programme Co-ordinator based in London, the Regional Minority Rights Specialist based in the Budapest Co-ordination Office and local partners[11] in the respective countries.

The above strategy of intervention was primarily planned by relevant MRG staff which was presented for comments to partners in a planning meeting in November 1996 in Budapest.

Strengths and shortcomings of the strategy of intervention

Based on lessons emerging from this evaluation, it is useful to look at the strengths and shortcomings of this intervention strategy[12].

In 1996 the CEE Initiative was seen as an innovative programme by some partners and many participants. It has to be noted, that at the time there were very few INGOs which launched regional programmes specifically focused on minority protection and inter-community co-operation. Even fewer international NGOs were explicitly rights-based in their approach in this field. The MRG programme was commended by some partners and participants for the following main reasons:

- it addressed relevant and sometimes novel issues of concern in the field of minority protection. These issues included the local management of multiethnic communities, transborder relations and minorities and international advocacy in the field of minority protection
- it offered new perspectives on the protection of minorities. These new perspectives included a comparative framework for the discussion of issues through the multiple perspectives of ethnic groups, professions, institutional affiliations and countries. In addition, it emphasised a human rights-based approach to the protection of minorities instead of the traditional perspective of post-communist countries according to which minorities were mainly regarded as "social problems". Finally, instead of addressing existing ethnic tensions it aimed at identifying feasible practical solutions and good practice
- through the employment of new participatory methodologies in workshop design and facilitation re-enforced and illustrated a rights-based approach;

In retrospect, the shortcomings of this intervention strategy were tabled along the following major points:

- the process of planning was not sufficiently participatory which resulted in the fact that the overall ownership of the programme was never shared by local partners but rested with MRG;
- the various levels of the intervention and the way they connected to each other were not specified. It was not clear how changes at the national level built into changes at the regional level, or in what ways activities on a regional level benefited local organisations and communities. Hence, the design of the programme and its activities were not well integrated into a substantive process whereby organizations could grow over time and networks be cultivated. For most local partners and participants this programme was a series of disconnected events which was aggravated by a lack of in-country follow-up events and processes
- the lack of in-country follow-up events was coupled with MRG's reluctance to engage in local advocacy along specific issues due to MRG's organisational policy at the time[13]. This lack of MRG's concrete engagement in specific local issues of minority protection created the feeling in some local organisations that MRG is indifferent to or not responsive to genuine local problems
- the objective of the programme to generate cross-country or regional networks among individuals, organizations and communities who did not share a language was first of all a design flaw and it contributed to the limited level of co-operation that finally emerged;
- whilst partnership was the underpinning strategy of the programme, its terms of reference were not explicitly negotiated and clearly set out. In the case of some local partners this

resulted in disappointment as they felt that expectations were raised but promises were not kept

- As the programme was not monitored in a transparent way the continuous communication of perceived problems was not possible by partners. This, in turn, made the agreed correction of the intervention strategy impossible.

Overall, it can be concluded, that the programme did not have a coherent intervention strategy based on an integral process and owned by partners. In addition, despite the fact that partnership was the underpinning strategy of the programme, there was no clear and shared agreement on the terms of reference of this cooperation which resulted in confusion at times and mistrust in case of some partners. Added to all this, MRG's reluctance to engage in direct local advocacy did not help with grounding the programme in relevant local processes of social change. As the former MRG Programme Co-coordinator noted, "this really seemed to mean an events-based logic rather than a more developmental or process-based logic that could have probably led to more effective and sustainable change".

Finally, it has to be acknowledged, that at the time of the design of this programme some of the mistakes - which may seem obvious today - would have been very difficult to identify and address. This is due primarily to the innovative nature of the programme in the field of minority rights; hence there was not much experience to draw upon. In addition, the evaluation of democratisation and human rights programmes in general was nearly non-existent; therefore, there were no lessons to learn from on a more general level either. Nevertheless, the identified mistakes are extremely important lessons and challenges to be faced in any future programming in this field.

3.1.2. Evaluation methodology and methods used in the CEEI

Methods of monitoring and evaluation
Activities within the Central and Eastern Europe Initiative were systematically evaluated over the three years of the programme, in the following ways:
- (a) by participants at workshops and training seminars (including oral feedback and anonymous written evaluation form);
- (b) in reports to donors, written by the Programme Coordinator, in consultation with Project Manager and other colleagues;
- (c) through informal conversations with partners.

In addition, the CEE Initiative was discussed at MRG's council meeting in March 1998, which included a review of the major lessons and outcomes of the programme with a view to outline a shift in strategy from Central and Eastern Europe to Southeast Europe.

However, there has been no final evaluation of the programme as a whole.

Overall, it can be said that the evaluation of the programme was formally conducted at the level of its distinct activities with a focus on outputs and outcomes. Indicators of success for the assessment of the overall achievements of the programme were developed by MRG staff but never used in a systematic fashion as the programme as a whole was never evaluated. Indicators for the assessment of the distinct activities were not established but can be deduced from the end-activity questionnaires.

Strengths and shortcomings

The strengths of the evaluation and monitoring process and methods of the programme activities lied in their systematic nature which, years later, made the overview of the existing findings easy and served as a frame of comparison for this present evaluation.

In retrospect and based on evaluation findings, the major shortcomings of the monitoring and evaluation methods applied can be summarised as follows:

- The lack of clear intervention logic with no indicators at the various levels of the intervention strategy makes the evaluation of the overall programme extremely difficult
- The evaluation of the distinct activities was focused on outputs and outcomes and did not aim to chart the possible impacts
- The nearly complete lack of participation of stakeholders in the design, implementation, and decision-making process of the existing monitoring and evaluation process. This implied that the relevant MRG staff did not systematically and transparently share the learning from this programme with local partners and direct beneficiaries which definitely weakened the capacity building dimension of the programme for both MRG and partners and beyond. It also contributed to the view of some partners that the programme was engaged in a top-down and one-sided capacity building of local organisations without learning from local stakeholders.

This evaluation is an attempt to come up with the final evaluation of the CEE Initiative and share the resulting learning.

3.1.3. Efficiency, Effectiveness and Impact of Programme Activities and Programmes

Given the fragmented nature of the intervention strategy and the lack of indicators associated with the various units of assessment at the different levels of intervention, the evaluation of the CEE Initiative as an integral programme is extremely difficult. The approach applied here has three stages, as follows:

> **A.)** In the first stage the **efficiency** of the programme and of the main programme activities is looked at through a brief summary of outputs and the disaggregation of available data according to gender;
> **B.)** In the second stage the **effectiveness** and impacts of the two major programme activities including skills-exchange workshops and rights and advocacy trainings, are assessed mainly through questionnaires, interviews and some observation.
> **C.)** In the third stage, the effectiveness and **impact** of the overall programme is looked at mainly through 4 deep-interviews with the relevant staff of local partner organisations as well as interviews with national informants.

A. Efficiency: Outputs
The review of programme efficiency focuses on a very brief summary of outputs to answer the major question: did the programme do what it said it would do? Did it carry out all the activities it promised under the anticipated circumstances? It has to be noted, that this evaluation does not look at issues of cost-effectiveness, as it was not possible to find any comparative data on this issue as is explained in Chapter 4 in more details.

Overall, it can be said that, with the exception of two publications commissioned from local authors and the final evaluation of the programme, the CEEI carried out all the planned activities including four skills-exchange workshops and three rights and advocacy training seminars. In addition, extra assignments termed as consultancy were taken up in the course of the programme[14].

The number of participants in the evaluated activities is summarised in the table below. It has to be noted that these numbers do not include MRG staff or observers and interpreters who did not have an active role in the respective activities or in the overall programme.

Training Seminars	No. of Participants	Skills Exchange Workshops	No of Participants
1997	15	Local Government	24
1998	27	Education	30
2000	18	Transborder relations	24
Total	**60**	Media	20
		Total	**98**

The total number of participants in the skills exchange workshops and training seminars evaluated herein is: 158.

It should be noted that around 12 participants took part in more than one activity within the framework of this programme. Hence, duplications exist. However, in case of multiple participation in various activities, the effects and impacts of each activity were assessed through separate interviews and questionnaires. In addition, some of those beneficiaries who participated in more than one activity were interviewed about the effects of participation in multiple activities[15].

Gender distribution in the evaluated activities:

Skills Exchange Workshops		Training Seminars	
Women	Men	Women	Men
35 (36%)	**63 (64 %)**	**35 (58 %)**	**25 (42 %)**

Skills Exchange Workshops and Training Seminars	
Women	Men
70 (44%)	**88 (56%)**

It is interesting to note, that despite efforts to ensure gender balance, participation of women in the skills exchange workshops is much lower (28%) than that of men. But in the training seminars the participation of women is higher by 10 %.

One explanation could be that the workshops were more for decision makers and agenda setters and therefore, men dominated. The trainings were more practical for operatives on the ground. It could be that overall women prevail in the NGO sector.

Overall, it can be concluded that on the level of inputs and outputs, the CEE Initiative could be considered as efficient for the following reasons:
- It carried out the major planned activities and it added to it a great number of unplanned and ad hoc activities including consultancy work offered to local minority organisations, NGOs and governmental institutions, local offices of INGOs, media and academia
- as a programme it involved the planned number of participants in its activities
- at the level of the overall programme it secured a gender balance it anticipated.

However, the final evaluation of the programme together with local partners was replaced by an internal review and the two locally commissioned publications were not published. These are missing outputs which definitely weakened the overall efficiency of the programme.

B. Effectiveness and Relevance of Activities: Outcomes and Impacts
The Four Skills Exchange Workshops
The outcomes and impacts of the four skills-exchange workshops were assessed through 36 questionnaires, which make up 37 % of the total number of participants, and 51 interviews which make up 52 % of the total number of participants. Some of the interviewees and respondents to questionnaires overlap.   The rest of the participants could not be tracked down as many of them changed jobs, 2 of them died and some of them simply did not respond to the Questionnaires.

The questionnaires[16] replicated the questions of the end-activity evaluation questionnaires with the aim to gather data on intended outcomes and track the changes between the end-activity responses and responses given 5, 6 or 7 years later[17].

The interviews served to cross-check and explain the data gathered through questionnaires and also to acquire additional data on possible unanticipated outcomes and impacts at the level of organisations, communities and beyond.

The major objective of the skills-exchange workshops was "to encourage co-operation between representatives of different communities throughout the region to address practical problems in implementing minority rights standards in their community and country."   Based on this, the most important intended outcomes listed in the end-activity Questionnaires are as follows:
- the development of a new understanding of the issues/topics discussed (Q1)
- the practical application of this new understanding in subsequent individual or organisational activities (Q2 and Q3)
- the development of professional networks in-country and cross-country (Q 8 and Q 9)

Based on interviews and responses to Questionnaires, these intended outcomes will be first analysed. Following this, the unintended outcomes and impacts will be listed and assessed.

New understanding of issues discussed
64 % of total respondents to the recent questionnaires claim that their understanding of the issues discussed has changed very significantly or significantly as a result of their attendance of the meetings in question. This is only 7 % less than the results of the end-activity questionnaires. There is a growing number of those (10 %) who claim in retrospect that their understanding has not altered at all.

Q1.
Original question: Do you believe that your understanding of local governance/education/transborder relations and media in multicultural communities has changed?
Current question: Do you believe that your understanding of minorities and local government/education/transborder relations and media changed as a result of participating in this workshop?

	Very significantly	Significantly	A little	Not at all
■ End Activity evaluation	18%	52%	29%	1%
■ 2003/2004	14%	50%	25%	11%
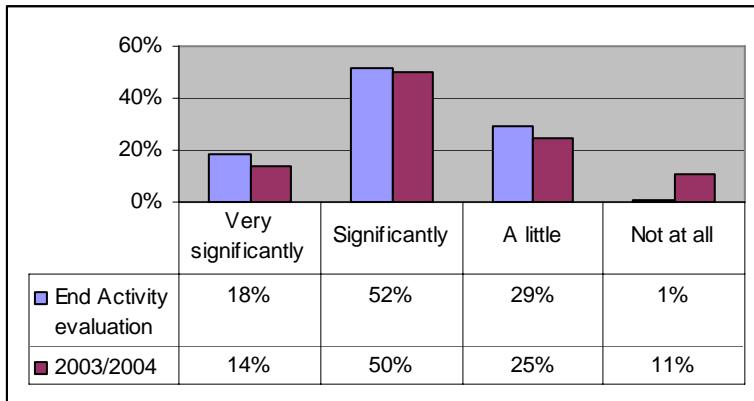
These results are roughly confirmed by interviews. 4 out of the 51 interviewed persons (7 %) claimed that they could not recollect discussions in the meeting. But 47 stated that their understanding has definitely changed to various degrees. The great majority of participants (around 90 %) valued the comparative framework which made them realise the complexity of the same issue and resulted in a different perspective on their own minorities' or countries' situation. Many (70 %) valued the opportunity to exchange information with minorities from different countries or with governmental officials from the same country. And many (40 %) stated that the meeting made them realise the importance of their own activities and encouraged them to go on with or take up new issues in their work at a domestic level. The use of the human rights perspective in discussion of issues related to minority protection was seen as a novelty by many and was also appreciated for establishing a broader legitimacy to the rights-discourse.

Overall, it can be said that in retrospect the four workshops achieved their objective of contributing to the changing of participants' understanding of issues discussed to various degrees. Nevertheless, the degree is important. Obviously, this contribution ranges between significant inputs that lead to concrete application and sharing of acquired knowledge and a more modest role in adding a few interesting details to the existing level of understanding. The next question assesses the level of practical application of the acquired knowledge.

Practical application of the changed understanding
Many years after the event, a steady percentage of the total respondents stated that the new understanding they acquired in the workshops helped them very significantly (28 %, see below) or significantly (47 %, see below) in their work. This is only 5 % less than results recorded in the end-activity questionnaires. The percentage of those who stated that these workshops did not help them in their work at all raised by 6 %.

Q 2.
Original question: Do you believe that this new understanding will help you in your work?
Current question: Do you believe that this new understanding helped you in your work?

	Very significa	Significantly	A little	Not at all	N/A
☐ End Activity evaluation	28%	52%	19%	0%	0
■ 2003/2004	28%	47%	14%	6%	6%
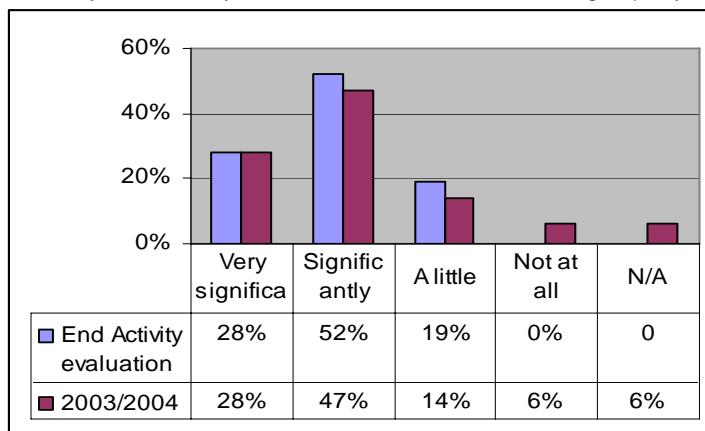
A subsequent open-ended question (Q3) and the interviews help understand in what concrete ways former participants applied this new understanding in their work. Based on data coming from these sources, responses can be structured as follows:
- the majority of participants claimed that they used this new understanding in their daily work in general as journalists, academics, civil servants, elected officials and NGO advocates i less visible and measurable ways.
- around 5 participants stated that they used this new understanding in organising trainings, seminars, discussion forums. For instance, in Hungary the workshop on media and minorities gave the idea to launch a project on the monitoring of the Hungarian media and minorities within the Minorities' Ombudsman's Office. In Romania, a former participant in the workshop on local governance who has become a university lecturer since introduced a course to the Sapientia University on the local management of multiethnic communities mainly based on this workshop and workshop report. The Local Government Reform Initiative of the Open Society Institute in Budapest launched a regional programme on the same subject. In the framework of this project a book was published and a series of training seminars in Southeast Europe was launched. The initiator of this programme was the workshop rapporteur of the relevant workshop and claims that this workshop contributed to the idea and design of this project to a very significant degree. In addition, two partner organisations claimed that they organised a series of discussion forums and meetings based on the workshops and workshop reports.
- 5 participants stated that they delivered lectures and presentations at a number of conferences and to relevant professional bodies.
- 3 participants from Poland and Bulgaria took up advocacy after the relevant workshops to secure broader participation of minorities in local and regional government
- 2 participants wrote and published 3 articles and 1 participant broadcasted 5 interviews in the Hungarian radio and television.
- Finally, as a result of participation in the workshop on education in Sofia, 3 participants from Hungary and Romania designed and carried out cross-country, multi-year programme on the education of minorities funded by EC/Phare.

Overall, based on the above data coming from the open-ended question and interviews, 18 respondents reported that they translated into practice what they had learned in the workshops. This is 18 % of the total number of participants which is 98. This is a significant percentage and it can be concluded that the workshops were effective in inducing local and regional activities and processes which multiplied their results.

*The development of in-country and cross-country networks*

The establishment of networks as a result of the workshops was a major objective of the workshops as it was hoped that through the networks long-term patterns of co-operation could be established.

It can be seen clearly from the chart that networks are positioned in the realm of occasional contacts. After years, many more participants stated that they contact other participants in their country occasionally rather than frequently and more than half of respondents say that they do not stay in touch with participants from other countries at all.

Q8 & Q9.
Original question: Do you intend to stay in contact with participants from <u>your country / other countries?</u>
Current question: Did you stay in contact with participants from <u>your country / other countries?</u>

	Frequent	Occasional	Little/No
■ In Country End Activity	61%	38%	1%
■ In Country 2003/2004	25%	61%	14%
□ International End Activity	23%	72%	5%
□ Inter-national 2003/2004	3%	42%	56%
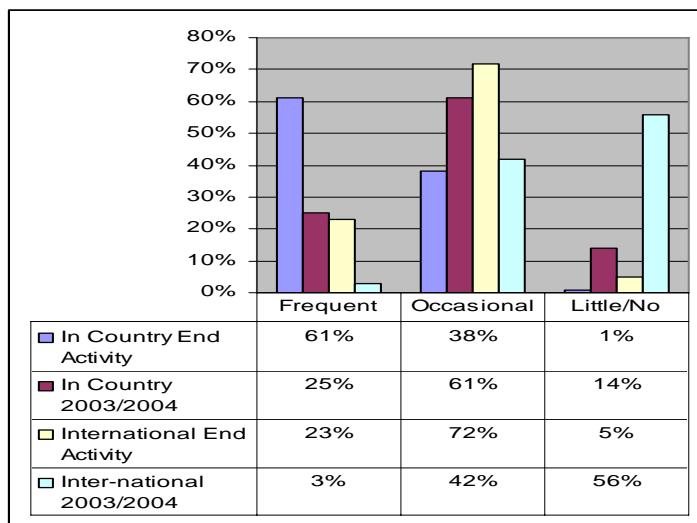
Interviews show that even these results are optimistic as they give details and explain the meaning of "occasional contact" in these, in-country and cross-country, contexts. In the in-country context occasional contacts are made up of very rare exchanges with one or maximum 2 participants. Exceptions are rare. And we know from interviews with local partners, that much of the time, those participants who stayed in touch more frequently had certainly known each other from before. So, at best, the meetings strengthened existing contacts rather than led to new ones. In addition, as the meetings were conducted with the help of simultaneous interpretation into five languages, most participants did not share a language, so it was impossible for them to maintain cross-country contacts. As a result, only those participants who shared a language did establish new contacts across countries. These were extremely few Hungarian and Romany speaking participants (who, of course, have cross national languages). Overall, on a cross-country level there is one clear example of long-term cross-country networking, and this is the regular professional exchange between participants in the education workshop from Hungary and Romania to date.

Overall, the results on networks are very poor. Reasons explaining the lack of both the in-country and cross-country networks were provided by participants and local partners, as follows:
- one-off meetings with no specific and concrete follow-up activities do not motivate participants to allocate time and energy to maintain contacts. Positive

18

examples of networks local partners were involved in showed that these were maintained through regular contacts, minimum 1 or 2 meetings in a year for a very extended period of time of minimum 4-5 years. In addition, these networks had very clear and concrete ways of professional co-operation along certain issues.
- lack of a shared language in case of cross-country networks
- some participants believed that issues of minority protection are inherently of local character and little can be learned from practices in other countries. "Although the principles on a macro-level are valid in all countries, I had no indication that their application locally would benefit directly from the participants from other countries who were at the seminar." - as one participant claimed.

Overall, it can be concluded that the objective to establish cross-country and regional networks as a result of the skills-exchange workshops had failed for both reasons of design and lack of experience.

Unanticipated positive outcomes
Based on interviews, some unanticipated, positive outcomes can be identified. These outcomes could mainly be located in the field of academia, research and training. The launch of a university course with its topic based on one of the workshops (local management of multiethnic communities), the foundation of academic research on analytic criteria developed in the media workshop (University of Cluj, Romania) or the launch of trainings based on lessons coming from workshops (local government) were not outcomes MRG staff could have anticipated. In fact, these findings confirm that the skills-exchange workshops performed much better in knowledge-generation than in practical solutions or advocacy resulting from this knowledge.

Unanticipated negative outcomes
The major negative outcome of the skills-exchange workshops is related to the fact that they raised expectations they could not fulfil. Some participants expected that the workshops are more practically focused and take up issues of advocacy and follow them through. A great number of participants and some of the local partners criticised the workshops for being one-off events without being complemented by follow-up activities or being replicated once or twice with the same participants over a longer period of time. Unfortunately, engagement in single events without grounding them in a longer local process of change, also lead to the questioning of MRG's commitment.

Overall, based on the above data it can be concluded that the skills-exchange workshops were partially effective as they performed well in the achievement of some of the anticipated objectives including the development of a new understanding of the issues/topics discussed and the practical application of this new understanding in subsequent individual or organisational activities. However, they failed in the establishment of in-country and cross-country networks.

Rights and Advocacy Training Seminars[18]
The outcomes and impacts of the three rights and advocacy training seminars were assessed through 23 questionnaires (38 % of the total number of participants), and 26 interviews (43 % of the total number of participants). The rest of the participants could not be tracked down as many of them changed jobs, 3 of them changed countries and few, who could be tracked, simply did not fill in the Questionnaires.

As is the case with the skills-exchange workshops, recent questionnaires replicated the questions of the end-activity evaluation questionnaires with the aim to gather data on intended outcomes and track the changes between the end-activity responses and responses given 6, 5 or 4 years later. It has to be noted that as the first, pilot training of 1997 had a slightly different agenda than the subsequent two trainings a few questions are not replicated across all the three training evaluation questionnaires. However, the changes across the three questionnaires are minimal. This is always indicated in the figures summarising the data[19].

Finally, the interviews served to cross-check and explain the data gathered through questionnaires and also to acquire additional data on possible unanticipated outcomes and impacts at the level of organisations, communities and beyond.

The major objective of the trainings was "to increase awareness of international and regional minority rights instruments and mechanisms and enable NGOs and minority groups to effectively advocate implementation of these standards in their country".   Based on this, the critical intended outcomes listed in the end-activity questionnaires can be summarised as follows:
- increased knowledge of international minority rights standards in general;
- development of an advocacy strategy that used international mechanisms to address specific problems in the participant's country;
- the development of in-country training seminars after the MRG training seminar in question
- the development of cross-country networks of advocacy after the training seminar in question
- the use of the Resource Pack received in the training in subsequent activities

Based on interviews and responses to questionnaires, these intended outcomes will be first analysed. Following this, the unintended outcomes and impacts are listed and assessed.

Increased knowledge of international minority rights standards in general
78 % of respondents to questionnaires claim that their knowledge on international standards had increased significantly or very significantly as a result of the workshop they participated in.

Q6
Original question and Current question are identical: Do you believe that your knowledge of international minority rights standards in general had increased as a result of this Workshop?

	Very significantly	Significantly	A little	Not at all	N/A
2003/2004	39%	39%	4%	0%	17%
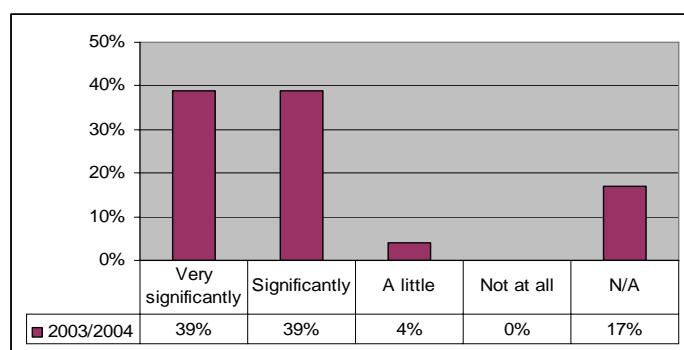
This data is confirmed by interviews: 21 interviewees out of 26 (80 %) reported that their knowledge had increased in different ways and to various degrees. 5 out of 26 interviewees (20 %) stated that they did not learn much or did not learn at all in the training they attended.

Most participants took part in this type of training addressing specifically the issue of minority protection at the international level coupled with advocacy and skills training for the first time. One participant said: "The trainings were extremely important for me in developing my theoretical knowledge on the subject, my know-how on how to apply this knowledge, how to train, and how international relations can be used locally. It was in the MRG trainings that I laid the ground for all this specialised knowledge and know-how."

Development of an advocacy strategy that used international mechanisms to address specific problems in your country
48 % of respondents to questionnaires claim that they developed advocacy strategies that used international mechanisms to address specific problems in their countries.

Q9.
Original question: Do you intend to develop an advocacy strategy that uses international mechanisms to address specific problems in your country?
Current question: Did you develop an advocacy strategy that used international mechanisms to address specific problems in your country?*

	Yes	No	N/A
■ End Activity Evaluation	64%	36%	0%
■ 2003/2004	48%	48%	4%
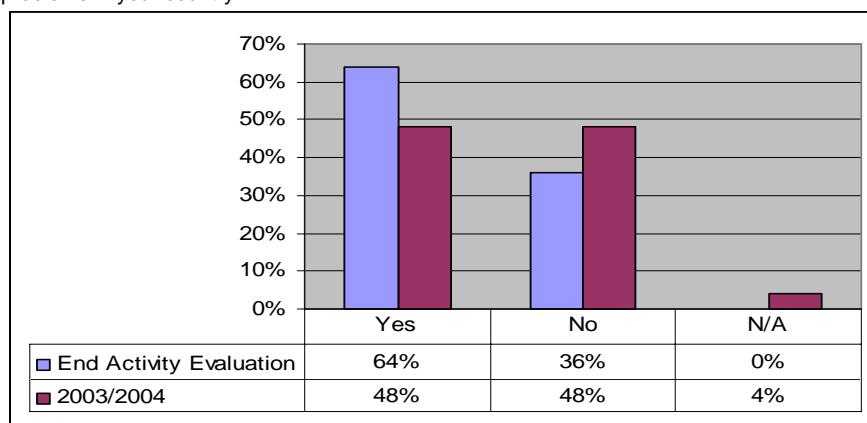
* Based on evaluation questionnaires from 1998 and 2000

This data is not confirmed by interviews and, based on responses given by interviewees very few participants had the chance to attend, for instance, the UN Working Group on Minorities or the OSCE meeting on Human Dimension in Warsaw. Many more prepared shadow reports under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe at a later stage, but this activity could only be marginally linked to these early trainings organised by MRG in the region. Overall, it is not common in the region to use international mechanisms for the solution of domestic issues of minority protection as generally these are considered distant, slow and expensive by local advocates. What has become common though and these trainings definitely contributed to that, is reference to international standards in general as well as to relevant case law and interpretations generated within the framework of these international and regional mechanisms in domestic advocacy strategies. When answering the question about the development of an advocacy strategy that used international mechanisms to address specific problems on the domestic level, respondents refer more to this indirect use of mechanisms via references to international standards in domestic advocacy rather than the direct use of any of the international mechanisms themselves.

Development of local training seminars after the training seminars in question
The majority of the 23 respondents to questionnaires claim that they developed or helped to develop a training seminar after the rights and advocacy training seminars they participated in.

Q12

21

Original question: Do you intend to develop or help develop a rights and/or advocacy training programme after this Training Seminar?
Current question: Did you develop or helped develop a rights and/or advocacy training programme after this Training Seminar?

	Yes	No
■ 2003/2004	74%	26%
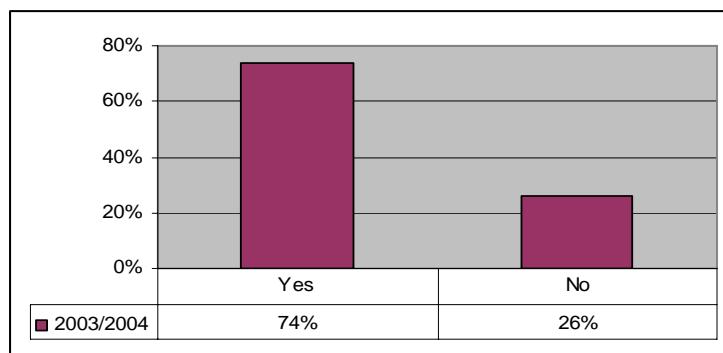
Based on interviews this proportion is smaller. Out of 26 interviewees 15 former participants, that is 57 % of those interviewed and 25 % of the total number of participants confirm that they did organise trainings on minority protection, anti-discrimination and human rights in general in which they used what they learned in the trainings they participated in. Some participants relate that they replicated or adjusted the training design and agenda or they used the parts which were relevant for them. The fact that local partners engaged in long-term domestic training and advocacy on issues of minority protection offered concrete possibility for those trained in these training seminars to use and apply and further develop their knowledge and skills. In Romania for instance, the Max Weber Foundation based in Cluj/Kolozsvar, developed 2 trainings grounded on the advocacy and campaign manual developed by MRG.

In many cases participants took part in other, local or international, trainings on democracy and human rights, but many of them emphasised the use of the specific knowledge and skills they have acquired in these trainings. Overall, it can be concluded that the training seminars were successful in multiplying their effects through local trainings.

Development of cross-country networks of advocacy after the training seminar in question
Nearly half (48 %) of the 23 respondents to questionnaires stated that they did not stay in touch at all with participants coming from other countries.

Q15
Original question: Do you intend to stay in contact with participants from other countries?
Current question: Did you stay in contact with participants from other countries?

	Frequent contact	Occasional contact	Little to no contact
■ End Activity Evaluation*	52%	43%	4%
■ 2003/2004	22%	30%	48%
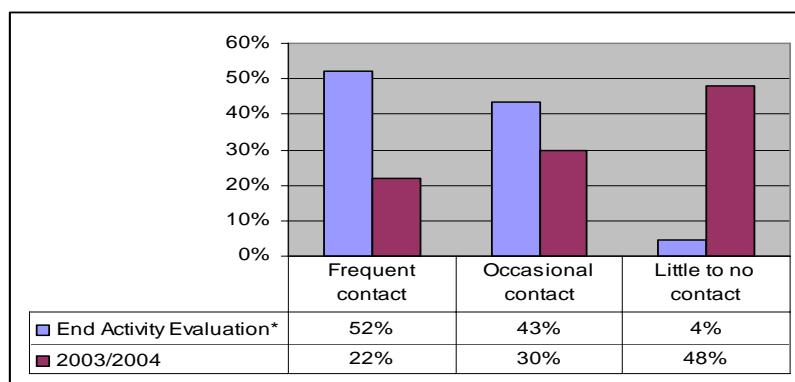
Interviews suggest that in fact even fewer of the participants may have kept in touch.. Out of the 26 interviewees 20 (77%) did not stay in touch at all with participants coming from other countries. The difference in answers in questionnaires and interviews is primarily due to the fact that in questionnaires those occasional and personal contacts which went on for 1 or 2 years and than faded away were referred to also, whilst interviews asked about contacts which were of professional nature and resulted in shared thinking or advocacy over a longer period of time or to date.

Based on results of questionnaires and interviews as well as deep-interviews made with local partners, it can be concluded that regional networks did not materialise despite attempts made. For instance, the Max Weber Foundation in Cluj/Kolozsvar (Romania) and MRG-Slovakia designed a common programme but they were not successful in fundraising, hence co-operation failed. MRG-Slovakia invited the Pro Europe League from Romania to co-operate in a common project but the pro Europe did not take up the invitation.

The reasons for the failure of these intended regional networks are very interesting. The analysis of some points may have changed over time, but they definitely deserve attention as they serve with important lessons for future programming:

- lack of follow-up activities or concrete objectives coupled with an action plan and available financial resources
- the perception that not much can be learned from neighbouring countries where the management of issues pertaining to minority protection is equally poor. This can be coupled with emotional saturation leading to resistance to listen to the same or similar problems again and again. As one former participant from Romania noted: "who are they to tell us what to do when they cannot manage their own problems either?"
- the perception that the protection of minorities is really context-specific and lessons are non-transferable; as on participants from Slovakia put it: "in Slovakia this [looking at examples coming from the region] is really not characteristic as it is believed that in issues of minority protection you have to come up with your own solutions which are not transferable"
- the very diverse professional backgrounds of participants. For instance one participant from Slovakia mentioned: "I do not stay in touch with participants from other countries. I think that they came from too much different background. For instance, participants from Slovakia were lawyers and unlike most participants from other countries, they were mostly interested in legal issues"
- a problem related to the agenda; the agenda was very packed and mostly dedicated to lectures and there was little time allocated to local organisations in general and for discussions on cross-country co-operation.

Use of the Resource Pack
57 % of respondents to questionnaires stated that the resource Pack prepared by MRG was useful in their subsequent work.

Q3. Did the Advocacy Resource Pack and the other background and resource materials proved to be useful in your work after the training seminar?

	Very useful	Useful	Only a little	Not at all useful	N/A
▣ End Activity Evaluation	82%	12%	6%	0%	0%
▣ 2003/2004	57%	22%	9%	0%	13%
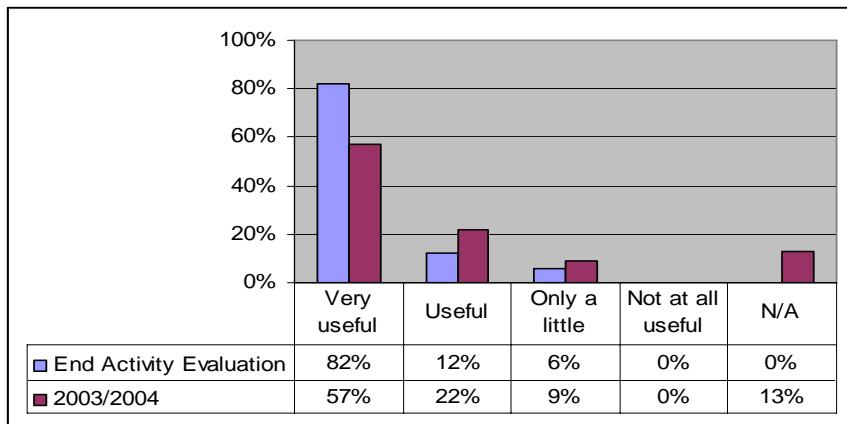
This is strongly confirmed by interviews, where we find out that part of the Resource Pack was translated into local languages and adjusted to local needs to be used in trainings to date. But there are examples of the use of the campaign and advocacy pack to design local advocacy campaigns. The Pro Europe League claims that two of their successful local campaigns were based step by step on the campaign pack.

There were no records of unanticipated negative outcomes of the trainings

Negative outcomes resulting from design faults
However, there were reports of negative outcomes mostly linked to failures in programme design. Increased social mobility has decreased the effects and impacts of trainings through a loss of advocates and trainers in the NGO sector. The programme did not explicitly address the issue of mobility. It is true, it was difficult to foresee at the time of design that the growing economies of accession countries would increase job opportunities in the private sector which meant that many NGOs lost some of their well-trained staff. Based on interviews the greatest mobility could be recorded in Slovakia.

The other negative outcome is linked to another design fault related to MRG's organisational policies at the time: the lack of MRG's support for and involvement in domestic advocacy which, in view of some participants, weakened MRG's impact in the region.

Based on all interviews and questionnaires used in this research, the overall number of those former participants who do advocacy work and/or training in the field of minority protection to date is 22 which makes up 36 % of the total number of former trainees. All these former participants state that MRG trainings were useful for them and their organizations. In comparison to other trainings conducted by MRG and after 5, 6 or 7 years, this rate can be considered as very good.

Overall, it can be said that in the light of current findings the rights and advocacy trainings were effective as, with the exception of the establishment of networks, all objectives were highly achieved.

C. Overall Effectiveness and Impact of the CEE Initiative

This section will look at the overall effectiveness of the CEE Initiative from the perspective of national informants and local partner organisations.

The view of national informants
The major question national informants were asked to answer were as follows: in what ways MRG had an impact on the protection of minorities in countries of the CEE Initiative and in the region? Five national informants were interviewed from Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania to give feedbacks on MRG's perceived impact in the respective countries and the region.

National informants are those third party people involved in the protection of minorities in their own countries and the region, who were not directly connected to the evaluated programme but they are familiar with MRG's activities in the region. Interviews were not conducted in Poland as MRG's activities in this country were really very limited, and looking for national level impacts would have been exaggerated.

According to the national informants the impacts of MRG-s programme/s on a country or regional level are indirect, and they can be located more in the realm of long-term outcomes (the results of activities) rather than impacts (changes in the lives of relevant minority and majority communities). It would be extremely difficult to prove that MRG's activities in the region have contributed directly to changes in people's lives. If at all, this could have only happened through the work of MRG's local partners. Nevertheless, as an INGO, MRG operated within a network of other INGOs, hence at best the effect of its work can be described as a contribution rather than a direct outcome of any specific intervention. Some specific contributions of MRG's activities to the relevant countries' minority protection regimes were listed by national informants, as follows:

- two national informants claimed that through its trainings, publications and meetings, MRG contributed significantly to the spreading and legitimisation of the rights-based approach among local NGOs and in general;

- two national informants emphasised that MRG contributed to the empowerment of local partner NGOs to become influential local advocates in the field of minority protection;

- one national informant emphasised that it was very important that MRG was present in the region when working for the protection of minorities was unpopular and reference to MRG's work legitimised and encouraged local advocacy;

- two national informants emphasised that MRG contributed to regional co-operation and sharing of know-how which strengthened local advocacy in the respective countries;

- in view of all national informants, in their respective countries MRG is not a highly visible INGO, in the way NGOs which take up advocacy on local issues are, such as Amnesty International or the International Helsinki Federation. Hence, in these countries MRG is mostly known by local minority organisations and NGOs engaged in minority protection, relevant governmental agencies and experts working in this field but not by the general public. This is not necessarily detrimental as high visibility was not necessarily needed for working through partners and staying in the background contributed more to the capacity-building of local partners. But the selection of local partners was critical for the overall effectiveness of MRG-s work. One national informant noted, that MRG did not always select partner organisations whose authority and influence was acknowledged by all major minority groups in that country. Therefore, MRG could have been more effective if it worked with more than one organisation in each country to multiply the effects of its work through a more established and broader credibility.

On the basis of the above feedbacks it can be concluded that MRG's work in the region has had some positive long-term outcomes over time, and it is supposed that through its partners' work it might have indirectly contributed to changes in peoples' lives. The next section will assess MRG's contributions and the overall effectiveness of the programme from the perspective of local partners.

The perspective of local partners
This section summarises the conclusions of four face-to-face deep-interviews conducted with MRG's local partners in the CEE Initiative. These conclusions are structured along some major issues discussed and analysed in these interviews which are related to the overall effectiveness and impact of this programme. These major points are as follows:
- partnership with MRG and cooperation among partners
- programme activities including skills-exchange workshops, trainings and the overall process of change
- overall benefits on an organisational level resulting from partners' work with MRG and future cooperation

Partnership with MRG and cooperation among partners
Retrospectively, all partners were critical about the way MRG forged and managed its relationship with local organisations. However, these relationships varied greatly across partners. Despite being critical on some points, two organisations were satisfied and happy with their cooperation with MRG as they thought they were well respected and they could develop very good relationships with the relevant MRG staff which helped them achieve their own organisational aims in the process. But two organisations were very dissatisfied.

The major critical point about this partnership was its lack of clear and agreed criteria for the definition of roles of both MRG and partners as a basis of cooperation. As one partner noted: "Perhaps partnerships would have been established easier if MRG had formulated specific criteria for partnership in accordance with the objectives of the various project activities. If the aim was fast advocacy and immediate policy change then strong partners were needed; if the aim was the capacity building of marginalised groups, then younger, less developed organisations were needed. But this was not clear". One partner stated that they perceived this programme as a one-sided capacity-building programme rather than of reciprocal capacity-building based on roles complementing each other. Obviously, the lack of criteria for partnerships - the underpinning strategy of the programme - is related to the lack of an integrated and coherent intervention strategy which was already discussed at the very beginning of this chapter.

Some partners thought that the unclear intervention strategy which did not spell out step-by-step how *local* change should be achieved coupled with sporadic and fragmented communication between MRG and some of the partners, made it possible to question MRG's genuine motivations and credibility. Not sharing evaluation findings with partners and the lack of their involvement in a monitoring process contributed to the confusion in roles as there were no established mechanisms for learning and of systematic feedbacks to address problems and take corrective action as the programme evolved.

Overall, it can be said that clarity in the intervention strategy focusing on the achievement of *local impacts* has to be coupled with a clear definition of roles of stakeholders in the process. In addition, roles in partnership have to be negotiated and perhaps re-negotiated as the programme evolves. Nevertheless, they have to be based on a clear set of principles and values agreed by all.

Finally, local partners did not co-operate among each other for multiple reasons. One simple reason is inherent in the programme which did not allow for meetings among them except one planning meeting at the very beginning of the programme. Another reason was that they perceived each other as organisations with different advocacy priorities which were not necessarily complementary to each other at the time of the programme. One partner organisation stated that they had very bad experiences with partnership programmes in general; therefore, their organisational decision was not to get engaged in any partnership programmes. And some times, even if cooperation was initiated by one organisation it failed as the other organisation did not take it up. As a conclusion it can be said that organisational co-operation is far from being automatic. To make sure they evolve, processes have to be established within the framework of which aims and objectives can be clarified and commitments establishment. The CEE Initiative clearly did not establish such sort of processes.

Programme activities including skills-exchange workshops, trainings and networking and the overall process of change
As noted above, the overall intervention strategy was not perceived as an integrated strategy for change but rather as a set of disconnected activities all having their distinct objectives which do not necessarily connect with each other at a different level.

Rights and advocacy trainings were perceived as the most successful activities by all partners[20], especially if their staff were involved in multiple trainings across a series of international and regional trainings organised by MRG including the training preceding the UN Working Group of Minorities and the Council of Europe's framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). This participation in multiple trainings of some of the staff of local partners were clearly valued for their contribution to organisational capacity and even in a change of profile through taking up international advocacy.

The skills-exchange workshops were valued by partners for creating important local advocacy opportunities and for raising their local influence and authority through their involvement in the organization of a regional event. Three out of the four local partners claimed that the workshop reports were used by them in the organisation of discussion forums and inter-ethnic meetings and that the workshops reports are used and are disseminated by them to date. However, none of them were convinced by the broader impact of these workshops. Critique was related to the intervention logic of this activity. One partner suggested that it would have been better to first build up the local understanding of the relevant issue and only after that debate it on a regional level. Another partner claimed that a series of shorter meetings of the same participants over a longer period of time would have been more effective. One-off meetings do not hold any promise for the future therefore they do not motivate longer-term effort and involvement. Briefly, the workshops should have been integrated into a well-grounded process which would have added to their effectiveness.

Overall benefits on an organisational level resulting from partners' work with MRG and future cooperation
With the exception of one partner organisation, all local partners stated that they have benefited from their co-operation with MRG within the framework of this programme and beyond. The summary of the major benefits resulting from this co-operation were listed as follows:
- contribution to staff-development through participation in MRG trainings and other activities leading to greater organisational expertise in minority rights
- it provided the initial support needed for international advocacy
- it provided contacts on a regional and international level

- it strengthened the authority and influence of partner organisations both locally and internationally

None of the local partner organisations reported any negative outcome on an organisational level from their co-operation with MRG and all of them were prepared for future co-operation[21].

Finally, based on the findings of the evaluation of the CEE Initiative, it can be concluded that despite the design faults and problems with the overall management of the programme, the CEE Initiative achieved the aims of its distinct activities and as a programme had some important longer-term outcomes mainly on individual and organisational levels and some modest outcomes on a country and regional level. However, it is clear that a process based intervention strategy grounded on a negotiated partnership and coupled with MRG's involvement in local advocacy would have made this programme much more effective.

3.2   Roma programmes

This chapter focuses on the impact assessment of several Roma programmes conducted by MRG and local partners based on various units of analysis and perspectives including gender.

3.2.1   Programmes and the framework of the participatory impact assessment

MRG has been engaged in programmes addressing the rights and protection of Roma communities since the early nineties. The table below summarises briefly the major programmes MRG conducted since 1995.

MRG's Roma Programmes

Programmes	Brief description
1994 -1997: **Roma Rights and Education**	- MRG worked with non-Roma human rights NGOs to develop educational materials for Roma communities
1997 – 2000: **INTRINSIC and PASSPORT**	- MRG works with 5 Roma NGOs using mentoring to develop skills and capacities of young Roma and to strengthen NGO capacity; these were non-content based projects in that specific areas of work were selected by local partners based on their needs and included human rights, advocacy and NGO management
2000-2002: **RIPPLE and RomaSEE**	- MRG works with 7 Roma NGOs. Mentoring is systematically applied in specialised fields chosen by local partners including education, human rights, media and NGO management.(RIPPLE); MRG works with 3 Roma and non-Roma NGOs to expand and test mentoring in significantly different contexts including education, health, human rights and advocacy. (Roma SEE)
2002-to date: **Roma Advocacy Project**	- this programme aims to build the capacity of young Roma advocates in international and local advocacy; the emphasis is on the use of international instruments and mechanisms and on the linkage of local advocacy with international campaign;

	mentoring is used as one of a number of methodologies

This evaluation focuses on the Intrinisc and Passport as well as the RIPPLE and Roma SEE programmes[22]. It has to be noted that these programmes were all planned to be based on the methodology of *mentoring*, a highly structured, systematic process which "empowers the learner or trainee to take more responsibility for their own learning by making formal, documented agreements with the mentor within the constraints or opportunities provided by the organisation[23]".

Mentoring had been widely used in commercial settings particularly in the USA but also in Western Europe, to a lesser extent mentoring had been used in working with excluded groups in the voluntary sector particularly ethnic minority school pupils. Mentoring was relatively little used – if at all – in the Roma programme countries and we are unaware of previous examples of use with the Roma community.

The present assessment of the programmes in question is a participatory evaluation in that its terms of reference were decided upon by a number of selected former partners including managers, mentors and mentees as well as relevant MRG staff in the framework of an evaluation meeting[24]. In addition, some of the former partners actively contributed to data collection and analysis too and will be also involved in the dissemination of findings.

According to the agreed terms of reference, the major objective of this evaluation is impact assessment that is the identification and analysis of the long-term, sustainable results (changes) that have been achieved through these programmes. To achieve this objective, a framework of participatory impact assessment was agreed upon by participants in the evaluation meeting[25]. This framework includes:

- the reconstruction of the model of change informing the Roma mentoring programmes;
- identifying the critical areas of change/units of analysis based on the model of change;
- mapping out the major areas of impact in the selected areas of change;
- agreeing on indicators to measure achievement of objectives in the chosen areas of change;
- based on identified indicators, summarising questions which are the basis of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires[26]

Key units of analysis and indicators
Based on the reconstructed model of change of mentoring programmes, it was decided that the critical areas of change which form the key units of this analysis primarily included **mentees, mentors, managers and organisations**. It was decided that the level of communities and possible macro-indicators would be considered if time allows.

Key indicators of success
A map of key impacts was outlined for each relevant unit of analysis and indicators for the measurement of these impacts were agreed. The key quantitative indicator for the overall success of these programmes based on mentoring and training was agreed to be "a pool/considerable number of highly motivated professionals who work for the Roma community." The qualitative indicator was defined as "the enhanced learning skills of those participating in the programmes[27]".

Attribution
In the process of mapping out the key areas of impacts, the question of attribution was addressed. This is an important question especially that many of the programmes in question were carried out simultaneously with one or two other activities which interfered with the results of the examined programmes. Hence, in this impact assessment the **contribution** of MRG programmes to the identified results is assessed rather than clear-cut impacts. In addition, given the lack of meaningful pre- intervention, or baseline data, impacts were identified through a careful, step-by-step process of **reconstruction** of the subsequent stages of change which finally lead to a sustainable impact. In fact, participants identified each impact through outlining a micro model of change leading to the impact in question.

Methods
Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were designed on the basis of indicators. Some interviews were conducted face-to-face but most of them are telephone interviews. Focus group discussion in the evaluation meeting as well as a degree of observation complement the methods used.

Focus on long-term, sustainable changes
It has to be noted, that focus on long-term and sustainable outcomes and impacts in this evaluation was made possible by previous evaluations which confirmed the efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes in question[28] which is a precondition of impact assessment. However, impacts and long-term outcomes are not strictly separated in this assessment given the diversity in stakeholder perceptions about what can be considered a significant change in people's lives. For instance, in some cases the acquisition of skills and knowledge - the outcome of a programme – can be defined as an impact by programme participants and hence it qualifies as a significant change in a person's life - an impact. The point here is that despite struggling for clarity in the use of terminology, in practice the borderlines between outcomes and impacts are blurred based on various perceptions which this evaluation acknowledges and respects.

Cross-checking data
The triangulation or cross-checking of data was ensured through gathering information from different sources and through different techniques. For instance, the deep interviews made with managers contained questions on mentors and mentees too and vice versa. In some cases key informants were used to clarify or add data.

Data
This evaluation summarises the data gathered from 16 deep-interviews conducted with programme managers and 2 key informants, 13 questionnaires of mentors (30 % of the total number of mentors), 8 select interviews with mentees as well as 7 select interviews on macro-level (community as well as national or international level) impacts[29]. As relevant managers speak English, it was possible to make interviews with all managers involved in the programmes in question. Despite the fact that questionnaires for mentors were translated into 6 local languages, only 13 were returned. However, this number was not unexpected, as these questionnaires were managed by former managers who clearly indicated that we could not expect for a high number of returns due to lack of time and motivation. In the case of mentees, all mentees were interviewed with whom we shared a language or we could get in touch within available timeframe.)

3.2.2   Findings

Findings related to the Roma programmes in question are presented according to the key units of analysis including mentees, mentors, managers, organisations and macro-impacts at the community, national and international levels[30].

MENTEES

Mentees were considered to be the major beneficiaries of mentoring programmes. It was anticipated that through changes in their own lives as well as through their advocacy and other inputs they would contribute to changes in the lives of Roma communities. Hence, the major indicators regarding mentees are about the acquisition of new skills and knowledge in specialised fields, enhanced learning skills and the continuation of studies, employment and/or work in the fields they were trained in or in new fields, the setting up of new organisations and starting up advocacy work and, in all cases, about sustained work for their own Roma communities[31].

Information on major indicators regarding mentees or trainees participating in the relevant Roma programmes was gathered from 3 major sources including interviews with all former programme managers, interviews with 8 former mentees, and conversation and interviews with mentors.

Please note that the results based on interviews conducted with mentees is possibly skewed towards positive as those mentees could be interviewed who spoke English and whose contacts were available meaning that they stayed in touch with their former NGOs to some extent and they were engaged in relevant activities or studies. In addition, they were willing to devote time for the interviews which may mean that they felt comfortable about their achievement in the programmes in question. Three additional mentees were contacted but they either were not able to give an interview or they did not speak English. However, even if these interviews may not be representative for the whole of mentees, they give an overview of the performance of the high-achievers.

Managers' interviews

Based on managers' reports, the results regarding mentees' personal and professional development are remarkable. Based on managers' perspective, mentees' major achievements can be summarised in the following points:

- All managers report that mentees or trainees not only acquired **specialised skills** in the relevant fields of their activity they were mentored in (NGO management, education, media and human rights advocacy or some fields and skills chosen by a particular NGO such as English or Romani language) but also gained **self-confidence** to continue their studies or find jobs in the fields they were mentored in or in some other fields.
- Minimum 18 mentees or trainees continued their education and became students. This is around 7 % of the total number of mentees, but this percentage may be much higher.
- Minimum 8 new NGOs were set up by mentees or trainees in the various programme countries.
- Out of the 11 NGOs involved in Roma programmes, around half of the staff of two NGOs including top-management (Roma Lom in Bulgaria and Rromani Criss in Romania) were former mentees. Four more NGOs involved confirmed that a considerable number of their staff were former mentees or trainees in these programmes.
- Many mentees (minimum one third of them but often more) stay in touch with the NGOs carrying out the mentoring or training programmes. A more modest number stay in touch with their mentors, but there are some strong professional relationships formed.

- A large number of former mentees and trainees have stayed in touch and do work for their Roma communities. Some of them have become well-known representatives of their communities locally, nationally as well as internationally.
- Few former mentees have become mentors as much of the time mentoring programmes were not continued, mentees were too young to become mentors or they feared the responsibility. However, around half of the NGOs involved in mentoring programmes adapted mentoring as an important methodology of project management in their organisations. In these cases some former mentees have had the opportunity to become mentors. In Mentors' Questionnaires, 4 mentors out of 13 reported that around half of their mentees became mentors. The rest stated that only a small number of their mentees became mentors, if at all.
- Based on data received from managers[32] a rough *minimum* of 44 % of mentees benefited to some extent from the relevant programmes in the sense that they took up university level studies after the programme, they worked as employees or volunteers with NGOs working for the Roma.

Mentees' interviews
The interviews conducted with former mentees add interesting details to, and generally confirm the information gathered from managers. This information can be summarised as follows:
- 4 out of the 8 former mentees interviewed were students. Out of the remaining four, one prepared his entry examination to a university in Austria in communication and science; one became a programme coordinator in the same NGO he was mentored in; one works as a journalist at the national television and one is an associate professor in sociology at a university in his capital.
- 7 out of the 8 mentees acknowledged that their participation in the mentoring or training programmes has clearly contributed to their present achievements through the acquisition of specialised skills and knowledge, contacts and/or self-confidence. "When the programme started, I was a mere waiter and kitchen assistant in a restaurant. After the programme I managed to become a journalist in the national television." Or: "Not only did the programme help me to acquire skills in education and NGO management but it made me more confident as a Roma." Or: "I think that this programme was a bridge between my past and present situation in my life. Even if I do not have a job now I plan to continue my study at a university in Austria in communication and science. I really feel responsible for the developments in the integration of Roma, and I think I am y have an important role in the future in this respect."
- 7 out of the 8 mentees continued to study or work in fields they were NOT mentored in, 2 of the respondents worked in the fields they were mentored in.
- 1 out of the 8 respondents had the chance to become a mentor. But most of the rest were interested in taking up mentoring in some ways in the future.
- All respondents stayed in touch with their organisations and with the exception of one former mentee, they did work informally or formally for their Roma communities.
- One of the respondents wanted to finish his education and leave his country and go to the West.

Overall, it can be concluded that based on findings coming from various resources, mentees/trainees performed well in the programmes assessed as they acquired specialised skills and knowledge, they took up further studies and overall they continued to do work formally or informally for their Roma communities. Based on the *key indicator* for the effectiveness and relevance of programmes ("a pool/considerable number of highly motivated professionals who work for the Roma community" as well as "the enhanced learning skills of those participating in

the programmes") the rough minimum estimate of 44 % of the total number of mentees/trainees benefiting from the programmes in question as well as working for their Roma communities, can be considered a significant achievement confirming the effectiveness and relevance of these programmes. As far as the qualitative indicator is concerned, the fact that many mentees have continued their studies and took up responsible jobs proves to some extent that many of them have become independent learners.

MENTORS

Competent and skilled trainers and their understanding of mentoring were considered as a critical factor of the success of relevant programmes. The enhancement of their skills and knowledge as well as their professional advancement was considered as equally important in the mentoring process. Indicators regarding mentors are therefore about their development of specific skills and understanding of mentoring (or effective training methodologies), the continued application (professional or informal) of mentoring skills, the wish to continue learning about training methodologies as well as professional advancement[33].

Information on indicators regarding mentors was gathered from 13 questionnaires, which make up 30 % of the total number of mentors/trainers. Please note, that it is possible that results recorded in these Questionnaires is skewed to positive as those mentors could be tracked down who still work in relevant fields, hence they use what they learned. Secondly, those mentors might have taken the effort to answer who felt positive enough about the workshop. This is why cross-checking the data through interviews was essential. As most of the interviewed managers acted as mentors too, additional information on mentors comes from these interviews too.

Former involvement in mentoring programmes or knowledge about mentoring
Interestingly, 6 out of 13 mentors indicated that they knew about mentoring programmes or mentoring before they started up the mentoring programmes with MRG's assistance. It has to be noted that this proportion of prior knowledge about mentoring was very different in the case of mentor-managers. In fact, out of the 13 managers interviewed only 1 knew about mentoring prior to the MRG programmes[34].

Newly acquired skills as mentors
Former mentors mentioned around 11 groups of skills they had acquired in the process of mentoring. They were asked to cite 5 of the acquired skills they have found important to date. These skills are presented in descending order of the frequency with which they were cited.

- Interaction and communication skills (8)
- Listening skills (7)
- Working in a team and networking (6)
- Promoting mentees' independence (4)
- Patience and reservation (4)
- Analysing and learning (3)
- Understanding mentees' perspective – empathy (3)
- Organising skills (2)
- Motivation (1)
- Trust and confidence (1)
- Transformation of critical judgement into positive decisions (1)

This list summarises the skills some mentors/trainers acquired in the process of the trainings they were involved in. It also shows that whether formal mentors or trainers who informally applied

some mentoring skills, an understanding of mentoring was developed as the major skills listed clearly coincide with the major skills advanced by the MRG Mentoring Advocacy Pack (MAP). The mentoring methodology, unlike conventional content-based training, places the mentee at the centre of the learning process and so do the listed skills identified by former mentors.

Continuation of mentoring
10 out of the 13 mentors stated that they continued with mentoring in some ways after the conclusion of programmes. However, the majority of mentors (7) used their mentoring skills in programmes which were not directly related to mentoring. Only two of those who continued mentoring worked in new programmes with their former mentees. Those who did not continue mentoring argued that they either took up new jobs (one mentor for instance became the deputy mayor of a locality in Bulgaria), or their organisations were unable to get funds for further mentoring programmes.

Working with former mentees
10 mentors continued to work with their former mentees in some ways. Most mentors (4) worked with their former mentees as colleagues in the same field, 2 continued to be the mentor of their former mentees and 1 trained mentees to become mentors. It is important that the largest number of mentors became colleagues with their former mentees as one of the major aims of mentoring is the promotion of mentees' independence.

Getting better positions in the same organisation or getting new jobs as a result of mentoring skills and capacities
6 out of the 13 mentors claim that they got better positions in their own organisations and 5 were able to get new jobs. This means that 11 out of the 13 mentors considered that they advanced as a result of their acquired skills and capacities. This was due to the combination of two major reasons: a) the programme gave them skills/confidence to progress and b) partners were very good at picking mentors with the potential to go far.

Training in mentoring after the conclusion of MRG programmes
4 mentors went to further training on mentoring and 11 continued to read about mentoring after the conclusion of the MRG programme.

Finally, 5 out of the 13 mentors expressed their wish to continue mentoring programmes in cooperation or without MRG.

Overall, it can be said that in case of mentors who filled in these questionnaires, the process of mentoring seems to have been a useful personal and professional experience, as they have acquired new skills and understanding and some of them could even get better positions or new jobs. Many (especially partners involved in the RomaSEE programme) were disappointed however, that the programmes did not continue and that this methodology, which they saw as very effective, is not widely used.

It has to be noted again, that these findings may not be representative of the whole number of mentors and trainers (44) involved in these programmes. However, 2, 3 or 4 years after the conclusion of programmes, 33 % of mentors reporting these kinds of benefits is a considerable proportion of overall effective achievement.

MANAGERS

Fourteen managers were interviewed. These included all former managers of each programme assessed. At times, key informants were used to get additional, or clarify information. Their major observations and feedbacks are summarised using the following structure:

- **the intervention strategy of programmes**
- **methodologies used: the adequacy of mentoring as a methodology**
- **management and mentoring: combined roles and new skills acquired**

The intervention strategy of mentoring programmes

Implicit intervention strategy and major characteristics: local ownership, process-orientation and flexible management

The intervention strategy or the model of change of the various programmes was not explicitly spelled out in any of the programme proposals. This is clearly a shortcoming as it makes the monitoring, the subsequent improvement of programmes difficult. However, it is clear from interviews, that managers as well as programme staff had a more or less shared understanding of the implicit process of change to be brought about by these programmes

All managers spoke about the relevant programmes as of their organisations' programmes. One manager noted that the fact that his organisation was able to determine much of the content of the MRG programmes was critical to the sustainability of the work beyond the duration of the funded programme. Another manager noted that as the programme was a longer local process, it was possible to be integrated with other on-going programmes or emerging opportunities such as scholarships or internships for mentees. Clearly, local ownership and process-orientation were two basic characteristics of the programmes.

In addition, despite the fact that MRG clearly based these programmes on mentoring there was flexibility in the application of training methodologies based on partners' choices.

Overall, it can be said that considerable **participation leading to local ownership** was the main characteristic of these programmes. In fact, local partners not only owned but authored their programmes initiated by MRG[35]. However, the explicit clarification of organisational roles and criteria of partnership could have enhanced programme effectiveness in some cases.

Roles of the various organisations

MRG's role in the various programmes varied depending on the changing needs of local partners from stronger involvement to loose management, evaluation and reporting to donors. Two organisations even mentioned MRG as a generous donor which did not interfere much with the content and management of local programmes.[36] Hence MRG's role was not a tightly prescribed role but one that explicitly changed across partners primarily according to local needs and according to MRG's perception of local needs. In one or two cases, there were tensions between MRG and local partners. This resulted primarily from the unclear roles of the various organisations. Hence, despite implicit flexibility coming from the overall philosophy of programme, roles among partners or among some partners may have to be explicitly agreed so that MRG too can be held accountable by partners and the process of changes in relationships can be based on subsequent agreements and can be monitored.

Critique of partners: lack of cooperation among local partners/lack of networking

Several mangers were critical about some aspects of this intervention strategy. Whilst they were all generally satisfied with the MRG staff's role in their programmes, they were critical about the lack of co-operation between programme partners. Many complained that the contacts between partners were minimal and no co-operation emerged. Some argued that this was due to the big

differences in the organisational capacities of local partners as well as their aims and methodologies. Others suggested that networking among partners should have been more structured with many more meetings to exchange experiences and plan co-operation.

There is, however, a notable exception to this: the RomaSEE programme. All three managers of local organisations involved in this programme noted that one of the great benefits of this programme was the exchange of experiences with local partners from other countries. This was due mainly to the fact that partners participated in each other's programme activities and the peer-reviews of programmes as part of the evaluation process enhanced the sharing of learning among partners.

Methodologies used: the adequacy of mentoring as a methodology
With the exception of one manger, all managers stated that they used in their programmes mentoring in some ways or to a certain degree.

It is clear that two organisations applied mentoring to a very limited degree, if at all. In case they did, this was not in a formal way but on a more voluntary basis by some of the trainers. These two organisations believed that the application of more conventional training methodologies would be more effective. Their choices proved to be correct as both programmes in question were successful.

However, the rest of organisations made an effort to apply mentoring. Some took a longer time of research and discussions with MRG to decide that this could be an effective methodology they could take on board in the relevant programmes. It has to be noted, that all organisations structured their mentoring processes to a lesser or greater degree, but definitions of mentoring varied greatly across organisations, mentors and mentees. Many managers noted that based on trainings received from MRG, methodologies evolved through practice in a way unforeseen at the beginning of the process.

All managers stated that mentoring was a universally applicable methodology and it could not be linked to particular groups or topics. However, three mangers claimed that mentoring was particularly useful for the Roma as Roma in their countries were complete beginners in NGO management and human rights advocacy and through mentoring an empowering environment could be created whereby those interested could be trained according to their personal pace and responsively to their understandings. No conventional training methodology would have been as effective as this.

Overall, it can be concluded that mentoring is not an automatically applicable methodology under all circumstances and by all organisations. Its success is not guaranteed. Research and data collection with regard to mentoring training programmes clearly demonstrate that it seems to be a high risk high success approach. A key characteristic of the successful programmes is the linkage between the rhetoric of mentoring and the reality of the training programme. The greater the ownership by the mentor and mentees of the practice the greater the structure that needs to exist to ensure the effective fit within the overall programme goal and objectives.

It is interesting to note that organisations which had clear and specific short-term objectives (for instance, training Roma youngsters to respond to available employment opportunities in media) opted for the use of conventional training methodologies to better control the process and make sure they respond to available opportunities. In these cases, risks entailed in the application of an unknown methodology were not taken. Finally, one key informant who has been involved in the dissemination of mentoring through programmes of the OSCE and ODIHR noted that in his

experience mentoring works in a person-to-person context but it has never worked so far in an organisation-to-organisation context. Hence, in his view, mentoring is personally transferable but organizations as such, cannot be mentored by other organisations.

Management and mentoring: combined roles and new skills acquired
Most managers were both mentors and managers and they took on intense research before making the decision to take this methodology on board. Two managers claimed, however, that combining the two roles was extremely difficult and not necessarily beneficial for the organisation as professional matters could easily become personalised and the border and balance between professional and personal was extremely difficult to maintain.

However all the other mangers claimed that, even if difficult at times, combining roles was really beneficial for them as they have developed new skills and new approaches to problem-solving. As one mentor-manager noted:

> "At the beginning I had difficulties as I had no clear understanding about mentoring, so I did not really know how to act as a mentor. Managing an NGO and being a mentor requires different actions, thinking and behavior. In my community I was known as a Roma leader who makes decisions and tells things while in mentoring negotiation is the key, so you have to spend time listening to others more carefully and have to plan steps together. So, this part was not that easy. After the program I see that even in the management of the organization I act on a different way than before, so one of the advantages of this combination is that I can work more closely with the Rromani Baxt team than before, a new dimension is present in my thinking. The other big advantage is that by the combination of being the manager and being one of the mentors the mentality of the community has changed. I mean that they see that even I'm a Roma leader, negotiation, discussion is important in the life of the organization, so they see that the role of a Roma leader is not only giving orders but listening to others."

Finally, it can be concluded that despite the fact that MRG based these programmes on mentoring no unified methodology has evolved. However, there are some shared principles and core values. Nevertheless, the intervention strategy or the model of change underpinning "mentoring programmes" was flexible; hence local organisations could either develop their own way of mentoring or simply use another methodology that they felt was more appropriate to their situation.

ORGANISATIONS and their relationship with MRG
Information about outcomes and impacts on an organisational level was primarily gathered from programme managers, many of whom are the executive directors of their organisations. In addition, information came from interviews with key informants, mentors and mentees as well as some degree of observation.

The results achieved by local NGOs involved in the programmes in question are remarkable. Without exception, all managers of relevant programmes claimed that their organisations have benefited significantly from programmes. A brief summary of major organisational benefits can be seen in the table below:

> - **Raised visibility, authority, credibility and influence**
> - **Enhanced capacity through the personal and professional development of staff and work with volunteers**
> - **Enhanced local and international advocacy for the Roma**
> - **Changes in organisational culture**

Raised visibility, authority, credibility and influence
An across-the-board achievement was the raised visibility, authority and influence of the NGOs mainly through the results they have achieved in these programmes, their broadened contacts with local communities through mentees, their increased credibility and influence through the jobs and positions their former mentees/trainees acquired as well as their broadened organisational networks. One organisation has become an officially registered NGO as a result of the RIPPLE programme and another one set up 12 regional branches headed by former mentees by the end of the same programme. Four organisations claimed that their visibility and credibility was significantly raised by the use of a new and innovative methodology (mentoring), which was seen as effective by local Roma communities and beyond.

Enhanced capacity through the personal and professional development of staff and work with volunteers
Six managers claimed that at least half of their present staff including top-management comes from former mentees and that the capacity of their organisations was strengthened significantly through the professional and personal development of their staff in these programmes. Presently, four organisations work with volunteers who were their former mentees.

Enhanced local and international advocacy for the Roma
Most managers claimed that their local and international advocacy for the Roma increased as a result of their participation in the programmes in question.

Changes in organisational culture
Four managers reported that the adoption of mentoring as a methodology in some of their programmes have resulted in changes in the culture of their organisations. The style of management has changed and has become more supportive and advisory. One manager reports that mentors have turned into much more responsible and motivated project managers well after the conclusion of the mentoring programmes. One organisation had consciously reviewed the values and principles informing the management and administration of the organisation: teamwork was emphasised and self-evaluation was introduced at both staff and organisational levels. This organisation had considerable broadened its work with volunteers though the use of mentoring, as all volunteers have mentors for a six months probation period.

Organisational relationships with MRG
Some organisations have built relationships with the relevant MRG staff only but most had some contacts with MRG as an organisation as they were interns with MRG or they participated in MRG's other, regional or international training or development programmes.

With one exception, all managers stated that they had very good relationship with the relevant MRG staff and they felt that the programme was well and responsively managed. But even the partners who said that they had some tension with MRG over issues of management and the application of adequate methodologies, stated that their relationship with MRG was satisfactory.

Local organisations have developed a strong ownership of their programmes which allowed them to grow increasingly independent or simply be independent and autonomous from the very beginning. One manger noted: "At the beginning MRG was dominant but the partnership was slowly moving towards independence. I see it as a positive side because we had no idea about mentoring so giving the direction was a critical part of the implementation."

Some critical points referring to MRG's staff approach and management were as follows:

- MRG staff should have had more meetings with local organisations to decrease the distance between local and international organisations
- MRG's approach to local realities was too abstract as if the staff had moved in a virtual reality distant from local circumstances

However, two organisations criticised MRG as an organisation for the following reasons:
- MRG does not have a clear organisational strategy which is communicated unambiguously with local organisations. Most importantly, it lacks a long-term strategy regarding Roma.
- "MRG only looked at the technical results of the projects. MRG is focused on donors and only interested in submitting technical reports to them. MRG has never had an evaluation like this before hence the sharing of experiences between organisations was impossible."
- "MRG was the first in Europe to put together a Roma network which could have been turned into a strong advocacy tool. But this did not happen as MRG did not get involved into local advocacy or the advocacy for Roma issues internationally".
- "MRG did not apply mentoring which discredited the organisation; it only used local organisations to administer "partnership" programmes"

Overall, it can be said that achievements on an organisational level are very significant and they have occurred in many unexpected ways through a creative application of methodologies and effective use of programme opportunities. This was mainly due to a strong ownership of the relevant programmes by local organisations and a highly flexible and responsive programme management by relevant MRG staff. However, some partners felt that their programmes were weakened by the fact that MRG as an organisation did not have a consistent, long-term strategy regarding he Roma with strong local and international advocacy support and the follow-up of programmes.

MACRO-IMPACTS (including community level as well as possible national and international level impacts)

Six interviews were made on macro-level impacts with select managers or mentors[37]. The cases were selected from among programmes with ample evidence of results achieved on an individual and organisational level but little information about the macro level and programmes the results of which were less well evidenced and MRG had less clear-cut evidence about results on individual, organisational or macro-levels. In addition, both programmes which explicitly used mentoring as well as programmes which used more conventional training approaches were included.

Some of those interviewed emphasised that it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to single out the long-term impacts of a particular programme especially in those cases when these programmes were carried out simultaneously with a number of other programmes (Roma-Lom, Rromani Criss). In these cases a degree of contribution can be identified. Other NGOs were more confident with the backtracking of long-term changes to particular programmes, stating that it was quite clear that certain changes were sparked or caused by a particular programme. These were the cases when the organisation in question was engaged only in that relevant programme at that time in the relevant field such as media or advocacy in human rights (Dzeno, MRG-Greece).

Some noted that in many cases important changes showed two- or three years after the programme was concluded but these changes could not have happened without that particular

programme. It was also noted, that at times the changes achieved at the conclusion of the programme could not be sustained by a particular NGO, mainly due to poor management.

The interviewees identified no unintended, negative impacts.

Changes resulting from programmes affecting the lives of Roma communities are of different types and include the following:

- *enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence of the involved Roma communities coupled with an increased awareness of their rights.* This strengthened self-confidence and self-esteem manifests itself through the ability to identify and report human rights violations to relevant authorities, the establishment of new interest-protection NGOs, associations and centres, an increase in the number of those who get educated, an emerging pride in native language and culture and acknowledged respect for highly-educated Roma whom they met with within the framework of these programmes (general impact).
- contribution to *the improvement of the image of the Roma in media* through the employment of highly-skilled Roma journalists by national television and radio stations (Czech Republic)
- *increase in the level of school-attendance* through the introduction of school-buses as a result of local campaign (Greece)
- *improved treatment by local police* and decrease in the rate of verbal and physical abuse (Greece)
- *improvement in the provision of running water and electricity (Greece)*

The following national level changes that have an impact on the lives of the Roma were reported:
- the **emergence of in-country networks** among various Roma communities (Romania, Albania, Bulgaria)
- the **increased visibility of involved Roma organisations** on a national and international level (general)

On the international level, it was noted that reporting local human rights abuses to intergovernmental organisations and litigation can be traced back to the programmes in question in some cases. The international level campaign for the local improvement of Roma rights lead to an improvement of the treatment of the Roma by local authorities and police in Greece.

Overall, it has to be noted that this list of possible macro-level impacts cannot be generalised across all organisations. However, it does illustrate a possible range of "impacts as contributions" which have occurred in some particular cases. In addition, it was interesting to see that the achievement of longer-term impacts does not necessarily depend on the number of simultaneous programmes an NGO is engaged in, but rather on the timing of that programme and the effective management and use of the opportunity the programme in question offers. A further observation from the data collected would seem to indicate that an initial phase of a programme needs to be carefully discussed with all partners in a conceptual form but equally needs to be agreed how it can be best practically applied to the local context.

GENDER
An important objective of the relevant programmes was to ensure gender balance across the major participants in the programmes including managers, mentors/trainers and, most importantly, mentees/trainees. Unfortunately, no full records on the gender balance of mentees involved in the programme were received from local partners. The narrative reports of the Passport and Intrinsic programmes reports that in this programme around half of the mentees

were women. Data referring to the gender of the managers and mentors is summarised in the table below:

Gender distribution across Managers and Mentors in Roma programmes

	INTR./PASSP.	RIPPLE	RomaSEE	Total
Managers	5 female: 1 male: 4	7 female: 3 male: 4	3 female: 2 male:1	**15** **female: 6** **male: 9**
Mentors	11 female: 6 male: 5	24 female: 16 male: 8	9 female: 4 male: 5	**44** **female: 26** **male: 18**

Interestingly, the number of male managers is bigger than that of females whilst the number of female mentors is bigger than that of men. Clearly managers needed to be in a management position within a Roma organisation and this may well have contributed to the imbalance here. In addition, this imbalance may also reflect the traditional situation of women being keener to take up alternative ways of training and train in general, whilst men are still predominant in management positions.

Finally, it has to be noted that there was no differential regarding findings in terms of gender.

Overall, it can be concluded that there is ample evidence that the Roma programmes assessed were efficient, effective and relevant at individual, organisational and community level. Examples of impacts at macro level, including national and international, could also be identified. Evidence shows that an agreed intervention strategy based on partner ownership was one of the key factors of success. It seems, however, that no singular methodology can be correlated with the success of the programmes in question, but rather the choice of a feasible methodology by local staff or the ingenious local adaptation of imported methodologies by NGO management and staff accounts for success. Hence, flexibility in management to allow for multiple local choices in methodologies is critical to the success of programmes involving local actors. Finally, it is important to note that agreement on and clarity regarding organisational roles and criteria of partnership are also needed and could have enhanced programme effectiveness in some cases.

3.3   Southeast Europe: Diversity and Democracy, a Partnership Programme, 1999-2002 and 2002-2005: development of a participatory system of monitoring and evaluation of the second phase of the programme

At the beginning of this Evaluation Programme, the assessment of the first phase of the SEE: Diversity and Democracy programme was planned. However, in the meantime two external evaluations were carried out of the first phase: a mid-term and a final evaluation. Both evaluations were commissioned by DFID, one of the programme's major donors, and were carried out with the extensive involvement of relevant MRG staff and a selection of partners and direct beneficiaries. As a consequence, MRG decided that as a response to one of the recommendations of the external evaluation, it would focus on the design of a participatory system of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to the second phase of the programme, rather than replicate an evaluation which was considered as very useful by the organisation.

In this section, the major processes and characteristics of the participatory system of monitoring and evaluation of the second phase of the programme are briefly summarised based on the following structure:
*   The foundation of the evaluation system: the intervention logic, the conceptual framework and the model of change of the programme

- The aim of the participatory system of the M&E and major methodologies underpinning the system
- Major processes: the macro-system
- Component evaluation activities and methods: the micro-system

The foundations of this system were designed by relevant MRG staff and a select number of partners at an evaluation meeting held in Budapest in April 2004. Subsequently, it was commented on by a broader number of MRG staff and currently it is being circulated for comments to all programme partners[38].

The foundation of the evaluation system: the intervention logic, the conceptual framework and the model of change of the programme
Based on its logframe, the goal and objectives and results of the second phase of the SEE: Diversity and Democracy partnership programme can be summarised as follows:

Goal, Purpose, Objectives

Goal/Overall objectives	To protect and promote the rights of minorities in Southeast Europe by contributing to the implementation of international standards and domestic legislation, and to enhance inter-community understanding.
Purpose	To increase the capacity of minority-based and inter-ethnic NGOs in Southeast Europe in order to: a) advocate for implementation of international standards, domestic legislation and policies for minority protection, b) raise awareness of minority rights and the value of interethnic dialogue, and c) link local issues related to protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, with national and international policy levels through participation in decision-making processes.

As the logframe of the programme together with its indicators was primarily designed by MRG staff with limited input by partners, those present in the evaluation design meeting felt, that the conceptual framework and the model of change of the programme need to be clarified.

Based on, and as a response to, comments in the meeting, the conceptual framework of the second phase of the programme was summarized by the MRG Programme Co-ordinator as follows[39]:

"Southeast Europe: Diversity and Democracy is an advocacy and a capacity building for advocacy programme. It is a human rights programme in the sense that it uses human rights standards as its basis. It aims to ensure implementation of the international minimum standards for minority protection and relevant domestic legislation, broadening interpretation of standards and improving domestic legislation as needed. Participation of minorities, including minority civil society, in decision making processes in political, economic, and social sphere is seen as crucial to achieving minority protection. Minorities and their representatives should be actors and not passive beneficiaries/victims. The programme also strives to continue to improve possibilities for participation within it."

As part of the conceptual framework of the programme, the criteria of partnership and the levels and ways of participation of stakeholders and partners in the programme were also clarified.

Interestingly, the model of change of the programme summarising the purpose and goal of the programme was illustrated with a drawing by participants in the evaluation design meeting, as follows:

This "three tree metaphor" helped participants in the meeting to visualise and better understand the complex process of change underlying the programme, to articulate how the various activities interrelated and contributed to the achievement of the three-pronged purpose and ultimately the goal of the programme. Difficulties related to attribution at the level of goal/impact as well as the issue of critical mass related to programme effectiveness were also discussed.

It was clear, that although important for outlining the logic of the programme, the logframe does not replace the model of change of the programme that primarily focuses on the complexity of the underpinning strategy and possible alternative courses of action which are not necessarily linear. Neither does it make the conceptual framework redundant, as the narrative clarifying processes and approaches related to the intervention strategy needed clarification and agreement.

The aim of the participatory system of the M&E and major methodologies underpinning the system
Following the clarification of the foundations of the programme, the aim and the major methodologies underpinning the monitoring and evaluation of the programme were agreed.

It was decided that the aims of the M&E system were:
- sharing the learning,
- improving effectiveness and impact
- better communication among the major stakeholders of the programme
- reciprocal accountability based on an evolving fourfold system of accountability

The major methodologies of M&E underlying the system were agreed to be as follows:

- technocratic methodologies favouring external evaluators and a scientific approach should be combined by the pluralist approach that encourages dialogue among the various stakeholders and their involvement in the design and implementation of M&E. Despite the fact that a mix of these two different approaches were favoured, an explicit bias towards the pluralist approach and the use of qualitative methods was expressed
- the logframe was regarded as one tool of planning and evaluation which has to be complemented by more complex tools and policy analysis
- the use of participatory approaches was favoured within the broader framework of a rights-based approach. The pitfalls of participatory methodologies were identified and taken into account.

Overall, it can be concluded that the major approaches underpinning this participatory system of M&E are a combination of technocratic and pluralist methodologies with a definite bias towards pluralist methodologies.

Major processes: the macro-system
As part of the macro-system of the M&E system two major processes were designed:
  (1) the processing of evaluation data based on data collection and analysis was conceptualised as a four-level process involving local partners, relevant MRG staff, the Programme Co-ordinator and, finally, an Advisory Group set up under the programme[40].
  (2) The decision-making process about the use of evaluation findings[41].

Evaluation activities and methods: the micro-system[42]
The micro-system of M&E summarises the evaluation of all programme activities based on the following structure:
- Activity
- Lead organisation in charge of the evaluation
- Type of evaluation including the outputs and outcomes evaluation as well as impact assessment
- Methodology giving details on participation and gender
- Methods including quantitative and qualitative
- Tools including questionnaires, different types of interviews and case studies

This M&E system is mainly based on self-evaluation but it also relies on the inputs of external evaluators. Finally, it has to be noted that this is an evolving system the foundations of which were developed within the framework of this Evaluation Programme, but, being participatory, it will have to change along the implementation of the various activities and its testing, in order to stay responsive to the stakeholders of the programme.

3.4   Other issues and related programmes

In this chapter feedback on two issues and a programme are assessed as follows:
- MRG publications including workshop reports
- The effects of participation in multiple activities
- Minority Rights in the 21st Century: a Rights and Advocacy Training programme for Bulgaria and Slovakia (MATRA programme)

MRG publications including workshop reports

The evaluation of MRG publications is not a central part of this evaluation. However, it was decided that the 77 interviews conducted with direct beneficiaries within the framework of the evaluation of the CEE Initiative would be used for seeking for feedbacks on MRG publications in general and workshop reports in particular. The major questions posed in this part of the assessment were about (1) the approximate number of direct beneficiaries participating in MRG programmes who read MRG publications; (2) how/in what ways readers of MRG publications use these publications in their work. The findings are summarised below.

Publications

Out of the 77 respondents 69 persons (90 %) responded to questions related to publications. 8 persons did not respond to the question. 31 respondents (40 per cent of the 77) stated that they read MRG publications including reports, books and directories. 38 respondents (49 per cent of the 77) stated that they did not read MRG publications at all, primarily because they were in English or they have never come across any MRG publications. Out of the 77 respondents, 15 (19 %) respondents claimed that they used MRG publications in various activities including trainings, teaching and various meetings.

The titles which were read most frequently are listed below in a descending order:

1. Manual on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (5)
2. Henry Tajfel, The Social-Psychology of Minorities (2)
3. Hugh Poulton, The Balkans (2)
4. World Directory on Minorities (2)
5. Language, Literacy and Minorities (1)
6. Hungarians in Romania (1)
7. Women's rights (1)
8. Armenia report (1)
9. Directory on National Minorities in SEE (1)
10. The Kurds (1)
11. Roma/Gypsies: a European Minority (1)

It has to be noted, that local partner organisations reported a much higher rate of usage of MRG's publications in general in trainings, meetings, advocacy and media. In addition, it seems that manuals are mostly used by local partner organisations for advocacy purposes, whilst thematic reports focusing on a particular minority, region or issues are generally used for awareness raising purposes. These reports are also used by academia for research and teaching purposes. It has to be noted that very few extra-European titles are read in Central and Eastern Europe and a few respondents stated clearly that they do not have time to go beyond Europe in their readings.

In general, MRG publications are claimed to be informative and easy to read. However, some readers made some critical points, which are summarised as follows:
- one respondent criticised the thematic MRG reports for not being entirely accurate in the usage of data related to local minorities, spelling of local names, and maps
- one respondent criticised thematic MRG reports for poorly using the findings of existing local research in its regional reports or reports based on single minorities, and therefore they seem to be outdated from a local perspective
- most respondents criticised MRG thematic reports for being too general in the coverage of a broad area rather than focusing on in-depth analysis of more specific issues. Several respondents noted that most MRG publications seem to be designated to an extremely broad international audience with little or no knowledge about the issues in question.

Hence, MRG publications were considered to be useful for a "general orientation" but rarely adequate for local advocacy purposes.

Overall, it can be concluded, that based on the above findings and from the perspective of direct local beneficiaries, MRG reports are read by fewer respondents than expected, and, with the exception of manuals, the usage of reports in local advocacy is low. This is partially due to few local translations and, possibly, the ineffective dissemination of the translated publications. Most importantly, it seems that with the exception of MRG manuals, the purpose of MRG reports needs to be clarified as it is clear that local advocates exhibit very different needs than an "international audience".

Workshop reports
MRG has internally reviewed the usefulness of workshop reports and there already existed some doubt about this. However, when this was raised with partner organisations, they have consistently been keen to continue to produce workshop reports. In this evaluation report relevant partner organisations reported that they mainly used workshop reports in their training activities and meetings. Despite this clear view from partners, MRG has increasingly discontinued workshop reports.

Out of 77 interviewees 11 stated (14 %) that they read and used workshop reports in their work. It has to be noted, that this number does not include the 4 interviews made with local partners. Out of the 11 respondents who read the workshop reports, there are three cases when workshop reports were the basis of, or significantly contributed to, subsequent projects. It is important to note that two of these projects were started up within the framework of academia and one of them is partially academia and training. None of the 11 respondents used the workshop reports for advocacy purposes, which in fact was the major purpose of the workshop reports.

Out of the four interviewed partners, three stated that they used the workshop reports mainly in the design of other meetings and trainings. There is one case of local advocacy.

It can be concluded that the workshop reports had a very limited effect. This effect can mainly be located in the field of knowledge generation and awareness raising rather than in advocacy – the major purpose of the reports[43].

Overall, the workshop reports did not live up to expectations mainly because they could not successfully combine the purposes of specific local advocacy and general awareness raising. Consequently, in case MRG plans to keep up advocacy as the major purpose of these reports on an organizational level, these reports have to be refocused significantly and changed into meaningful instruments of advocacy. It has to be noted though that issues discussed in a workshop do not automatically qualify as relevant issues of local and international advocacy. Therefore, decisions with relevant beneficiaries on the need of an advocacy paper following a workshop may need to be taken on a one-by-one basis.

In conclusion, it can be said that for a more effective use of publications by direct beneficiaries two relevant issues need to be considered by MRG. These include the clarification of the purpose of publications and the improvement of translation policies of local partners including the local dissemination of translated publications.

The effects of participation in multiple activities
Information on the effects of participation of direct beneficiaries or local partners' staff in more than one activity organised by MRG is based on interviews made within the framework of the

CEE Initiative programme. The major questions this inquiry addressed are as follows: (1) does participation in multiple activities organised by MRG strengthen individual and organisational capacities or minorities' advocacy? (2) If yes, in what ways? If not, why not?

Out of the total number of participants (158) in this programme, 12 direct beneficiaries including local partner organisations' staff (7 %) participated in more than one activity (workshops, trainings or other events) organised by MRG. Out of the 12 participants 9 were interviewed within the framework of the evaluation of the CEE Initiative.

Based on these interviews, the results are mixed. It is clear, that participation in multiple events does not necessarily enhance results in terms of acquired skills and knowledge or organisational capacity for the benefit of a community.

In the case of multiple participation in one-off events (the skills-exchange workshops, for instance), results were limited to a broader understanding of issues discussed, but even this could be questioned in some cases. However, multiple participation in trainings has proved to be much more effective. In the majority of cases it lead to the practical application of the experience gained by the local organisations which delegated the respective participant. This practical application included effective local advocacy for the change of relevant national legislation or policies as well as training of local minority rights advocates on the use of international advocacy opportunities. The most successful cases exhibit the following characteristics:
- repeated participation in various trainings on both regional and international levels
- the participant's clear and long-term personal affiliation with an organisation, community or issue
- the delegating organisation has well-established organisational advocacy strategies or it clearly commits itself to take up international advocacy in the relevant fields on an organisational level
- strong personal motivation
- good command of English language

One local organisation reported that it took up international advocacy as a result of its staff repeatedly participating in MRG trainings at regional and international levels including the rights and advocacy training seminar organised in Budapest and the trainings around the UN Working Group on Minorities and the FCNM training in Strasbourg. Nearly all organisations in question as well as individuals reported that their international advocacy was definitely strengthened through participation in these trainings and advocacy events. Out of the 12 cases of participation in multiple activities there was one case of "NGO-tourism", when the respondent clearly admitted that her major purpose was tourism.

It can be concluded that in case participation in trainings becomes part of or is planned from the beginning as a contribution to long-term organisational processes, participation in multiple trainings helps improve personal and organisational performance. There is no evidence, that participation in a series of short, disconnected single events enhances organisational or individual capacities for the benefit of a community unless it is part of a well-established individual or organisational plan or process of activities.

The MATRA programme
One year before the end of the CEE Initiative programme and partially as an exit strategy from Central and Eastern Europe, MRG coordinated the development of a 24-month programme proposal with local partners' organisations. Inter-Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights (IEI,

Bulgaria) and MRG-Slovakia (MRG-S), with various degrees of consultancy support from MRG International, organised training programmes in their countries to enhance understanding of human and minority rights and empower members of minority and majority groups to advocate the implementation of these rights. The title of this programme was Minority Rights in the 21st Century: a Rights and Advocacy Training programme for Bulgaria and Slovakia and it was funded by the Dutch MATRA, hence the short name of the programme. Initially, participation of the Pro Europe League from Romania was integrated into the programme proposal, but, due to problems of funding, only a very limited participation of the partner organisations from Romania could be realised.

The overall objectives of this MATRA programme were:
- to develop a pool of activists in each programme country who will advocate for the effective implementation of human and minority rights,
- to ensure that minority groups are able to utilise fully all available constructive political, legal and social channels to promote change and address problems.

However, each local partner planned and developed their local programmes with full independence within the framework of the agreed broad objectives.

In **Bulgaria**, rights and advocacy training centres were developed in three districts including Plovdiv, Kurdzhali and Gotse Delchev. Each centre worked with five trainers recruited from civil groups and organisations in the respective region. These trainers were first trained by IEI. During the second stage of the project, these trainers trained around 30 other activists in each region in a responsive way to specific local needs. The concluding phase comprised the development of an advocacy campaign on an issue with which participants were especially concerned. In addition, a country-wide conference was organised to educate the public on issues of human and minority rights.

In **Slovakia**, activities were focused on transferring the information about national and international human rights mechanisms and standards to those who need them in their everyday lives. This 2-year project was based on several activities including three multi-phased training seminars on different thematic issues and the development of training and informational materials, public education campaigns and the development of networks for cooperation along various issues.

MRG's role was limited to the organisation of one regional training on international minority rights advocacy for trainers involved in the two local programmes and to consultancy as requested by partners.

As the assessment of this programme was not central to this evaluation, few interviews were made with the available former programme staff of the two local organisations as well as 5 direct beneficiaries to gather feedbacks on the long-term results of this programme. These results are presented on a programme and programme basis. Finally, MRG's role and performance is presented form the former programme managers' perspective of local partner organisations. Please note that local partners prepared 6 sets of progress reports to MRG in which they reported in details the achievements of their programme activities. A final evaluation was prepared by MRG to the major donor of this programme, in which all results are summarised. In these evaluations both local partners considered their programmes very successful. This present assessment looks broadly at long-term, sustainable results.

The programme in Bulgaria managed by IEI
Three interviews were conducted with the staff of the IEI involved in this programme including the programme manager and director of the organisation. One interview was conducted with a participant – initially trainee and later trainer - in this programme.

Based on the interviews with IEI staff according to whom the programme was successful, the following major long-term results were achieved:

Active trainers
6 out of the 25 trainers (24 %) trained in this programme are still active as trainers or as human/minority rights activists in various capacities. Several NGOs work with these former trainers as with resources persons nationwide.

Active issue-based regional networks
Three networks of activists set up in Southwest Bulgaria under the MATRA programme are still active: in Gotse Delchev various members of the regional group have been involved in advocacy for the rights of the Roma community in Marchevo. In Plovdiv, members of the MATRA programme group have been active in advocacy on issues arising from the electricity supply riots in the city affecting mainly the local Roma community. In Kurdzhali, members of a network established by this programme are active in advocacy on education rights in municipal and regional authorities. In Plovdiv, Kurdzhali and Gotse Delchev, the ex-team members work in various configurations with other actors independently from the IEI Foundation.

Community advocates' involvement in the establishment of local NGOs or state-sponsored institutional structures for the protection of minorities
7 former trainers or trainees are involved in NGOs or local governments working in the field of minority protection. One of the former trainers has become a specialist on ethnic and demographic issues in the municipal council of Plovdiv.

Impact of the public education campaign involving a film-conference
The format and approach of the film conferences have now been adopted by other NGOs which use visual materials on human/minority rights in the design of their own trainings and public debates. In addition, students who attended the conferences provided vital feedback to the Faculty of Journalism.

The *training packs* prepared for the trainings in this programme are still in use by local former trainers and former trainees and by IEI itself.

The impact of the English language course
The feedback received by some of the staff of IEI as well as the 2 direct beneficiaries confirm that the English-language course was not really successful as few trainees managed to learn the basics of the language. Some participants found that the course was too short and they were not really motivated to learn.

Direct beneficiaries' feedback
The two interviews made with former trainees confirm these results. One of the trainees reported:
"The training on advocacy we had was unique at that time. I still go back to the training materials in my advocacy work today. We met key figures at the training. For example, the Bulgarian representative at the UN was there as a trainer. That sharing of experience, advices, and information cannot be received at other courses."

This training had long-term results on an individual level including improved advocacy skills and knowledge as well as experience, at NGO level as it enhanced the public profile of local NGOs that got involved into the training as well as at a community level through an increased awareness of minority rights issues.

The programme in Slovakia managed by MRG-S
Five interviews were conducted in Slovakia with the former manager of the programme as well as director of MRG-S and with a former programme staff, as well as with three direct beneficiaries/trainees.

Based on the interview with the former programme manager, the long-term results can be summarised, as follows:

The MATRA programme was of strategic importance for MRG-S
MRG-S's director noted: "In a way, much of what MRG-S does now is a follow-up to the MATRA project. Hence, the MATRA project was one of the resource projects of the organisation: the major themes we work on now had been established in the framework of this project. Obviously, MRG-S's current projects are better defined but in many ways they are similar to the initial projects within the MATRA programme."

Issue-based advocacy networks
Out of the 50 trainees trained in the framework of this programme many got involved in networks established along various specific topics including anti-discrimination, access to information and freedom of speech connected to racially motivated attacks. The latter resulted in a co-operation with the police in a later project which was the continuation of a small grant project of participants within the MATRA programme and was funded by MRG-S. These networks have been active to date.

Resource persons and advocates
All participants in these trainings were recruited from active NGOs. These participants have either become involved in advocacy or they became resource persons in issues they were trained in. MRG-S stays in touch with and uses as resource persons around seven of the former trainees.

Useful training materials and training methodology
With the cooperation of lawyers and psychologists an interesting training methodology and resource materials were prepared for the trainings which have been applied and used by many other NGOs in their own trainings. MRG-S still uses the training materials in other trainings.

Direct beneficiaries' reports
All 3 interviewees confirmed that the trainings they participated in were extremely useful for their personal professional development and for their organisations. One former trainee, a member of an NGO, stated: "The training I participated in was extremely well prepared in that it had a very good balance between theory and practice, it was very close to our everyday reality and it could respond to the complexity of our human rights situation. For instance, we even learned how to organise a referendum".

MRG's role: co-ordinator and consultant
Both organisations confirmed that MRG's role in this programme as a consultant on international advocacy was satisfactory. Both organisations stated that the regional training organised by MRG was very useful for their trainers who could use what they had learned in subsequent local trainings.

However, MRG's consultancy contribution to the two programmes was extremely different: MRG-S did not ask for any contribution from MRG mainly because they considered that they could meet the local demands by themselves. IEI, however, stayed in touch with MRG all along the programme and asked for MRG's contribution in the delivery of trainings, training design and training materials.

MRG's co-ordinating role was perceived very differently by the two local partners. MRG-Slovakia considered that MRG , apart from minimum administrative work, did not co-ordinate the programme at all as it did not stay in touch regularly with the local organisations. IEi in Bulgaria reported that its relationship with MRG was clear and correct all along the programme.

However, both organisations stated that cooperation between the two organisations on a regional level did not materialise. One NGO believed that a more structured approach by MRG could have helped the establishment of regional cooperation; the other NGO took personal responsibility for this lack of cooperation.

Conclusion
Based on the evidence gained from these interviews and narrative reports submitted to donors it can be concluded that, overall, the intervention strategy proposed by this programme was correct as through a significant devolution of planning it allowed for a full ownership of local programmes and it adequately complemented local capacities with international components as was agreed and required by local NGOs.

4. Cross-checking findings in a comparative context

Initially, the aim of this Evaluation Programme was to look at evaluation findings of five or six similar international non-governmental organisations that work in the field of democratisation and human rights in the same regions and analyse MRG's findings in a broad comparative context. However, this was not possible as after an introductory research period it became clear that out of the 6 got in touch with, 5 were not engaged in evaluations at all. In addition, we briefly attempted to look at organisations that we knew were doing evaluations but who were working with a slightly different focus e.g. development organisations but we did not get any positive responses from those we approached.

As MRG did not want to abandon the idea of a broader comparative context, an international workshop on the evaluation of democratisation and human rights programmes conducted in Central and Eastern (CEE) as well as Southeast Europe (SEE) was organised to cross-check findings, share experiences and look at possible criteria of effectiveness based on findings[44]. International NGOs as well as local organisations working in CEE and SEE were invited to this meeting.

In this section brief conclusions are drawn about MRG's practices related to evaluation methodologies and methods as well as major evaluation findings within the framework of this Evaluation Programme - against a broader comparative background as it evolved based on discussion in this meeting.

4.1 Issues related to methodologies and methods of monitoring and evaluation

Legitimacy and accountability of human rights NGOs

Human rights NGOs derive their legitimacy in different ways. Many human rights NGOs hold that working for human rights is in itself good and important as it is based on universal values that should be upheld. However, some human rights NGOs have been undertaking a cultural shift from "do human rights because they are good per se" to "do human rights because - and only to the extent that - they improve people's lives". Against a broad comparative background, it can be concluded that MRG belongs to those human rights organisations – fewer in number - which have consciously shifted their organisational culture towards greater accountability to direct beneficiaries through a gradual introduction of systematic evaluation and monitoring processes primarily focusing on changes in peoples' lives, i.e. impacts.

The rights based approach (RBA)

The RBA is a normatively based conceptual framework, which stands for an express linkage to rights in both the substance and process of programmes. This means that rights based programmes should comply with the basic principles of human rights not only in their objectives but also in their processes and methods used. The basic principles of human rights to be observed in both substance and process include equality, equity, accountability, empowerment and participation.

MRG as an organisation has not yet considered the implications of the RBA for its overall work and specific activities. However, feedback from some local partners on issues of accountability, empowerment and participation clearly signal that more organisational clarity and consensus is needed in organisational approaches in these particular fields as well as in clarifying the implications of the relevant details of RBA in general.

Some conclusions regarding MRG's evaluation processes and methods

MRG' various programmes have developed their own methods and processes to monitor and evaluate their activities and these major methods include questionnaires, interviews, case studies and oral evaluations. So far, the coordination of the various different evaluation processes has been mainly voluntary and fragmented but lately a more unified organisational system is emerging. The emphasis is on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods with a clear bias towards quantitative methods through the extensive use of questionnaires. The cross-checking of data is often informal rather then explicit. With the exception of some recent initiatives, broader participation of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of evaluation processes is lacking.

It was clear in this meeting that some of the local NGOs as well as international organisations have developed interesting and useful participatory systems of evaluation through the involvement of a large number of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of their monitoring and evaluation processes and through a definite shift towards self-evaluation/internal evaluation combined with the innovative application of qualitative methods including the case study method[45]. MRG could learn from these organisations.

One important finding of this Evaluation Programme is that MRG is considered by the majority of local partners as well as some INGOs as an organisation which is mostly expert-based and teaches others rather than systematically learns from local partners, direct beneficiaries or other INGOs working in the same region. The systematic application of participatory processes of monitoring and evaluation is key to the re-definition of organisational capacity-building that should be based on reciprocity rather than top-down, one-sided approaches targeting other organisations. The introduction of more participatory evaluation processes not only enhances the local ownership of programmes but it makes learning systematically documented, shared and thus it becomes the basis of reciprocal accountability.

4.2 Issues related to evaluation findings and a shared criteria of effectiveness

One major conclusion on evaluation findings was that, similarly to other NGOs working in the field of democratisation and human rights, MRG struggles with problems related to processes and methods in the improvement of the following activities:

- the development of meaningful participatory methodologies of programme planning
- the establishment of participatory structures of management of partnership and other programmes;
- complementing accountability to donors with accountability to rights-holders through the introduction of transparent and participatory processes of evaluation;
- the selection of local partners and recruitment of direct beneficiaries to trainings and other activities;
- the establishment of meaningful networks among rights-holders and organisations

Comparatively, MRG proved to have developed outstanding experience and good practice in the field of international advocacy, the use of the media as well as the establishment of monitoring and evaluation processes and methods to some extent.

Based on the presented evaluation findings in this meeting, the possibility to identify some shared criteria necessary to make the work of NGOs in the field of democratisations and human rights effective was considered. These criteria were identified as follows:

- In programmes for the protection of minorities both minorities and majorities have to be involved and brought together along concrete, practical and shared issues of concern.
- The involvement of internationals into programmes dealing with the protection of minorities and inter-community co-operation can act as a bridge as it creates a broader comparative framework and a neutral ground for discussions.
- Extensive, local policy analysis is needed in the planning phase of all programmes to identify relevant major trends, patterns and possibilities of regression. The model of change of any programme has to be informed by this analysis.
- Planning of programmes has to be participatory to ensure ownership and authorship of planned interventions.
- The intervention logic or the model of change of the programme has to be negotiated and agreed and made explicit so that learning can be continuously fed into it.
- The intervention logic or the model of change has to be flexible so that it can be quickly adjusted as circumstances change. For this continuous monitoring is needed.
- Participation has to be made authentic across the whole project cycle and through a participatory management structure. Limitations on participation have to be agreed and made explicit.
- Accountability to rights holders has to be regarded as a priority. This involves continuous monitoring and evaluation, transparency in how the evaluation findings are used and the publication of findings.
- Selection of partners and recruitment to trainings should be treated as resource-intensive activities based on analysis and observation. These are key factors of effectiveness.

5.   Conclusions: Learning from findings

In this section, based on findings, conclusions are drawn for the improvement of MRG's programme work as well as related evaluation processes and methods.

5.1   Learning how to do work

Conclusions on how to do work are grouped around the following major issues and activities:

ISSUES
- the conceptual framework, intervention logic or the model of change of programmes and activities
- lessons on programme management
- partnership in programmes or the various levels of participation
- the concept of capacity-building

ACTIVITIES
- advocacy and rights trainings (ARTS)
- the continuation of activities in the second phase of a programme with a particular focus on ARTS
- workshops or meetings as single events
- publications including workshop reports

ISSUES
The intervention logic, conceptual framework or the model of change of programmes and activities: the intervention strategy[46]

Most of the intervention strategies of the evaluated MRG programmes stop at the level of outcomes related to either the individual participants in the programme in question or the local partner organisation involved in the programme. In logframe terminology, there is a big gap between the outputs and outcomes of the programme related to its purpose and the goal of the programme that refers to its impact. Briefly, the process of the outlined change terminates at the level of results and it is not extended and monitored or accounted for at the level of the goal or impact.

When planning a programme, the intervention strategy has to spell out clearly and explicitly the various levels of the planned process of change including inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts. In the case of a complex democratisation and human rights programme, seldom will the model of change be linear. Possible alternative courses of change need to be outlined and recorded and, overall, the process of change needs to be kept flexible so that adjustments can be made in the course of implementation, if necessary.

In case a programme is composed of a series of activities, it is important to have the micro model of change of each activity to see clearly how the outputs and outcomes of the various activities contribute or channel into the achievement of intended impacts.

In case of regional programmes, it is important to clearly spell out what does the programme mean by changes at the regional level. The model of change has to be clear and explicit about what type of anticipated change occurs at the local, national and regional levels and how these changes at different levels connect to each other and contribute to the anticipated impact.

Lessons on programme management
Two major lessons occurred:
(a) Lack of clarity in the intervention strategy can be easily accompanied by confusion in programme management and the communication of contradictory messages to relevant stakeholders: the staff involved in the management of the various processes and activities will unavoidably have different interpretations about desired changes at different levels and about the level of participation of the relevant stakeholders in the structure of management.   A clear intervention strategy significantly contributes to the clarification

of basic issues of management at the planning phase of the programme and, overall, results in a more effective management of a programme.

(b) In case the number of staff involved in programme management is limited (2 or maximum 3 peoples) and the structure of management is hierarchical meaning that, in fact, there is one person in the organisation who is responsible for the programme in question, a false ownership of the programme can easily develop which can isolate the programme within the organisation and in general, it makes it self-defensive towards external challenges and broader criticism. It is important to establish participatory management structures of a programme rather than hierarchical ones for several reasons. First of all, a participatory structure of management negotiates and does not impose duties and responsibilities and by doing that, it secures permanent confrontation of different perspectives and approaches. This keeps the programme flexible and adjusting. It also reminds the relevant staff of the ultimate location of programme ownership: direct beneficiaries.

Partnership in programmes or the various levels of participation
One of the general flaws of the assessed MRG programmes was that partnership, as the underpinning strategy of regional programmes, was not clearly conceptualised by relevant stakeholders. None of the programmes was clear about the roles and functions of the relevant local partners and of their levels of participation in the planning, management, implementation and evaluation of programmes. No clear processes of reciprocal accountability including budget and participatory monitoring and evaluation had been established in any of the programmes. This proved to be problematic as, with the exception of Roma programmes, it contributed to some of MRG's local partners and direct beneficiaries perceiving MRG as an organisation which is primarily focused on its own agenda and it is not sufficiently responsive to local needs. This has also contributed to some of the drop-outs of local partners from programmes.

It is important to agree with local partners and in some cases with direct beneficiaries (in the case of trainings, for instance) on a criteria or guiding principles of co-operation as well as duties and responsibilities resulting from this cooperation at the planning stage of the programme so that expectations can be realistic and processes of mutual accountability can be established.

The concept of capacity-building
The great majority of MRG's local partners do not perceive MRG as an organisation that learns from local partners but rather an organisation that, through an extensive reliance on experts, teaches local organisation and direct beneficiaries. This is unfortunate.

Effective capacity building can only be based on mutual responsiveness and continuous learning from each other. It is not sufficient to learn informally from each other and apply this knowledge voluntarily as informal learning cannot be shared hence it cannot be transformed into organizational or broader learning. The establishment of participatory management structures coupled with participatory evaluation processes help to record, organise and share learning and develop a culture of a genuinely open and learning organisation.

ACTIVITIES
Advocacy and rights training (ARTS)
The major problem with the model of change of ARTS in the framework of the CEE Initiative was that the emphasis was placed on outcomes at individual and organizational levels rather than concrete contribution to changes in communities' lives. The evaluation Questionnaires based on the indicators of success of the ARTS clearly reflect this emphasis on outcomes rather than impacts.

The model of change of the ARTS in the framework of the SEE Diversity and Democracy programme moved forward and placed more emphasis on ensuring a broader local benefit through the extension of the one week training with 6 follow-up activities funded within the framework of the programme. However, this extension of the chain of impact was not clearly conceptualised and its implications to recruitment strategies, agenda and training methodologies or evaluation processes and methods including indicators were not thought through.

Shifting the focus from outcomes to contribution to impacts is a significant change that has to be systematically reflected in the following:
- the model of change of the ARTS that has to be clarified and clearly extended to impact; the indicators of success of the ARTS has to clearly reflect this change
- the Agenda of each training that has to be made responsive to changing local needs through policy analysis and needs-assessment before each annual regional training (for instance, in the SEE an emphatic focus on the European Union may be needed)
- the use of training methodologies that partially move away from expert based lectures to learning by doing methodologies that enhances the practical applications of theoretical knowledge
- the re-design of recruitment procedures through making the impact-related aims of the ARTS clear to applicants. It could be useful to focus on organizational interests in the recruitment process, i.e. having organizations send candidates rather than individuals apply.
- the evaluation forms need to clearly reflect and communicate with trainees that the emphasis is on the contribution to impacts.

Based on feedbacks received in the framework of this Evaluation Programme, MRG's involvement in local and regional advocacy would complement the trainings and contribute to their effectiveness.

The continuation of successful activities in the second phase of a programme with a particular focus on trainings
Success of an activity in the first phase of a programme does not automatically lead to the continuation or replication of that activity in the second phase of the programme. Success does not guarantee sustained relevance. In societies of transition, political circumstances which make a particular activity effective will most probably not persist over an extended period of time in the case of democratisation and human rights programmes. The point here is that well-designed activities with a history of success, (such as the MRG trainings, for instance), are not intrinsically successful but their effectiveness depends on their relevance to external circumstances. Local policy analysis coupled with locally conducted needs assessment is the best informants of imminent changes and emerging long-term patterns.

For instance, with an increased participation of some minority groups in government structures the demand for international advocacy may generally decrease (CEE); or, through the stabilisation of post-conflict regions major long-term political strategies change and new approaches to international advocacy are required (SEE and European integration); or through a saturation of available effective advocacy infrastructures, demands for further trained advocates on behalf of relevant local NGOs or minority organisations drop. In each country and region there is a limited available infrastructure for the meaningful use of trained and skilled advocates.

To be successful, INGOs engaged in trainings, including MRG, need to base their models of change on a local analysis of existing effective local infrastructures for advocacy and in case there is a need for the further development of this infrastructure they have to clearly engage into the strengthening of this infrastructure beyond training. Feedbacks coming from local partners or local organisations complement but do not replace broader policy analysis.

Interviews with local direct beneficiaries make it clear, that in case of saturation of effective local infrastructure for international advocacy when recruitment of future advocates turns to organisations with weaker advocacy capacities, one-off follow-up activities are not sufficient for sustained activities. Overall, it can be concluded that the continuation of successful activities needs to rely on thorough local policy analysis and clear choices reflected in the models of change of these activities so that the prospect of contributing to intended impact is realistic.

Single or one-off activities: workshop and meetings
In this inquiry, single or one-off activities are those events which are not clearly connected to any other events or processes within the framework of activities of the programme in question and there is no evidence that they are planned as part of a long-term local process. Regional or international one-off meetings (such as the three skills-exchange workshops out of the four in the framework of the CEE Initiative) are cases in point.

In both the CEE Initiative and the SEE: Diversity and Democracy programmes, findings of this evaluation show that, at best, single regional events benefit local organisations, however there is no clear evidence that this has ultimately contributed to the anticipated impact of the programme. This of course does not mean that all one-off meetings are automatically disqualified as ineffective. Some positive examples exist, when, for instance, regional one-off meetings contributed to enhancing the profile and influence of local minority organisations which, as a result of the meeting in question, got involved in local government structures on an advisory level and in the long-run this contributed to local reconciliation. However, these meetings proved to be exceptions to the rule.

The model of change of one-off meetings has to be carefully planned and designed by organising local partners so that a reasonable impact for the benefit of relevant communities can be expected as a result of these meetings. However, even if contribution to impact can be expected, issues of cots-effectiveness may challenge the effectiveness of these types of meetings.

Publications and workshop reports
Based on feedback on various MRG publications, it was suggested that, with the exception of manuals, the purpose of MRG thematic and issue-based reports needs to be more clearly defined according to audience and intended usage.

The workshop reports did not live up to expectations mainly because they could not successfully combine the purposes of specific local advocacy and general awareness raising. Consequently, if MRG plans to retain advocacy as the major purpose of these reports on an organizational level, these reports have to be refocused significantly and changed into meaningful instruments of advocacy. It has to be noted though that issues discussed in a workshop do not automatically qualify as relevant issues of local and international advocacy. Therefore, decisions with relevant beneficiaries on the need for an advocacy paper following a workshop may need to be taken on a one-by-one basis.

5.2   Learning how to evaluate

Conclusions on how to evaluate are summarised in the following major points:

- Programmes need to be constructed in a way that they can be evaluated and learning can happen.

- Participatory monitoring and evaluation systems are critical to the effectiveness of partnership programmes as learning can be systematically shared along the implementation of programme and, based on emerging lessons and agreements among partners, adjustments can be made. In addition, shared learning enhances ownership and the responsibility of stakeholders to work for success.

- Participatory systems of monitoring and evaluation decrease the gap between local perceptions of success and perceptions of the staff working at distant headquarters. Experience shows that this gap between perceptions does exist and in the absence of long-term, participatory processes of monitoring and evaluation in the framework of which these various perceptions can be confronted and discussed, a gap between perceptions will persist and may lead to significant misunderstandings and confusion that lead to ineffectiveness. A pluralism of perceptions is natural and will always exist. However, clarification and understanding of differences is necessary in key factors of programme success such as the basic model of change of a programme or indicators of success.

- Indicators in general and impact indicators in particular cannot be designed at distant headquarters of international organisations. Change occurs locally and it is for direct beneficiaries to indicate what do they consider as successful change. In addition, locally designed indicators are by definition more realistic than those designed at a considerable distance. Innovative methods exist for the involvement of direct beneficiaries into the design of indicators.

- Experience in this evaluation shows that questionnaires disseminated through emails are the least efficient method of evaluation as respondents do not take the time to fill in anonymous questionnaires which are not directly related to their current work and it is not clear how the evaluation would benefit them or their organisations. In addition, it often happens that respondents would like to talk about other issues too, which in their view are more important. Face-to-face or telephone interviews turned out to be the most efficient methods in these evaluations as respondents felt that the evaluator takes more time and energy herself to clarify issues and she is interested in issues they want to say and clarify. Telephone interviews were at times more successful than face-to-face interviews as respondents felt it easier to reveal negative comments. In cases where visits were paid to relevant organisations, the members of the staff emphasised that programmes should have been monitored through visits like this in the course of their implementation. Discussions with the relevant staff and with direct beneficiaries on the side of a programme activity MRG staff attended were not considered as meaningful monitoring as in these cases monitoring tended to be sidelined and important issues never got discussed. Briefly, it was made clear that informal monitoring could not replace a planned, documented and shared learning process.

- Cross-checking the data of any evaluation through the use of multiple resources or technique is absolutely necessary. Systems of evaluation need to be constructed accordingly. It is not sufficient to monitor or evaluate through the application of one method only. Information gathered through questionnaires can be easily skewed towards positive and need to be complemented by interviews and key informants.

- The validity of self-evaluation: experience shows that information that is revealed among "insiders" of the programme - that is among major stakeholders who worked together for a longer period of time - is often not disclosed to a person external to the process. This phenomenon can be termed as the "loyalty of insiders". At the same time, experience shows that within the process of self-evaluation it can happen that local direct beneficiaries do not reveal negative information to an evaluator coming from the headquarters of the international lead organisation. Hence, it is important to combine external evaluation with internal evaluation and involve local staff in the monitoring and evaluation process.

6.   Recommendations

Following the conclusions on how to do work and how to evaluate in programme work, this section contains recommendations for MRG as an organisation based on findings of this Evaluation Programme.

1. MRG should ensure that relevant staff have the appropriate skills in terms of programme planning and monitoring and evaluation as well as impact assessment.   All programmes should have explicit theories of change and a strong prior analysis.

2. Programmes need to be adequately staffed to allow staff some time to organise participatory processes, including participatory management structures, and to go beyond delivery to allow some time for learning and reflection.

3. MRG needs to be clearer with partners what they can expect and what is expected from them in terms of partnerships.

4. A systematic process of monitoring and evaluation needs to be developed across the organisation so that learning can be continuously shared among the staff and beyond.

5. A toolkit of evaluation methods should be developed across the organisation so that the various methods developed in the different programmes are accessible to all MRG staff and can be shared with relevant stakeholders.

6. MRG should assess the implication of the rights-based approach to social change (the RBA) at an organisational level.

7. Involvement in local advocacy in the relevant programme countries in line with MRG's mission and based on human and minority rights should be considered.

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[1] Some of the comparative studies of interest in the field of democratisation and human rights are as follows: Gordon Crawford with Ian Kearton, *Evaluating Democracy and Governance Assistance*, Centre for Development Studies, Institute for Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, February, 2002; Sida, *The Evaluability of Democracy and Human Rights Projects*, Sida Studies in Evaluation 00/3,

Sida, Stockholm; International Council on Human Rights, *Deserving Trust, Issues of Accountability for Human Rights NGOs*, Draft report, Geneva, May 2003; Todd Landman and Meghna Abraham (University of Essex), *Evaluation of Nine Non-Governmental Human Rights Organisations*, Working Document, Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands, The Hague, February 2004. An interesting study with a broader but relevant focus is Allison H. Fine, Collete E Thayer, Anne Coghlan, Program Evaluation Practice in the Nonprofit Sector, Innovation Network, Inc, Washington, September, 1998.

[2] This Comprehensive Evaluation Programme was funded by SIDA East.

[3] The evaluation and assessment dimensions including efficiency, effectiveness and relevance referred to in this Evaluation Programme are discussed in more detail in Dr. Todd Landman, *Human Rights Evaluation*, presentation delivered at the seminar "Evaluation of nine human rights non-governmental organisations", 11 May, 2004, London.

[4] We use various terms to denote the process of change a programme or an activity plans to induce and achieve. All terms emphasise a different aspects of this complex process of change which a programme or an activity embodies. The conceptual framework is possibly the broadest term and it includes the justification of the programme as well as its major underpinning strategy/ies. The intervention logic is related to the logframe, a programme planning tool, and it focuses on the logical sequence of activities, results, objectives and goals a programme plans to achieve. The model of change is, in fact, an extended or more detailed version of the intervention logic in that it is based on a logical sequence of activities and their planned results and, as a whole it presents a process based on a sequence of activities and their results as they gradually build up the anticipated goal of a programme. The conceptual framework is normally based on a narrative, the intervention logic on a matrix whilst the model of change can be represented in multiple forms and shapes including matrixes, drawings or charts accompanied by narratives. For the purpose of this inquiry I mostly use the term intervention strategy to summarise all major aspects of a process of change.

[5] The major areas of evaluation and key questions are summarised in **Annex 1**.

[6] The importance of turning democracy assistance programmes into processes of democratisation through the use of appropriate methodologies and methods in programme design , management as well as monitoring and evaluation is discussed in Gordon Crawford, *Evaluating democracy assistance: the inadequacy of numbers and the promise of participation*, Paper prepared for conference on 'Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Development Research, University of Wales, Swansea, 1-2 July 2002.

[7] The Glossary of Terms is attached as **Annex 2.**

[8] It has to be noted though, that some circumstances have limited to some degree the participatory/pluralist aspect of this evaluation. These circumstances include: reduced access to direct beneficiaries due to their changing jobs and working places in the last seven years, and reduced motivation to participate in evaluation events and processes when participants could not clearly see the concrete corrective activities to be taken as a result of the evaluation findings.

[9] The various levels in the intensity of stakeholder participation are presented in Reiner Forster, *Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation, Principles, Actions Steps, Challenges: Introduction,* Social Development Department, SDU/WBI PME Learning Event, 12 April 2002. Participation is defined as a "process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the resources and decisions that affect them." Participation has four major levels, including information, consultation, collaboration and empowerment. The level of information is described as a one-way flow of information; consultation is a two-way flow of information; collaboration entails shared control over decision-making; finally, empowerment is a transfer of control over decisions and resources.

[10] MRG also coordinated the development of a 24-month programme proposal. Inter-Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights (Bulgaria) and MRG-Slovakia, with various degrees of consultancy support from MRG International, organised training programmes in their countries to enhance understanding of human and minority rights and empower members of minority and majority groups to advocate the implementation of these rights. A brief feedback on the overall effectiveness and impact of this programme is given in section 3.4 *Other issues and other programmes*.

[11] The list of partners of the CEE Initiative is attached in **Annex 3**.

[12] Information on the intervention strategy of the CEE Initiative partnership programme was primarily gathered from deep-interviews with some of the staff of the 4 major local partners, from interviews and correspondence with MRG's former director, Alan Phillips, and the former Europe/Central Asia Programme Co-coordinator, Catherine Barnes.

[13] At the time of the CEE Initiative, MRG' s policy on international and local advocacy was that MRG did not advocate for specific minorities but for minority rights standards and mechanisms in general, reinforcing the capacity of local organizations, including minorities, to represent themselves.

[14] A more detailed list of the outputs of the CEE Initiative programme is attached as **Annex 4**.

[15] Details on findings on the effects of participation in multiple activities can be found in section 3.4. *Other issue and related programmes.*

[16] Samples of questionnaires used in the evaluation of both the Skills Exchange Workshops and Advocacy and Rights Trainings of the CEE Initiative programme are attached in **Annex 5.**

[17] Please note that the answers of 37 % of the respondents are compared with the end-activity answers of 93 % of the respondents, so the comparisons present rough approximations/tendencies only. In addition, it is supposed that the recent answers to questionnaires are skewed towards positive, as those participants could be tracked down who still work in relevant fields, hence they can use what they learned. Secondly, those participants might have taken the effort to answer to questions who felt positive enough about the workshop. Please find the summary of all quantitative data based on questionnaires referring to the skills-exchange workshops in **Annex 6.**

[18] The evaluation of the rights and advocacy training seminars includes 3 training seminars which had similar objectives, and agendas. The training seminar organised by MRG together with the Central European University is not evaluated here as it was a pilot on the basis of which more advocacy oriented trainings were designed. The training seminar organised by MRG as a regional component of the MATRA programme was included into this evaluation as it was training with similar objectives and agenda.

[19] The summary of all quantitative data based on questionnaires is attached as **Annex 7.**

[20] Please note that, in general, trainees to the rights and advocacy training seminars were not recruited from Hungary and Poland, as given the scale of problems in the protection of minorities, these two countries were not considered as priority countries and places were reserved for programme countries with a more acute need for advocates in this field.

[21]MRG continued co-operation with the Sofia-based Interethnic Initiative for Human Rights within the framework of the Southeast Europe: Diversity and Democracy Programme since 1999 and maintained a working relationship with the Pro Europe League from Romania.

[22] The table of the 11 NGOs involved in the respective programmes can be seen in **Annex 8.**

[23] See in Minority Rights Group, MAP: Mentoring Advice Pack, A Training Guide, Minority Rights Group, 1999, p 4-5. The Mentoring Advice Pack (MAP) was also a programme that centrally involved Roma and Roma NGOs but was essentially undertaken to service the main Roma programmes covered in this Evaluation Programme.

[24] The participatory methodology meant that the evaluation looked at areas that were not necessarily the focus of the original programme plan, for example, partners were less keen to assess the impact on mentees that MRG would have been – partly for practical reasons – but were keen to assess the impact on mentors who had not been seen as primary "beneficiaries" in the original programme design.

[25] The Meeting Report is attached as **Annex 9.**

[26] This framework for impact assessment was adapted from *Toolkits, A Practical Guide to Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment*, Save the Children, 2003, pp.125-143.

[27] The qualitative indicator was essentially about "how to learn", and based in a particular discipline. Success in that dimension leads to a lifelong learning strategy that is based on the progressive autonomy of the learner. Hence progression from dependent towards independence on the learning continuum is in itself an indicator of success that leads to enhanced opportunities as a lifelong learner. Nevertheless it is difficult to assess and difficult to identify as a criteria of success as far as data collection is concerned.

[28] The efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the Roma programmes assessed is in this Evaluation Programme is confirmed in a brief external evaluation in Todd Landman and Meghna Abraham (University of Essex), *Evaluation of Nine Non-Governmental Human Rights Organisations*, Working Document, Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands, The Hague, February 2004, pp. 93-97.

[29] The number of participants in the relevant Roma programmes is attached in **Annex 10**.

[30] The checklist of questions for interviews with mentees and managers as well as the questionnaire for mentors can be found in **Annex 11.**

[31] See the indicators regarding mentees'/trainees' performance in *Annex 9/Evaluation meeting report*, p. 16.

[32] See the table summarising the data received from managers in **Annex 12**

[33] See the indicators regarding mentors' achievements in Annex 9/Evalutaion meeting report, p. 18.

[34] In the view of the Programme Coordinator of the Intrinsic and Passport programmes "Managers of the initial mentoring programmes INTRINSIC and PASSPORT were not familiar with mentoring methodology or practice and the mentors selected in that programme had some knowledge of the term but had not been part of any programme that implemented such a methodology. In subsequent programmes familiarity with the ideas and practice of mentoring was increased by the existence and promotion of the earlier programmes." This statement confirms the innovatory nature of the methodology used in these programmes.

[35] In the view of the MRG Programme Coordinator of the Intrinsic and Passport programmes "The local ownership was established on a trusting relationship between MRG, as the managers of the programme and the local partners. The trust seemed to have a link to face-to-face contacts particularly in the initial stages of the project. Such a relationship seemed to ensure the local ownership of the programme and in turn develop a process of sustainability."

[36] MRG does not see itself or portray itself as a donor organisation – as it has almost no free funds, therefore it jointly fundraises with partners for any work that we do together, however it is interesting that partners nonetheless see us this way.

[37] See the interview questions and the list of interviewees on macro-impacts in **Annex 13.**

[38] The detailed description of the process leading to the design of the system of monitoring and evaluation and the system itself can be read in the *Evaluation design meeting report* in **Annex 14**.

[39] See in "Minority Rights Group International's Comments, Report and Analysis of Workshop on Evaluation Design, Southeast Europe: Diversity and Democracy Partnership Programme, Workshop held in Budapest, 23-24 April 2004, Comments prepared by Magdalena Syposz, Europe / Central Asia Programme Coordinator, August 2004", p. 4. Please note that this conceptual framework was developed with the input of a number of MRG staff and it is not final as it in the process of being commented upon by partners who were not present in the meeting.

[40] The processing of evaluation data based on data collection and analysis is outlined in **Annex 15.**

[41] The decision-making process about the use of evaluation findings is outlined in details in **Annex 16.**

[42] The detailed micro-system can be read in **Annex 17.**

[43] Most respondents commented that they do not read workshop reports as there are hundreds of workshops each day and why would they follow them all. In addition, some respondents explained that workshop reports are adequate for awareness-raising on broad issues but they are too general to be useful in advocacy. Hence, the purposes of advocacy and awareness raising may not necessarily coincide.

[44] A briefing summarising the major issues discussed in the workshop is attached as **Annex 18.**

[45] See the concrete examples presented in the workshop briefing in **Annex 18**.