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Supporting Mauritanian CSOs
to mainstream gender into their work
and advocate for the implementation of gender rights for Haratine women.

Final Evaluation Report

(March- April 2016)

Alessia Mortada

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COVER PAGE

Project name: Support project for Mauritanian NGOs to integrate gender equality approaches in the workplace and carry out advocacy activities for the rights of Haratines women.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AFCF	Association des Femmes Chefs de Familles
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ASI	Anti-Slavery International
AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
EU	European Union
HC	Haratine Community
HRC	Human Rights Council
HW	Haratine Women
IGA	Income-Generating Activity
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MG	Mauritanian Government
MRG	Minority Rights Group International
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO: International NGO)
OHCHR	Office of the United Nation High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SOS	SOS-Esclaves
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This final evaluation took place 9 months after the end of the 4-year project, implemented by MRG and local partners AFCF and SOS. The goal of this project was to establish strong leadership and long term organizational sustainability amongst the Haratine community (HC), Haratine women (HW) and civil society organisations (CSOs) in Mauritania, to ensure their effective participation in decision making processes, on local, national and international levels.

The purpose of this evaluation was:

- To Evaluate the overall performance in relation to the objectives as defined in the grant application sent to the EU and other related documents;
- To evaluate the suitability of the project in relation to the national priorities and more specifically the situation of the HC and the HW;
- To Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the project;
- To carry out a critical analysis of project implementation and management;
- To assess the sustainable impact and long term effects of the project,
- To record experience and knowledge gained of best practices on the design, implementation and management of the project, which could be useful for other projects that will take place in the country and elsewhere. This was achieved by reviewing all relevant documents, interviewing MRG staff and partners, a visit to Nouakchott to carry out a survey and interviews with the HC and CSO’s.

The results of this evaluation demonstrate that this project satisfactorily reached its objectives:

Average rate of achievement of expected results

	Result 1	Result 2	Result 3	Result 4	Average
Rate of Objectives reached	72%	95.7%	67.5%	74%	77.3%

Source: The evaluator extracted the results from the project’s documentation and the interviews.

The average result (77.3%) represents the rate of objectives achieved. This high rate, shows that the project sufficiently reached all of its targets and most of its indicators. The trainings and the awareness raising activities of the HC has provided many HW with the necessary tools to assert their rights and those of their children. The beneficiaries of the awareness networks and the training sessions have gained essential knowledge and skills which can be used on a professional and social level on a long term basis. Aside from the positive point outlined previously, there were some shortcomings which should be noted:

- A delay in the implementation of the activities (notably the first activity: the baseline study)
- The weak engagement on behalf of the Mauritanian government and foreign embassies;
- The turnover of MRG staff (notably for this project) and of the EU resulting in a lack of communication and collaboration between the different organizations.

The lack of engagement on behalf of the Mauritanian government and the foreign embassies remains the principle obstacle preventing significant changes to the HC's situation in Mauritanian society from happening.

It must be emphasized that despite these shortcomings, the project played a primary role in promoting the rights of HW and feminine leadership. Some factors may call for the continuation of the project, such as; the problematic position of HW is connected to larger problems within Mauritanian society, that are supported by the international community and the projects strategy. The project took place on two levels, involving two target groups: the CSO's and the local community. Not only does this strategy create a sort of convergence of the various levels but also increases the chance of succeeding as ~~where~~ when one level fails, the other can compensate.

Finally, in order to assure sustainability and effectiveness of the project and its impact, it is recommended that;

1. Encouraging teams working on future projects to put in place a simple and effective way to monitor activities by creating an evaluation manual and establishing a database, which would lead to more effectively controlled projects with better capitalisation of actions and results of future projects.
2. The Project has been carried out sufficiently and the target groups have been rightly chosen. However, in order to maximise the potential of partners and the impact of the project on the target beneficiaries, the inclusion of partners in designing and planning the project's activities would be beneficial in the long term, especially in the implementation of the project so that the current needs of the target group are prioritized.
3. The advocacy work done had positive results, however project participants could use other ways to reach the Mauritanian government, in order to insure a commitment to long term engagement on their behalf,
4. Given the positive results and impacts, it is advisable to initiate continuation of the project ~~is carried out~~ in a second phase. This second phase should focus on further training sessions and awareness raising in other regions of the country.
5. The project produced extremely relevant and useful material (on paper and online). In order for these materials to be better distributed, it would be useful to hire a regional manager of communications.
6. Finally, to assure that information about the HC is continued to be shared, a newsletter could be created and managed by a group of locals (both men and women), creating groups on social networks so that they can continue to share their problems, needs and reach out to a greater number of individuals thus strengthening the capacities of networking on a local level for better utilization of skills acquired.

PROJECT EVALUATION GRID

1= completely achieved, with few or no shortcomings

2= broadly achieved, despite some shortcomings

3= partially achieved, advantages and shortcomings are balanced

4= results very limited, many shortcomings

5= not achieved

Overall, the evaluation deems the project final rating is 2, for it is a project broadly achieved despite some shortcomings. For more details, see the full report.

	Rating	Log Frame Indicators	Initial Values of Indicators	Progress Achieved	Comments on achieved changes during the project (incl. unexpected impacts)
Overall Objective HW are more visible in their community, in the Mauritanian society & at the international level, and effective initiatives have been implemented to tackle the issues they face (poverty, discrimination, violence).	3	1. The report on HW permitted to increase their participation in decision making processes.	1. HW could not make their voices heard in decision making processes, they were not taken into account and their problems were unknown / ignored by the international community and the Mauritanian society.	1. The report enabled to denounce the situation of HW in the country, these women are more aware in regard to their rights and their voices. Nevertheless they are not completely taken into account in the decision making process.	HW are more visible in their society, however, there are no real and effective initiatives implemented to confront their issues (notably poverty and discrimination). HW still encounter difficulties in participating in the decision making process.
	4	2. The MG took some measures to improve the situation of HW.	2. The MG passed laws denouncing slavery practices, criminalising it, and set up 3 specific courts for slavery cases (not operational yet).	2. The MG appears to be more aware of the situations of HW, but has not yet taken concrete actions to address their issues.	

	Rating	Log Frame Indicators	Initial Values of Indicators	Progress Achieved	Comments on achieved changes during the project (incl. unexpected impacts)
	2	3. The number of HW with Civil Registration papers has increased.	3. Most HW (slaves descendents) in Nouakchott have Civil Registration papers	3. Many HW have raised awareness among other HW on the importance of having Civil Registration papers for themselves and their children, and the number of Haratine people enrolled has increased, thanks to the project's network.	The project's network of HW allowed to raise awareness not only among other HW but also among men of the HC who now understand the importance of the Civil Registration papers, especially for their children, so that they can reach out for a better future.
Specific Objective Reinforce the capacities and the participation of HW and CSOs to local & national decision-making processes.	1	1. 2 Haratine CSOs have gained in capacities in terms of advocacy on behalf of HW.	1. The 2 partners, AFCF & SOS were lacking capacities in terms of advocacy.	1. AFCF & SOS have gained capacities in advocating for HW's rights, as well as creating networks from Embassies, INGO, local CSOs and media.	Many HW are more and more committed and want their voices to be heard by decision-makers.
	3	2. At least 2 Haratines CSOs attest of an increase in HW commitment and participation in decision-making processes.	2. HW were not committed and participating to the decision-making processes.	3. Despite the increased number of informed HW, there has been no real changes in terms of HW participation in decision-making processes. HW are enlightened but still face obstacles for their voices to be heard within the Mauritanian Society.	CSOs have integrated more effectively gender issues in their work but the lack of funding and their limited capacities require more support from INGOs to improve the situation of HW on the long term.
	5	3. 2 new projects/ initiatives are created & implemented by partners before the end of the project.	3. Before the project, there were no initiatives or projects set up specially for HW.	3. Now new initiative was created or implemented by partners.	

	Rating	Log Frame Indicators	Initial Values of Indicators	Progress Achieved	Comments on achieved changes during the project (incl. unexpected impacts)
	3/4	4. 50% of trained HW participate in the decision-making process.	4. Less than 20% of HW were participating in decision-making processes.	4. HW are more aware of their rights than before, nevertheless, the participation rate is about 25%.	
	1	5. 2 Haratine CSOs work on specific matters linked to HW before the end of the project.	5. The situation of HW was not a priority for local CSOs.	5. AFCF and SOS included more effectively gender issues specific to HW in their work.	
	1	6. 4 HW make official speeches at the launch of the local advocacy campaign and/or at a national meeting.	6. No advocacy campaign specific to HW were formerly launched.	6. 4 HW have actually taken part to and have spoken during international and national fora: Féministe du Monde – World Feminist in English (Morocco), at the Human Rights Council (Geneva), as well as at the launch of a national level advocacy campaign and during governmental meetings.	
	2	7. CSOs meet with policies decision-makers (5 international ones and 12 national and local).	7. Decision-makers had not formerly discussed openly about the situation of HW.	7. Many national and international policies decision-makers were contacted, especially during the advocacy campaign, and CSOs were able to meet with 4 State institutions, 13 international institutions and 8 Civil Society networks.	Through more advocacy campaigns and more pressures on the international community as well as on the MG, national policies decision-makers might engage later in the struggle and take concrete actions to improve HW situations.

	Rating	Log Frame Indicators	Initial Values of Indicators	Progress Achieved	Comments on achieved changes during the project (incl. unexpected impacts)
Result 1 HW and CSOs possess increased knowledge about international tools for greater commitment in the promotion of gender issues in their work and in advocating, for the establishment of human rights mechanism within the government.	1	1. 75% of Haratine CSO's staff trained shows an active interest towards HW's situations, resulting in a better collaboration between both gender employees.	1. HW's situation was not discussed within the CSO as they focused more on slavery and women globally. Joint efforts were already carried out between different gender employees but limitedly.	1. The situation of HW is more and more discussed in all spheres, among men & women. Men are willing to collaborate with women to help improve their situation as a community, and are also more aware of the issues women face.	There are more and more collaboration and commitment from CSOs employees in order to improve HW situations in the country.
	4	2. 2 new initiatives focusing on women discrimination are designed and implemented by CSOs.	2. No initiatives were formerly implemented.	2 & 3. No real initiatives arose from this project, nevertheless, many HW & men continue to informally raise awareness in the community, in order to help Haratines claim their rights.	
	3	3. Partner CSOs' HW report that their CSO designed & implemented activities tackling their specific issues.	3. There were no real activities formerly tackling HW specific issues.	See point 2.	
	1	4. 75% of trainings participants (min. 10 women) declare their participation allowed them to increase their awareness and knowledge on gender and international tools as well as their capacity and confidence to promote their rights.	4 and 5. Due to high illiteracy rates in HC, most HW were not aware of their rights as women and did not have the capacities and the confidence to promote or claim them.	4 and 5. Most HW participating in the trainings (> 10 including women from the river valley regions) widely benefited from the trainings, allowing them to sensitize more HW, claim their rights and gain confidence to fight discriminations they face. 2 of the grantees have become director of AFCF centres for violence and slavery victims, 1	At the HC level, the project permitted to introduce gender issues to many women and men, who are now more open to discuss the problems HW face. They want to break the silence about Haratines and they want to support women in claiming their rights.

				has become a teacher.	
	Rating	Log Frame Indicators	Initial Values of Indicators	Progress Achieved	Comments on achieved changes during the project (incl. unexpected impacts)
	1	5. 3 CSOs' grantees declare having gained more capacities in terms of promoting women rights.	See point 4.	See point 4.	HW have acquired more knowledge about gender and women rights, as well as about international tools used to promote such rights. Moreover, they have gained more confidence to advocate for their own rights.
Result 2 There is more collaboration between Haratine CSOs and the HC, including between men and women regarding information sharing and advocacy methods.	1	1. 75% of information sharing workshop's participants (100% of women) demonstrate more confidence and capacities in advocating for the implementation of their rights.	1. HW had never participated in workshops to strengthen their leadership. No activities targeting HW formerly existed.	1 and 2. This workshop allowed 38 women to increase their level of knowledge in national laws and in implementation tools. It also allowed them to increase their level of debate or speech abilities, their advocating capacities for their own rights, and their networking capacities. About 97% of participants are completely satisfied of their level of attainment during this workshop. About 94% gained more communication and advocacy skills. They have more confidence and understand the key role of networking.	The information and experience sharing workshop has definitely increased the knowledge in leadership, women rights, advocacy and networking of the participants. It allowed men and women to carry out efficient advocacy campaign along with state institutions, Embassies, NGOs and CSOS, and the media.

	Rating	Log Frame Indicators	Initial Values of Indicators	Progress Achieved	Comments on achieved changes during the project (incl. unexpected impacts)
	2	2. 75% of information sharing workshop's participants (100% of women) have more capacities in efficiently and diplomatically engaging and communicating with policy decision-makers, media, donors, etc.	2 and 3. The majority of HW had never have the opportunity to meet policy decision-makers and media to discuss their situation. Most of them had also never taken part in an advocacy campaign at national and international levels.	See point 1.	
	1	3. 25% of information sharing workshop's participants (100% of women) take part in advocacy initiatives at local, community or national levels.	See point 2.	3. 25% of the women participating in the workshop took part in local and national advocacy campaigns in June 2015.	
	1	4. 50% of the awareness meetings (50% of men, 50% of women) have a better understanding of multiple discrimination affecting women.	4. Prior this project, no awareness meetings were held, excepting informal ones among some women but it never was a proper network.	4. Awareness raising events were only for women, and more than 50% of HW in Nouakchott have been sensitized and are aware of discriminations affecting them in the different daily stages.	The meetings focused on HW discrimination in society, as well as on their need to claim their rights (such as Civil Registration papers for themselves and their kids, marriage and divorce certificates, etc.).
	1	5. 3 HW working for partner CSOs engage in an international forum.	5. Women working in CSOs already participate in international fora, but on women or slavery issues and never targeting specifically HW questions.	5. During the project, the AFCF coordinator engaged in the World Feminist Forum; a deputy took part in a seminar in France and a journalist in the International Social Forum.	

	Rating	Log Frame Indicators	Initial Values of Indicators	Progress Achieved	Comments on achieved changes during the project (incl. unexpected impacts)
	2	6. 2 radios commit to relaying evolutions in women rights application in Hassaneya, at the end of the project.	6 and 7. Prior to this project, media in Mauritania did not discuss enough HW issues or women rights in general.	6 and 7. 6 radio and TV programs were relayed in Hassaneya, in order to discuss discrimination issues faced by HW. These debates were very interactive and allowed many Mauritians (not only Haratines), to get to know the obstacles faced daily by HW. Moreover, throughout this project, many articles were published online on the project's activities and the situation of HW in general.	In addition, the radio and TV programs allowed to raise the public opinion's awareness about the HC and initiate a dialogue to claim the rights of the HC.
	1	7. 2 articles on HW are published during the project.	See point 6.	See point 6.	
<p>Result 3</p> <p>There is an increase of awareness and of willingness to tackle HW's problems among local and national policy decision-makers (including UN, AU, ACHPR, NEPAD, MFA).</p>	3/4	1. The local and/or national government show more willingness to improve HW's situation via the implementation of specific measures and more dialogue with Haratines CSOs.	1. The MG has never officially taken into account HW's situation, nor open the dialogue with Haratines CSOs about this specific question.	1. During the advocacy campaign, a commission was able to meet with some government members. This policy decision-makers were ready to listen and showed an interest in trying to improve HW's situation. They all promised to do their best but no formal commitment was made.	The advocacy campaign proved there was more willingness from the MG's part to listen to HW's issues & situation in the country. However, it has not set up yet specific measures which might help HW in solving their issues (poverty, discrimination & violence). During this activity, media showed interest in mentioning events and studies on HW undertaken.

	Rating	Log Frame Indicators	Initial Values of Indicators	Progress Achieved	Comments on achieved changes during the project (incl. unexpected impacts)
	2/3	2. 2 national/local government representatives and the media take part in the national launch of the study.	2. No study had been carried out on HW, whether from slave descent, or the slaves born, as well as no study on the discrimination they face or their needs.	2. The participants of the study focus group included MPs, journalists, teachers and CSOs representatives.	
	1/2	3. 1 media mentions the launch of the study/ the advocacy campaign.	3 and 4. No media or international agency had talked specifically about HW's situation, except ASI that had been working in Mauritania for already a few years.	3 and 4. 2 local media mentioned the advocacy campaign and the study report on HW: Cridem Flamme d'Afrique and La Calame. Moreover, the HCHR quoted HW's situation during the opening statement of the HRC's 23 rd session.	
	1	4. 1 international agency makes a statement quoting HW's situation.	See point 3.	4. During the HRC's 109 th session, the last expressed final observations including HW's rights to participate.	
Result 4 The European public (more precisely the UK's one) became aware of HW's situations and the importance to develop initiatives to solve their issues.	1	1. 7 articles are published in the UK and European press.	1, 2 and 3. The Europeans and UK public was not really familiar with HW's questions in Mauritania, nor with the existence of slavery in the country.	1, 2 and 3. Part of the European and UK public is more aware of the issues in Mauritania, especially about the question of slavery and double discrimination affecting HW. MRG raised awareness among many individuals online and throughout articles, the report and the radio programme with the BBC.	

	Rating	Log Frame Indicators	Initial Values of Indicators	Progress Achieved	Comments on achieved changes during the project (incl. unexpected impacts)
	2/3	2. At least 20% of European and UK public members have read/seen/heard about HW's situation.	See point 1.	See point 1.	
	1	3. Online materials reach at least 3000 hits.	See point 1.	See point 1.	
	1	4. 1 agency/ initiative for human rights uses the material produced within the project.		4. During the HRC's 109 th session, the last expressed final observations including included HW's rights to participate.	
	N/A	5. The documentary is screened in at least one European or UK film festival on human rights.			
Activities Comments on the relevance, the efficiency, the effectiveness of the activities in general.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baseline Study: this activity was subjected to a delay in its execution, due to problems linked to researcher's capacities to collect data. However, it is an extremely relevant activity given the lack of specific information about HW's situations. This study allowed to, despite its delay, understand social perceptions and the role of HW in the Mauritanian society, as well as the social prejudices and discriminations they endure. - Capacity building trainings of partner CSOs: this activity permitted to increase our partners' level of knowledge about project management and finances, resource mobilisation, leadership and the importance of networking and of strategic planning. The partners can thus benefit on the long term from this acquired knowledge which allowed them to become more effective. - Grants for HW: the trainings in social work allowed 40 women to become social workers and to be able to take responsibility for slavery or violence victims. This activity is extremely relevant because it allowed some of them to access employment opportunities as well as financial stability. - Information and experience sharing workshop between HW and CSOs: a good workshop, allowing to strengthen HW's knowledge on their own rights and on leadership, which nevertheless did not really include women from the 				

neediest regions.

- **Establishment of an informal HW network and awareness raising within the HC:** it is one of the activities which produced concrete impacts as it directly concerned HW, as well as Haratine men and families in general. Despite the end of the project, HW continue to informally raise awareness for other women from their neighbourhoods, thus contributing to a general enlightenment among HW.
- **Documentary and report on the question of multiple discrimination affecting HW:** extremely important materials allowing to popularise HW's conditions within the Mauritanian society and at the international level. These materials are timeless, and many other studies and project will probably be based on them.
- **Advocacy campaign at local, national and international levels:** an activity very useful which permitted to strengthen our partners and HW's knowledge about advocacy, but it is an activity needing some continuity in order to reach its expected results, and a real commitment from the MG's part and the rest of the Mauritanian society.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Description and context of its expansion

The Mauritanian society is greatly stratified and is based on a strict hierarchy, according to ethnic groups. The White Moors constitute 30% of the population, the Black Africans (the Pulaar, Wolof, Soninke and the Bambaras) also constitute 30% of the population and finally the Black Moors (also called Haratines), make up the remaining 40% of the country's population. The White Moors (Beidans) hold most of the positions in the administration, the army, the police, courts and trade. Black Africans, and especially Haratines, are at the bottom of the social ladder, they occupy low-paid positions, mainly manual jobs and are commonly discriminated in accessing basic services. The poverty rate remains high in Mauritania, especially in rural areas. The main obstacles to tackling poverty are the low productivity of the rural economy, the lack of human capital high intensity sector, governance issues, the poor quality of public services and the country's vulnerability to exogenous shocks. The Mauritanian UNDP Human Development Index was 0.506 in 2014, and is still categorized as a country with low human development. The country is ranked 156st of 188 countries¹.

Furthermore, Mauritania is regularly classified as the world worst country for slavery, with thousands of people reduced to total servitude. This practice, despite being officially criminalised, continues to persist by the automatic marginalization of Black Africans and especially Haratines in Mauritania, within the same ethnic group and particularly with White Moors. The persistent inability of the government, of the security forces and of other actors to protect these communities, left them exposed to mainstream exploitation and dehumanisation. For many years, the MG has been under pressure from the international community who demands the actual enforcement of the law promoting human rights and the abolition as well as the criminalization of slavery. The State, given these pressures, seems to be more ready to listen and to engage dialogues with NGOs and CSOs. Nevertheless, there is a trend to not take concrete actions in order to reduce the inequalities' gap within the Mauritanian society. Furthermore, the few Haratines and Black Africans who work in the administration do not seem to engage effectively to find solutions for their community's problems. In spite of some progresses achieved and laws enacted, there has been no real evolution or changes, which have resulted in the improvement of these communities' living conditions.

The situation is particularly precarious for women, notably for HW, who are victims of a double discrimination based on both their gender and their ethnical identity. Until now, many former Haratine slaves and their descendants face widespread stigmatisation and the lack of access to necessities such as education, land law and political participation. As a consequence, many former slaves really struggle to integrate into Mauritanian society, even after nominally obtaining their freedom. The deeply rooted discrimination undergone by HW, even within their own communities, is fostered by the authorities' reluctance to take significant measures to reduce abuses. In such case as slavery, disregard and even sometime the complicity of legal

¹ UNDP, 2015.

institutions, have actively contributed to the impunity slaves' masters possess. Religious educations have also been wrongly used to legitimate its use. Other legal measures against slavery, although important, have therefore a limited effectiveness, unless further efforts aiming to transform institutional attitudes and social prejudices are undertaken, through raising awareness and trainings. Nonetheless, despite these obstacles, many HW have demonstrated a lot of courage and dedication in their struggle for equality and for a greater autonomy in their own lives. With the danger and the deeply rooted resistance they have confronted, HW played a front line role in promoting their own rights and obtaining compensations for the abuses committed against them. It is important that formal bodies, civil society and all other stakeholders recognize their essential contributions and ensure their active participation in their efforts aiming to put an end to the abuses and the discrimination. Even though the immediate abolition of slavery in Mauritania is the first crucial step in reducing most of the worst abuses and violations of rights against HW, a broader process of social and institutional reform is also necessary before their rights and security can be ensured.

It is in this context that the Project Supporting Mauritanian CSOs to mainstream gender into their work and advocate for the implementation of gender rights for Haratine women was designed and implemented. The project was implemented between September 2011 and June 2015. It was mainly financed by the European Union Delegation in Mauritania.

1.2 Start and duration of the project

The project was first planned to start by the end of 2010 and last 3 years, but it encountered some delays in the grant contract signing, for unknown reasons, and has therefore started in September 2011. The evaluator tried to contact the EU on multiple occasions as suggested by MRG, but the EU was not able to put the evaluator in contact with its representative in charge of the project. Besides this, the project underwent co-financing issues since its beginning, for there was an informal agreement between MRG and ASI, but as a consequence of the delays in starting the project, ASI was no longer available to co-finance the activities of the project. This loss of co-financing caused continued problems throughout the project.

The development objective (or general objective) of the project was to “*contribute to the visibility of Haratine Women within their own community, as well as in the Mauritanian society and the international community*”. The objective of the project, or immediate objective, was to “*strengthen the capacities and the participation of Haratine women and of civil society organisations in the decision-making processes at local, regional and national levels*”.

The goal of the initiative was to raise awareness among HW about the discrimination they face, in order to enable them to build up a support network and to demand the enforcement of their rights. The strengthening of women's position in terms of advocacy aim to generate positive impacts on the implementation of rights of the HC in general, especially regarding slavery. In addition, with an advocacy targeting national and international policy decision-makers, the HC will be able to pressure the MG in enforcing existing tools against slavery, and tools promoting women's rights. Furthermore, this initiative aimed to support HW and

CSOs to strengthen their capacities and knowledge about human and women rights' international tools. The strengthening of their capacities allows to give them appropriate tools so that they can claim the actual implementation of human rights. This initiative targeted particularly HW working or volunteering in partner CSOs for this project, to enable them to become active advocates encouraging and motivating other women to take part in the policy decision-making process, and improve the situation of HW in the Mauritanian society.

1.3 Project's Partners and planned activities.

The key partners who made this project possible were Anti-Slavery International, l'Association des Femmes Chefs de Familles (AFCF) and SOS-esclaves. AFCF is an organisation for the defence of human rights created in 1999 and is led by a multidisciplinary staff composed of sociologists, nutritionists and development economics and communication specialists. SOS-esclaves is a human rights organisation which originated in 1995, but as only legally recognized in 2005. It intervenes mainly in the elimination of ascendant slavery and established itself as a leading authority or resources NGO on the subject thanks to the support of ASI, who ensured an institutional support that helped its professionalization. These two CSOs have a lot of experience in the country on defending human and women rights, slavery and violence victims. Their expertise and presence in the country have allowed the project to gain a wider scope, especially in the capital and its 9 counties, as well as within the HC.

The main activities were:

- **A baseline study**, allowing to collect more data on HW's situation and the double discrimination and the social prejudices affecting them;
- **A capacity building workshop** for the partners;
- **An information and experience sharing workshop**;
- **A training for social workers**;
- **A community-based awareness training**, followed by regular meeting within the community.
- **The production of a report and a documentary**, and their dissemination;
- **A national advocacy campaign** and advocacy meetings with international and national policy-makers.

2. ACTION'S SCOPE AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

2.1 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation relates to the whole project's implementation period (from September 2011 to June 2015), and to all the actions carried out throughout the project. The evaluation started mid-February, notably for the document review and for some interviews with MRG's staff, and also consisted of a 15-day field mission to evaluate the action's impacts on partners and the HC.

The evaluation methodology used can be summarized as following:

Briefing meeting

These meetings were held in London and in Nouakchott with MRG, AFCF and SOS' staff. They were occasions for the evaluator on the field to expose her approach to effectuate the evaluation, to project's coordinators in order to bring up complementary information to the reality on the ground and to enable a better planning of the visits and interviews with the HC and other civil society actors. The local partners' present staff also took the opportunity to ask some question of clarification to the evaluator.

Documents Review

In order to know the project and its evolution context, its running, its results, etc., the evaluator proceeded in a document review. This review focused on the grant application sent to the EU, the different budgets, the interim reports and the final report, the trainings, workshops and advocacy reports, a EU correspondence list, the documentary produced as well as the report published for the advocacy campaign. Moreover, the evaluator also read other relevant to the action materials such as:

- MRG's report entitled "*Enforcing Mauritania Anti-Slavery Legislation: the continued Failure of the Justice System to Prevent, Protect and Punish*", 2015;
- MRG, AFCF and SOS' report entitled "*Still Far from Freedom: The Struggle of Mauritania's Haratine Women*", May 2015;
- The 2007 and 2015 laws against slavery in Mauritania;
- The 2014 report on Mauritania of the Committee on the elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- The 2014 report from the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery;
- The 2014 UNDP report on human development;
- Online articles from other NGOs about Haratines and slavery in Mauritania as such as ASI, Middle East Eye and Amnesty International;
- Ets. (See annexe 4 for the complete list).

Sampling

On the basis of the information provided during briefing meetings and the documents review, the evaluator carried out on the ground a sampling of sites to visit, CSOs and NGOS to meet. On the 9 counties of project intervention in Nouakchott, the evaluator retained 5 counties, in order to have a better overview of the activities' results for the direct beneficiaries of the

project. The choice of counties was made by the partner, who organised the visits in the different counties. A representative of each organisation was present during the visits to facilitate the dialogues and provide support if necessary.

Realisation of the interviews and investigations

The interviews were held in London and in Nouakchott with:

- MRG, SOS and AFCF's staff;
- Local NGOs working on human rights and fighting against slavery practices (such as IRA, ABA-ROLI, etc.);
- Consultants working on human rights (2);
- HW from the different sites of intervention (about 62 in 5 out of the 9 Nouakchott counties);
- 10 Haratine men from the communities;
- Activists campaigning for the promotion of human rights in the country (4).

The interview with the aforementioned aimed to gain knowledge about the project activities and the quality of the activities, the assessment of the project's impact on the organisations in terms of strengthening capacities, the assessment of the project's strength and weaknesses, etc. These interviews were based on interview guides and specific surveys depending on the actors. During the mission, the evaluator judged helpful to meet with a number of member from CSOs which did not benefit from the project or from certain activities. This was intended to show the true impact of the project, beyond the beneficiaries. These interviews were based on three investigation surveys, including one for MRG and its partners, one for the other actors not involved in the project and the last one for the HC. The interviews carried out with MRG's staff and its partners, as well as with civil society actors, were shaped as semi-structured questionnaires. The interviews realised with members of the HC were shaped as semi-structured focus groups, and as individual interviews with HW, to collect as much data as possible while creating an informal environment to facilitate dialogue between HW. These interviews and focus group aimed mainly to assess the effectiveness of the activities carried out, especially the trainings and workshops, how they were put to use and the sustainability ~~durability~~ of the action in general as well as the needs of HW and the HC globally.

Drafting of the reports

Throughout the mission and after it, the evaluator scrutinized all the interviews and investigations carried out in order to have thorough data to start drafting a first draft complete report, and then a final one.

2.2 Difficulties faced and study's limits

Globally, the mission has not encountered major difficulties which hindered its implementation, nevertheless, it was confronted:

- A lack of clarity and low availability of people in charge of the project or working, even briefly, in the action (MRG and the EU);
- The delays in providing required information (MRG);

- The deficiency of database on the project, etc.

These difficulties have mostly hindered the beginning of the evaluation and the mission on the ground for partners who were contacted only two days before the arrival of the evaluator, giving them very little time to prepare the sampling size of people interviewed and to target the objective of the evaluation. Yet, it is important to clarify that the partners showed a real availability and commitment for this evaluation, in spite of their own commitments, and have strongly supported the evaluator in collecting relevant data on the ground. Nonetheless, the lack of communication is an important factor to take into account, as it is a shortcoming which also had some consequences on the implementation of the project, an element to be discussed in the following section.

Study's limits

Some data from the interview, such as the level of acquired knowledge mastery, are based only on declarations and were not assessed or tested. Thus, they may be biased.

3. PROJECT'S ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

3.1 Analysis of the project's log frame approach

As a reminder, the general objective or development objective of the project is to “*contribute to the visibility of Haratine Women within their own community, as well as in the Mauritanian society and the international community*”. The objective of the project, or immediate objective, was to “*strengthen the capacities and the participation of Haratine women and of civil society organisations in the decision-making processes at local, regional and national levels*”. The comparison of these two objectives shows that the immediate objective achievements actually contribute to the realisation of the development objective as stated. Indeed, by strengthening the capacities and the participation of HW and CSOs (immediate objective), it contributes logically and inevitably to increase the visibility of HW at local, national and international levels, as set in the development objective. There is therefore a good consistency between these two objectives.

Following the immediate objective, the project document formulates four (4) expected results:

- 1) HW and CSOs possess an increased knowledge about international tools for greater commitment in the promotion of gender issues in their work and in advocating, for the establishment of human rights mechanism within the government;
- 2) There is more collaboration between Haratine CSOs and the HC, including between men and women regarding information sharing and advocacy methods;
- 3) There is an increase of awareness and of willingness to tackle HW's problems among local, national and international policy decision-makers (including UN, AU, ACHPR, NEPAD, MFA);
- 4) The European public (more precisely the UK's one) became aware of HW's situations and the importance to develop initiatives to solve their issues.

The first result was sufficiently achieved. The HW and CSOs showed during the evaluation enhanced knowledge in terms of human rights, however, this knowledge is still limited, notably for HW. The CSOS had already a better understanding of international tools for the promotion of human rights and national laws which can be claimed, particularly for slavery and women rights. Thus, with this project, CSOs' knowledge in these areas has increased so that they can better promote gender within their organisations and in the national advocacy campaign. Compared to CSOs, HW's knowledge was lower, some of them were not aware precisely which tools were available for them to claim. Yet, the project enabled an increase in the knowledge of HW who attended the trainings and workshops, but given the high rate of illiteracy, their number is still limited. Most HW who benefited from the project continue to promote women's and children's rights within their own neighbourhoods, with general knowledge on what they can claim, but a large number of them do not feel confident enough to advocate their rights at a governmental level and do not want to subsequently jeopardize their status in society.

The second result was broadly achieved, because the collaboration between CSOs and the HC is indeed visible. CSOs and the HC, men and women, do collaborate mutually, sharing

information on a regular and constant basis, as well as sharing information techniques to extend the scope of women rights within all Nouakchott counties and other regions of the country.

The third result was not sufficiently reached. This result is quite important and ambitious, notably to improve HW's situations at all levels, but remains difficult to achieve. Local, national and international policy decision-makers who were met throughout the project have showed they were ready to listen but no real willingness to effectively tackle HW's problems and take concrete actions. The project might have raised awareness among policy decision-makers in terms of HW's issues, yet, this realization remained as such: it did not lead to further actions or commitments from them.

Finally, the fourth result was only partially achieved, especially regarding the indicators, most of which have been reached. Many individuals of the European public, more particularly in the UK, have effectively gained awareness thanks to the available materials, both hard copies and online, produced during the project. These people have been sensitized on the discrimination and the situation of HW in Mauritania, including the need to continue developing sustainable initiatives to try and resolve their problems, and to pressure the MG in finding concrete solutions to their problems so they can unfold their potential. However, it is difficult to evaluate if indeed 20% of the European public (including the UK), was sensitized.

3.2 Consistency and impact of the activities

The planned activities for the project were:

- **Baseline Study:** this activity was subjected to a delay in its execution, due to problems linked to researcher's capacities to collect data. However, it is an extremely relevant activity given the lack of specific information about HW's situations. This study allowed to, despite its delay, understand social perceptions and the role of HW in the Mauritanian society, as well as the social prejudices and discriminations they endure.
- **Capacity building trainings of partner CSOs:** this activity enabled the increase in partners' levels of knowledge about project management and finances, resource mobilisation, leadership and the importance of networking and of strategic planning. The partners can thus benefit in the long term from this acquired knowledge which has allowed them to become more effective.
- **Grants for HW:** the trainings in social work allowed 40 women to become social workers and to be able to take responsibility for slavery or violence victims. This activity is extremely relevant because it allowed some of them to access employment opportunities as well as financial stability.
- **Information and experience sharing workshop between HW and CSOs:** a good workshop, strengthening HW's knowledge of their own rights and about leadership.
- **Establishment of an informal HW network and awareness raising within the HC:** it is one of the activities (with the grants distributed to HW) which produced concrete impacts as it directly concerned HW, as well as Haratine men and families in general. Despite the end of the project, HW continue to informally raise awareness among

other women from their neighbourhoods, thus contributing to a general enlightenment among HW.

- **Documentary and report on the question of multiple discrimination affecting HW:** extremely important materials popularising HW's conditions within Mauritanian society and at the international level. These materials are timeless, and many other studies and projects will probably be based on them.
- **Advocacy campaign at local, national and international levels:** a very useful activity which strengthened partners' and HW's knowledge about advocacy, but it is an activity needing some continuity in order to reach its expected results, and a real commitment from the MG's part and the rest of the Mauritanian society.

The activities were all relevant to the project's objectives and the expected results. They all targeted the main goal of the project, which was to increase the visibility of HW and to raise awareness of the discrimination affecting them so that they can weave a support network and claim their rights in practice. In spite of the delays affecting some of the activities (baseline study, capacity building trainings of partners and information sharing workshops), they were all carried out and all obtained positive feedbacks among participants, trainers and partners.

The activity which seems to have had more impact is the awareness raising meetings for HW in the 9 Nouakchott counties. These meetings permitted direct reach to HW's groups and families, including men. This led to a major interest for the HW's situation within the HC itself, which is now able to carry out more often open dialogues about the discrimination and the obstacles daily affecting HW. Furthermore, the training in social work allowed 40 women to benefit from lasting knowledge they may use in professional or social spheres. The advocacy campaign was also a good activity enabling a practical application of the acquired knowledge by actors and beneficiaries of the project. It made possible a true community mobilisation targeting the government, civil society actors, embassies and the media, in order to achieve real changes in the situation of the HC in general and more particularly of HW. Admittedly, the advocacy campaign did not lead to the implementation of concrete measures by the actors appealed to, but it did rally a large number of individuals and fostered a strong foundation of community across the two partner organisations, a human rights culture, women's loyalty to the organisations, the enlightenment of many HW and the willingness to work towards real long-term changes, notably for future Haratine generations.

3.3 Project's indicators

The log frame offers a broad number of indicators, all precise but also ambitious, given the socio-political context in which the project was conducted. Some indicators are difficult to confirm (such as the number of HW having gained Civil-Registration papers, HW from partner CSOs reporting that the CSOs' designed and implemented activities tackle their specific issues, the national and/or local government shows more willingness in improving the situation of HW through the implementation of specific measures and more dialogue with Haratine CSOs) on a short time period. In fact, how to measure if the number of HW having gained Civil-Registration papers for themselves and their children, is a direct consequence of the project's activities. When taking into account the political context of the country, the

accuracy of the data and the long process to obtain registration papers, it is difficult to ascertain the correct number of people registered. For the other indicators, it is admitted that an advocacy campaign and few meetings with representatives cannot measurably increase the willingness of the government to improve the situation of HW in such a short time period. For years now, the international community and the local CSOs have pressured the MG to abolish all forms of slavery in the country, to criminalize it and tackle poverty these communities endure. This pressure and collaboration of all the aforementioned actors have allowed, after many years and actions, the establishment of concrete measures fighting against slavery and poverty for these communities (although they remain un-enforced for most of them). It is therefore very unlikely and ambitious to believe that an advocacy campaign would directly lead to a true commitment from the government’s part in so little time. Whilst the efforts are admirable, the context requires more time for positive and sustainable changes towards HW in Mauritania to be visible.

3.4 Hypotheses and Risks

The project’s document identified 5 main hypotheses:

Table 1: Project’s Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1	Partners and the HC are not targeted by the government or even their own community, preventing them to access employment.
Hypothesis 2	The government is willing to tackle HW’s problems, and policy decision-makers are ready to commit to the project.
Hypothesis 3	Members of partners CSOs and of the HC are ready to work together on specific issues.
Hypothesis 4	HW are willing to organise themselves in order to promote their rights and collaborate with CSOs. Men show a positive attitude towards gender issues.
Hypothesis 5	Staff turnover does not unfavourably influence the implementation of the activities and the communication within and between partner CSOs.

Source: Project’s document / grant application

The hypotheses identified in the above table are all relevant and realistic when looking at the country’s socio-political context, the institutional capacities of MRG and of its partners. Hypotheses 3, 4 and 5 have occurred and have enabled a better implementation of the planned activities. Hypothesis 1 has not happened and the government as well as the HC, did not target partners and individuals who took part in the project. This allowed them to work efficiently and to carry out all the project’s activities. Hypothesis 2 is difficult to analyse, given the lack of concrete indicators allowing to measure the government’s willingness to tackle HW’s problems. Admittedly, the government showed it was ready to be receptive, but this could also be the result of the long-lasting pressures from the international community. The government proved to be really diplomatic, showing an interest towards HW’s situation, yet, it never committed concretely during the 3 years of the project. Finally, hypothesis 5 partially occurred throughout the project, sometimes unfavourably influencing communication between MRG and partner CSOs. Staff turnover for this project as well as for

other MRG projects, delayed communication with partners, who were not always informed about the decisions taken by MRG on the project.

Furthermore, the project’s document identified 6 risks:

Table 2: Project’s Risks

Risk 1 (medium/high)	Backlash from the Mauritania society, against the participation of women in this project.
Risk 2 (high)	Backlash from the Mauritanian government.
Risk 3 (low/medium)	Outbreak of a pandemic.
Risk 4 (low/medium)	A natural disaster.
Risk 5 (low/medium)	Work with new partners.
Risk 6 (low/medium)	Economic risks.

Source: Project’s document/ grant application

The two first risks mentioned in this table are very realistic, and show a good understanding from MRG of the actual socio-political situation in the country. For this project, no risk with negative impact on the implementation process has occurred. Nonetheless, the government arrested and kept in custody some of the activists working to promote rights of the HC. Additionally, during the project, a Fatwa was issued against Mrs Aminetou Mint Moctar, president of AFCF, compelling her to leave the country for a few months for her own security. In response, MRG continued to efficiently raise questions about the project, while staying clear from reprisal, allowing its fulfilment and successful achievement.

In the end, it should be highlighted that there is good coherence between the objectives and results of the project. The indicators are numerous, sometimes ambitious and difficult to concretely verify given the socio-political context of the country. The hypotheses and risks were well identified and formulated, except hypothesis 2 which remains difficult to analyse. The project’s proposal document demonstrates well the understanding and the expertise of MRG on the country, and takes into account the instability of the context in which it intends to work.

3.5 Result analysis and overall performance of the project

The analysis of the results and the overall performance of the project will include two main stages and will be based on three essential documents: the project’s narrative and financial proposal documents approved by the EU, the annual activity reports and the primary data collected by the evaluator on the ground via different types of interviews and investigations.

3.5.1 Analysis of global results

Initially, the level of achievement of the expected results will be assessed, and secondly, the level of achievement of the project's objective will be addressed. To sum up, the estimate of results' achievement rates was carried out as following:

- First, to simplify the calculation, all results were considered as having the same weight;
- Then, for each indicator provided by the project's documentation, a grade was given between 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest grade a 10 the highest) by comparing what was planned and what was actually achieved.
- Finally, to make the achievement rate of a given result, the achievements rates of all the result's indicators must be added up, and the sum divided by the total number of indicators composing the given result. In other words, it is the arithmetic average of the achievement rates of one result's indicators which constitute the overall result.

Table 3: Estimations of expected results' achievement rates²

	Achievement rate estimated	comments
Result 1	72%	This achievement rate shows that the majority of HW who benefited from this project have indeed acquired more knowledge on international tools for the promotion of human rights, and that there has been an increased commitment within the HC to promote gender equality and human rights. Nevertheless, even if a majority of HW have benefited from this knowledge, there is still a part of this community that was not reached, especially at the grassroots, which requires more support.
Result 2	95.7%	This high achievement rate demonstrates that there is in fact more collaboration and commitment between Haratine CSOs and the HC (men and women), notably regarding techniques of information sharing and advocacy.
Result 3	67.5%	This result was only partially achieved, given the socio-political context of the country and the MG's position towards the HC. This project was, nonetheless, able to produce and encourage major awareness raising of State institutions and international policy decision-makers. However, regarding their willingness to improve HW's situation, it remains far from being realized by sustainable decisions in favour of HW.
Result 4	64%	This result was also partially fulfilled, because some part of the European public, especially in the UK, gained awareness on HW's situation in Mauritania and understand better the importance of initiatives addressing their issues.

Source: Estimation realised by the mission based on the document review and the interviews conducted.

² See details of the estimation in Annexe 6.

3.5.2 Relevance

Relevance of the project with regard to the CEDAW, the Istanbul Programme for Action, the MDG's and the SDG's.

The article 2(b), (e), (f) and 5 of the CEDAW indicate that:

“States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;”

AND

“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.”

It can be asserted that the general and specific objectives of the project are well in line with the goals of the two CEDAW articles aforementioned, and are therefore relevant.

Besides, the paragraphs 88 and 89 of the Istanbul Programme for Action of 2011 claim:

“88. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are central to achieving better development outcomes, including all the internationally agreed development goals as well as the Millennium Development Goals. Least developed countries have made encouraging progress on some aspects of gender equality and empowerment of women, such as in primary education and women's representation in parliament. However, further efforts are needed to end gender inequalities in access to education, health care, water and sanitation, economic opportunities such as employment, and productive resources, as well as to end gender-based violence. Gender equality and empowerment of women are essential to make progress towards social and human development and eradication of poverty in least developed countries.

89. Policy measures on gender equality and the empowerment of women will be pursued in line with the following goals and targets:

- (a) Achieve equal access of women and girls to education, basic services, health care, economic opportunities, and decision-making at all levels;
- (b) Take steps to realize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health;
- (c) Accelerate efforts to promote women’s rights and gender equality, including women with disabilities.”

It can be asserted that the general and specific objectives are in line with the two Istanbul Programme for Action paragraphs aforementioned and are therefore relevant.

To summarize, the project’s objectives are in coherency with 4 major UN documents: the CEDAW, the Istanbul Programme for Action, the MDGs and the SDGs. Likewise, the project was relevant in its beneficiaries targeting: HW, Haratine CSOs, NGOs and Mauritanian CSOS, as well as the international community.

3.5.3 Effectiveness

The Analysis of the project’s effectiveness will be done in two steps. In the first step, the efficiency of a number of elements allowing assessment of the project’s efficiency will be analysed. In the second step, the analysis will deal with the global efficiency of the project. The first element allowing to assess the project’s efficiency is the achievement of its results and objectives.

Table 4: Average of expected results’ achievement rates

	Result 1	Result 2	Result 3	Result 4	Average
Achievement rate	72%	95.7%	67.5%	74%	77.3%

Source: The evaluator based of the project’s documents and the interviews

The average of the results’ achievement rates (77.3%) represents the achievement rate of the project’s objective. It is a high rate, showing the project has indeed sufficiently reached all its results as well as most of its indicators. A few constraints have impacted negatively on the achievement rate of the project’s results and objectives: the delay in launching the project, the delay in implementing the first activity (baseline study) which was supposed to last only 4 months but ended up lasting 2 years, and MRG’s and the EU’s staff turnover which delayed communications with partners on the ground. All in all, the achievement of the project’s results and objectives remains high, despite a few negative factors which delayed the implementation of the project.

At the awareness raising level

Several channels for awareness raising were used by the project to reach the targeted audiences and bring changes in attitudes:

- Awareness raising meetings in Nouakchott counties;
- Meetings with national thoughts leaders (national CSOs and policy decision-makers);

- Meetings with international thought leaders (international policy decision-makers, embassies and NGOs);
- Realisation of a national advocacy campaign with 3 target groups;
- Production of a documentary and a report, as well as online materials to be used nationally and internationally as awareness raising tools for policy decision-makers and international public (150 copies of the documentary, 100 copies of the report both in French and Arab);
- Creation and broadcast of debates or programmes to raise awareness on radio stations or local television (6 in total);
- Design and dissemination of awareness raising documents in paper format (booklets, banner, etc.);
- **Production** and distribution of awareness **headscarves** (totalling 100).

The above elements show well that an important effort was undertaken in terms of awareness raising. It was notably recognised by all the actors (partners, the HC and especially HW) met by the mission. These efforts to raise awareness allowed to reach a broad number of people targeted, both at national levels with the HW, CSOs and Mauritanian policy decision makers, and at international levels with embassies, NGOs and international policy decision-makers. For example, the mission did not encounter one person in the visited counties who had not heard about the questions of women and children rights promotion as part of the project. It should therefore be highlighted that the project showed a satisfactory level of efficiency in raising awareness among the targeted groups.

At the capacity building level

It should be stressed that this part used the results of the survey carried out with people who had attended training events.

The efficiency of the training events held can be analysed by considering the following three (3) aspects: the targeting of the people trained, trained people's mastery of the themes covered by the training and the proficiency of the trainers responsible for the trainings.

- Targeting of the people trained
A significant proportion of the trained people on behalf of CSOs and HW were individuals who already had basic knowledge on human rights and were already active in their communities, supporting their friends and neighbours to claim their rights. The training modules were well targeted to the participants' level of education and knowledge. The modules were composed of interactive and participative workshops, group work and debates, in order to trigger critical thinking among the participants and reinforce their capacities to promote women's leadership. Ultimately, the targeting of the people to be trained was effective to the extent that a significant number of people concerned with HW's situation and the promotion of human rights for the HC, were trained.
- Assessment of trained people's mastery of knowledge showed appreciation for the trainings.

It should be noted that the level of knowledge mastery was not measured by a test but simply by statements made by the beneficiaries. It is therefore to be considered with caution. During the investigation on the ground (individual and group interviews) with the trainings beneficiaries, all of them reported gaining a lot of knowledge from these trainings: the partners regarding project management, report production, networking and advocating; the CSOs regarding international tools for the promotion of human and women rights, advocating and networking; members of the HC regarding HW's discrimination, international tools for the promotion of human and women rights, national laws criminalising slavery, advocating and networking. Participants have also declared that they are able to use this acquired knowledge in the long term both at professional and social levels.

- **Assessment of the trainer's proficiency**
Throughout the investigation on the ground (individual and group interviews) with the trainings beneficiaries (partners, CSOs and members of the HC), all of them have declared that the training sessions and workshops were well facilitated, the trainers were highly qualified and this allowed good dynamics during activities, as well as a better understanding of the themes covered.

At the community actions level

The project supported partner CSOs to create an informal network within the 9 Nouakchott counties in order to organise awareness raising meetings with HW on a regular basis. During the mission, the evaluator met with these awareness raising groups in 5 counties (Arafat, Sabkha, Toujouine, Darnaïm ant Ryad). All in all, 6 groups were met: 5 of women and one of men (Arafat). Each group was composed of 10 to 15 persons, so about 72 people in total participated in the interviews. For the visited counties, the mission observed the following situations on the ground:

- **Arafat (SOS):** This community has strong views on discriminations endured by the HC, as well as on the obstacles preventing them to integrate the Mauritanian society at professional and social levels. The community asserted that even though some were not born slaves, the aftermath of slavery can still be felt within the HC, sapping thus opportunities for a better future. Despite the discrimination, all the community is proud to be Haratine. The level of education among them is quite heterogeneous, yet most of them have manual and low-paid jobs. In addition, most have never benefited from an Aid programme or external support. Still, the community tries to take part in decision making processes and has already voted in elections to obtain a better representation of the HC at political levels. All participants declared having gained knowledge about rights (notably about Civil-registration papers, marriage and divorce certificates, etc.). A 52 years old slave descendant woman declared that "*these meetings are a very good initiative which should continue to gain more impact in the HC' basis. They have given us an open space to freely express our issues and find common solutions which may benefit us all*". Since the end of the project, most

participants continue to informally raise awareness among other Haratine families, but all wish for more financial support. Furthermore, participants affirmed the meetings have answered most of their expectations but all hope for a financial support and more trainings to help them secure a job;

- **Sebkha (SOS):** All the women from this community consider themselves as women facing discrimination based on their ethnic identity, for they are still considered by society as slaves. They have started to ask themselves more and more questions about the rights and obligations of their status of HW. They know their rights but continue to face obstacle in fulfilling them: for example, they continue to feel discriminated by enrolment centre when requesting for Civil-Registration papers because authorities make this process quite long and cumbersome, especially for women like them with full time employment. They also notice that for other communities, the processes are shorter and easier. It is similar in schools, where there is a very high absenteeism rate among teachers in public schools with Haratine majorities, because they would rather be tutoring other students. They have declared that thanks to the awareness raising meetings, they understand their own rights better and have learned how to claim them, especially regarding their children's schooling. A 28 years old slave descendant woman stated, *"I have more confidence and I know how to claim my rights to local authorities as a Mauritanian citizen"*. Since the end of the meetings, they continue to raise awareness among their friends and neighbours and in their neighbourhood. They, nevertheless wish to obtain financial support;

- **Toujouine (AFCF):** These women show a lot of confidence and are always ready to give their opinions. They see themselves as women leaders, ready to campaign for their rights and to find their place in society. They believe that the awareness raising allowed them to shatter taboos, for they noticed many women from their neighbourhood did not have any papers (Civil-Registration, marriage and divorce certificates, etc.), preventing them from accessing basic services. They are aware of being discriminated against, because they have to undergo a very long and complicated process to obtain papers, but they understand the importance of possessing such papers. For those who benefited from the social work training, they consider that they have learned a lot about women and children rights, about slavery and how to support victims of violence. A 44 years old, a woman from slave descent declared, *"Thanks to the meetings and the trainings, I feel more valued, I am capable to argue in favour of my rights and I can represent AFCF in debates and with the media."* The awareness raising network was well received in the neighbourhood and there were no difficulties to convince HW to participate. Men also showed they responded well to the awareness raising messages but are more hesitant to enrol their children because they work fulltime and know the process is quite long. The women wish the project would be continued, in order to raise awareness among even more HW, but also wish for financial support, more trainings for capacity building (open to

graduated and illiterate people) and for small loans and support for income generating activities.

- **Ryad (AFCE)**: these women are proud to be Haratine but continue to feel discriminated against in society. They feel at the bottom of the social scale. They all do manual and low-paid jobs, and above all, feel isolated in their own community due to important gender inequalities. In this neighbourhood, other women are more reluctant to respond to awareness raising messages because their priority is to find a job and earn a salary. Among those who benefited from the social work trainings, some have recognised having gained knowledge about women rights and how to support victims from violence. They know how to defend their rights and obtain their papers. Since the end of the project, they continue to raise awareness among their friends and neighbours, but believe there should be awareness raising events in rural areas of the country (especially the river valley), where HW are numerous but even more isolated. They wish for this project to continue, so that more HW can become aware of their rights, but also for continued financial support, more capacity building trainings, legal framework workshops, as well as income generating activities.

- **Darnaïm (AFCE)**: the majority of the group is composed of young female students who are very aware of the discrimination and the racism towards the HC. They know HW are discriminated against at the market, in the distribution of Aid programmes, in schools, in the police and the administration. They also note the absence of opportunities allowing the advancement of their position within Mauritanian society. They are very committed young women who help other HW through this awareness raising network. They have continued to informally raise awareness among other HW after the end of the project, they have a Whatsapp group with other HW who have gone overseas and remain in contact. They try to emancipate other HW so that they can reach socio-economic independence. Some women from the neighbourhood were even more reluctant than men during the meetings but many were convinced in the end. A young 18 years old woman of slave decent said, *“These meetings allowed us to create a real network of women in the neighbourhood, I was able to meet other women who, like me, wish to express their opinions and be taken into account. We keep contact and it gives us motivation to continue our awareness raising work in the neighbourhood”*. Some of them have also participated in the national advocacy campaign and have declared it was a very useful experience which, besides the awareness raising, allowed them to learn a lot about rights, advocacy and networking. Finally, they also wish to see this project continue to raise awareness among more HW, but they also wish for financial support and more capacity building trainings, legal framework workshops, as well as income generating activities.

Overall, the community awareness raising actions proved to be very effective, for they reached a great number of Haratine women and men throughout all the different neighbourhoods. It seems there was a real enlightenment within the HC, who are now more aware of rights and of how and why to claim them. However, all the groups interviewed requested more awareness raising to ensure the continuity of the action, more capacity

building trainings so that all HW (especially at the basis of the community), may benefit from this knowledge, but also some financial support and income generating activities.

3.5.4 Efficiency

At the level of intervention sites choices

At the level of Nouakchott, the project decided to intervene in all of the nine (9) counties. Nonetheless, at the regional level, the project opted to include only certain actors in the trainings and workshops which took place in the capital. It should be noted that in Nouakchott, the project mobilized a great number of actors from the HC and the CSOs. It favourably raised awareness among many Haratine women and men from different neighbourhoods.

Yet, many women from the HC live in the country's rural areas (river valley, Adwabas) and need this type of project so that there can be a real impact within the HC in Mauritania. In these rural areas, the main activities are herding and agriculture. Many women do not own property and find themselves in perpetually precarious situations. Besides, compared to contemporary forms of slavery which can be found in urban areas, slavery remains more traditional in these remote areas, and is therefore even more difficult to escape from it. To summarize, this project succeeded in intervening in all the counties of the capital but could have also targeted certain rural areas where HW really need awareness raising events, trainings and workshops.

At the level of the achievements' quality

- Trainings achieved

As demonstrated by the results of the investigation carried out among partners, CSOs and the HC, the trainings undertaken during the project were presented by competent trainers, which enabled to ensure the quality of the trainings.

- Awareness raising:

The two partners succeeded in implementing a good awareness raising network, which allowed the numerous Haratine women and men aware of their rights. The only weak point that stands out from the investigation is the lack of transportation costs covered for these events (1000 MRO are not enough for the trips).

- Study Achieved:

The study carried out produced qualitative materials which were used both at national and international levels.

At the level of the respecting the execution schedule

Reading the reports shows that some activities were implemented with a delay. This led to discrepancies between established execution schedules and the actual realisation of some activities. To conclude, it can be said that the project was not really efficient in respecting the execution schedule.

Assessment of the global efficiency

To sum up:

- The project focused on the 9 counties of the capital and not on the regions of the river valley where the HC face the worst discrimination;
- The quality of achievements (trainings, awareness-raising and study) is good;
- Finally, many activities were executed with some delays compared to what was originally planned.

In the view of this summary, the mission considers the project's overall efficiency to be sufficient.

3.5.5 Catalytic role and impact

In general, the impacts of a project are visible only a few years after its implementation. But, a certain number of "immediate impacts" can be grasped by the end of the project, or even during its implementation.

Two important groups were targeted by the capacity building actions brought by the project: the communities and the CSOs and partners. The impacts produced on this two target groups should therefore be analysed. In the community target group, two case studies are included to show the impact of the project. These case studies were collected during the ground mission and the name of the people interviewed are not disclosed for security reasons.

Catalytic role and impact at the communities' level

As a reminder, the communities benefited from three main actions: the awareness-raising, the training of certain members and participation information and experience sharing workshops, and national advocacy.

Impact of awareness-raising

The question of changes in behaviour following on from the awareness-raising was mentioned during the group interviews with the communities and during the individual interviews with the people who benefited from the trainings. The triangulation of these two approaches allowed some conclusions to be drawn on the impact of awareness raising. Thus, it became clear that the behaviour change was quite high in the counties in terms of human and women rights promotion and the claim of such rights. There is a willingness and a realization within the HC, not only among HW, but also among men. The majority of Haratines who benefited from the trainings learned to mobilize against the unfavourable situation of the HC within the Mauritanian society, and bring about changes. In some of the visited neighbourhoods, such as Sebka, Toujouine and Darnaïm, HW seem to be extremely aware of their condition and do all they can to trigger long-lasting social change for the HC. All these women are working hard and are highly motivated to take part into this type of project, to ensure a better visibility of HW within society. In the aforementioned neighbourhoods, as well as in the Arafat and Ryad's ones, HW have continued to informally raise awareness among Haratine families, despite the end of the project. There is therefore a true strengthening of the HC's movement to defend its rights and position within the Mauritanian society.

Case study no.1: a teacher from the Toujouine network
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This Haratine women from the Toujouine county studied for many years and was always top of the
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class. She passed her baccalaureate several times to ensure she would get the best grades she could. She is a very ambitious woman, full of will, who passed the exam to become a teacher in 2011, and since then, works as a teacher in a public primary schools of Nouakshott. She is also mother to 4 children. During her career in public education, she observed the discrimination affecting Haratine children, for most of them do not own Civil-Registration papers. These children were expelled from schools and deprived of an education, a fundamental right. This motivated her to take part in a positive and lasting change for these children. She became a guarantor for these children, allowing them to come to school and follow classes. Some are now in their final years and will take the baccalaureat exam. She also convinced their parents to obtain Civil-Registration papers for the children. She joined AFCF in 2014, because her beliefs were closed to the organisation's ones and she wanted to continue to promote and defend women and children rights. The awareness-raising network of the project enabled her to pursue her individual initiative to support and raise awareness among a broad number of women. This project also allowed her to gain more knowledge about legal texts and leadership. Indeed, her goal is to become a true focal point for Haratine children and women in her neighbourhood, while offering them financial support. In order to achieve this ambition, she recently created a feminine cooperative in her neighbourhood, with the help of 61 other HW. This cooperative allows every month for 2 different HW to work and earn a monthly wage. This woman believes that educating future generation, alongside real community efforts, is the key to eventually enhance the position of the HC within the society. And, for her, a project such as this one, enables the mobilization of communities and moves towards sustainable progress.

The impact of the awareness raising is therefore very tangible at the community level, which did not have any true platform to engage dialogue about their problems and share opinions.

Impact of the trainings and workshops

The project trained some members of the community on diverse themes such as human, women and children rights, international tools to promote them, gender promotion, laws criminalizing slavery, leadership building, support for violence and slavery victims and their follow-up care. These different trainings have helped reinforce and build the technical capacities of the communities, which now feel they truly master these themes. The acquisition and the mastery of the knowledge learned in the trainings constitute a first level of impact. Furthermore, most beneficiaries of the trainings have achieved concrete application of their knowledge, especially in their work. The impact of the trainings is therefore high among the beneficiaries.

Case study no.2: a social worker from the Toujouine network

This Haratine Woman has a master in communication from Nouakchott Institute of Superior Studies and Islamic Research. As an HW, she endured herself the discrimination faced by the HC, more particularly in school where her classmates denigrated her. She joined the AFCF network by the end of 2010, after she finished her studies, because she admired the work carried out by the organisation, especially regarding the defence of women, children and vulnerable communities' rights. She took part in numerous human rights workshops. For a year now, she has been involved in the AFCF's project on family disputes and is a social worker for the AFCF project entitled "*Underage Servant Girls*".

She participated in all the trainings for this project and says she gained a lot from the social work trainings. She learned how to support victims of violence who come to the AFCF centre and how to help them. During the trainings she got an opportunity to share her experience with other women and to increase her knowledge. She was very satisfied by the trainers, who were all experts. This training therefore allowed her to strengthen her knowledge and capacities, and to become director of the AFCF centre in Toujouine. She also participated in the awareness-raising meetings and network and talked to the media on many occasion to denounce the situation in which HW live, and to promote gender equality. She strongly believes in the impact of the project on the HC because she witnessed first-hand the HC's mobilization to improve its own situation and it was a direct consequence of the project. She hopes for a form of continuation of the project to carry on defending HW's and the HC's rights.

A partial conclusion about the impacts of the awareness-raising efforts and the trainings, is to say that the impact of the awareness-raising efforts is very high and tangible in the different counties. As for the trainings, their impact is also globally high.

Catalytic Role and impact the CSOs and Partners' level

Four (4) CSO benefited from trainings covering various themes such as gender discrimination, gender, minorities as well as human and women's rights, how to integrate gender in work, how to encourage women's participation, leadership and advocacy, how to use international tools for the promotion of human rights. Additionally, the two partners AFCF and SOS, benefited from a capacity building training focused in project management, financial management, advocacy, networking, report production and resource mobilization.

The knowledge acquired during the trainings was directly put to practical application when implementing the project's activities such as the national advocacy campaign, the community awareness raising, the information sharing mechanism for the HC and the launch of the report and documentary. In conclusion, the impact of the trainings on CSOs and partners is high.

At the national level

No concrete measure was carried out by the government, despite the different activities undertaken which aimed to raise awareness within the administration and among policy decision-makers. It is true that in the current socio-political context of the country remains unstable and the government tends to avoid confrontation regarding Haratine rights. It is therefore quite difficult to assess the impact of the project at this level. Admittedly, the government did contribute to denounce the HC's situation as well as its lack of rights and equality within the society. These efforts, along with other projects, could maybe trigger more concrete changes at the Mauritanian governmental level in the future.

All in all, the project's impacts are high in all the different levels and contribute to its sustainability.

3.5.6 Sustainability

The analysis of the sustainability will be done in two parts. In the first part, the sustainability of the obtained results will be discussed, and in the second part the positive and negative factors influencing the sustainability of the project's achievements, benefits and results, will be assessed.

Sustainability of the project's results

The capacity building trainings of partners concerning project management, financial management, advocacy, networking, report production and resources mobilization, generated good results and impacts from which partners may benefit in the long term. Incidentally, the staff interviews showed that the two organisations have a good mastery of the gained knowledge.

At the community level, the trainings and the awareness-raising efforts are currently valued by the CSOs and partners and it is very much likely that the benefits will live on, for the received trainings were in line with the project intervention methods, and, in addition, partners are present on the grounds, allowing the continuity of the communities' mobilization.

Factors favourable to sustainability

From the mission's point of view, a certain number of favourable factors may contribute to the sustainability of the project's results, such as:

- **Strategic characteristic of the HW's rights promotion:** the problem of HW's situation is linked to broader issues in the Mauritanian society, followed by all the international community. The question of HW fits therefore into the international community's concerns and, hence, some international organisation will continue to appeal to the MG on this question.
- **Project's strategy:** the project targeted pertinently two levels or groups: the CSOs and the local communities. Not only did this strategy triggered a sort of convergence of the different levels, but it also gave more opportunities for a level to compensate, even though only partially, for the other's weaknesses.

Factors unfavourable to sustainability

The mission identified some unfavourable factors impacting, or could impact, the project's results sustainability.

- **The socio-political instability;**
- **The low functionality of the administration and institutions;**
- **The mass of trained people:** the number of trained people, at CSOs or partners or community levels, is not sufficient to reverse the current situation. The trainings receive during the project can only be, in any case, a first step is the capacity building process and calls for a deepening and broadening of the process in real training strategy framework.

PERFORMANCES' CONSTRAINTS

This part deals with analysing the elements which constitute negative factors impacting the project's success.

The weak co-financing mobilization

The institutions which committed to co-financing the project were not able to honour their commitments. Also, the project was deprived of a good part of its initial budget. This compromised the good execution of some activities. The co-financing first identified was no longer available at the beginning of the project and resulted in problems emerging all along the project.

The delays in execution

In the Mauritanian context, granting only three (3) years, to a project acting in awareness raising and trainings in order to trigger long-lasting social changes, is not sufficient. Indeed, in such a context, it necessarily takes longer for CSOs to capitalize on and gain value from training they receive. Besides, at the community level, behaviour changes require time and practice.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

After reviewing the project “*Supporting Mauritanian CSOs to mainstream gender into their work and advocate for the implementation of gender rights for Haratine women*”, identifying its achievements and shortcomings on various levels, analysing the project implementation and outcomes and highlighting its constraints, to conclude this final evaluation, the following conclusions and recommendations will be made along with outlining lessons that were learnt.

4.1 Conclusions

On a global level, the implementation of the project was sufficiently good. This project was relevant in the context of the overall policies and global strategies outlined in CEDAW, the Istanbul Programme for Action, the MDG’s and the SDG’s.

Other positive points of this project include:

- The development of many important resources in the field of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- The high quality of the training sessions that were carried out;
- The impact of the awareness-raising about the HC;
- The creation of sustainable long-term community networking structures;

In addition to these positive points, there were some shortcomings that can be identified:

- A delay in the implementation of activities;
- Weak engagement on behalf of the Mauritanian government and foreign embassies;
- Turnover of MRG and EU staff which led to a lack of communication and collaboration between different organisation.

It must be emphasized that despite these shortcomings, the project played a primary role in promoting the rights of HW and feminine leadership.

Despite these constraints, the project produced good results and had a positive impact within the HC.

4.2 Lesson learnt

The lessons learnt during the implementation of the “*Supporting Mauritanian CSOs to mainstream gender into their work and advocate for the implementation of gender rights for Haratine women*”, which could be used in other phases of the project or similar projects are as follows:

- 1) Communication and collaboration between organisations is an essential part successful project planning and implementation. This ensures a good work dynamic for carrying out activities and achieving expected results;
- 2) The project demonstrated that there is a need to strengthen basic core capacities of the HC, particularly in the valley regions and in the Adwabas. It is important to include this section of the HC, as they are highly discriminated against within Mauritanian society and could really benefit from this type of project.

- 3) As long as we do not provide communities with financial support, training or income generating activities, there is a lower chance of real behaviour change even if beneficiaries do increasingly understand the necessity of asserting their rights.

4.3 Recommendations

After this evaluation taking place, based on observations on the field, and taking into consideration the constraints of the project and the lessons learnt, the following recommendations can be made;

Recommendation to the EU

- 4) It is recommended that communication with NGO's and partners is increased in general but also specifically when communicating delays that affect the project (signing of contracts etc.).

Recommendations to the process of designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the project.

- 5) Encourage future project teams to put in place straightforward and effective mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating projects by developing a manual and compiling a database which will lead to better management and a more effectively carried out project with better capitalization of actions and results.
- 6) The Project has been carried out sufficiently well and the target groups have been rightly chosen. However, in order to maximise the potential of partners and the impact of the project on the target beneficiaries, the inclusion of partners in designing and planning the project's activities would be beneficial in the long term, especially in the implementation of the project so that the current needs of the target group are prioritized.

Recommended actions to support and strengthen the initial benefits of the project.

- 7) The advocacy campaign has been successful, however, project participants could use other ways to obtain long term commitment to the project on behalf of the Mauritanian government;
- 8) Due to the satisfactory results and impacts of the project, it is advised that a follow-up project should be implemented. This second phase should focus on raising awareness, carrying out training sessions in other regions of the country, helping communities to obtain necessary official documents, offering financial support, training session or AGR for behaviour change that will have a positive impact on the HC.

Recommendations for directions to take in the future.

- 9) To expand the area of intervention to other regions of the country and to work in the Adwabas, with supporting networks, awareness raising, and training sessions tailored to the needs of the HC in these rural regions.
- 10) The project has produced very relevant and useful materials (on paper and online). In order for these to be better distributed, it would be useful for a manager of regional communications to be hired and work for the project.
- 11) In order to continue raising awareness of the HC, a newsletter should be created and managed by a group of beneficiaries (both men and women), and creating groups on social networks, so that they can continue to discuss problems and needs while spreading the message to a wider audience.

5. ANNEXES

(Please see original report in French)