

MRG-SIDA Capacity Building Programme and MRG's Global Programme 2012-18

February 2020



“MRG's flexible and practical support was instrumental in our success”¹

¹ Ponniah Logeswary, of Sri Lankan rural land rights movement, HDO, shown adding to a timeline of events in Sri Lanka. See [Loges.](#))

A. Executive Summary

Purpose and result of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation² is to review and assess the work between 2012-18 of its target audience - MRG and Sida³ and capacity-building Partner organisations, community leaders, influencers and other allies'. The work is evaluated against relevance, Impact and sustainability, with examples throughout the report, and a short summary at the end. It is found to have been consistently sound with overall strongly positive impact across questionnaire, KI research and primary source data.

Scope and context of the evaluation

This evaluation was unusual. The scope was enormous, covering 7 years, 60 countries, the entirety of MRG capacity building -most of its work. The evaluation covered far more than a 'programme'⁴ and could not rely on any single document against which to evaluate. 178 questionnaires were returned (132 Trainees; 46 Partners) from 1800+ sent to 60 countries⁵. Visits were made to 4 countries (Tunisia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Macedonia), the evaluation drew on data from the team's [2018 evaluation](#) on Irish Aid funding in E and C. Africa, and baseline data from the team leader's worldwide [2013 MRG capacity building evaluation](#).

MRG's intricate, quantified targets and detailed reports allow clarity (eg 34 of 38 targets achieved/exceeded for 2013-2020⁶ and 4 partly met). Programme visits brought colour to the statistical results, e.g. the Programme and Results Matrix 2013-2016 gives ambitious targets for the legal challenges of both the Enderois and Ogiek peoples; the 2018 report shows that activists at the highest levels were invigorated and enthused by the positive judgments in African legal institutions⁷.

Summary of questionnaire and Key Informant findings

When asked 'What worked well?' Trainees and Partners gave disparate examples on content, advocacy and opportunities. Multiple Trainees said that the program had strengthened their careers and initiatives, and 'gave voice to the voiceless' especially youth and women. Trainees wanted greater funding; many of their other qualitative responses were resource-related. Some of these may be eventually tackled by MRG's growth; others by ongoing encouragement

² Terms of Reference

³ The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (**Swedish**: Styrelsen för Internationellt Utvecklingssamarbete, **Sida**) is a government agency of the **Swedish** Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

⁴ 'programme' is nonetheless used throughout the report, for want of a better summary term.

⁵An estimated 25% were bounced back from expired email addresses etc.

⁶ Totals from the two 4-year reports to SIDA.

to use MRG support as a trigger⁸ with Trainees themselves setting up Facebook groups⁹ etc.; many more need good expectation-management. Respondents asked MRG to offer more hours of training more regularly, improve its training material and Trainees' advocacy skills, and provide localised (country or province-specific) minority-based reading¹⁰, session material and 'more pragmatic' programmes. In sustainability indicators, they want MRG to maintain their accounts, for post-training networking and better quality communication from MRG and peers. All of this is encouraging; the programme is valuable, and Trainees want more. The report title is indicative; MRG is lauded for 'flexible and practical support' by Ponniah Logeswary of the Sri Lankan Human Development Organisation (HDO) which welcomed support with navigating EU funding, access to arenas and more (see [Text Box](#))

When asked 'What worked badly?' less than 3% of Trainees and Partners had an answer, with nearly all of them about the lack of follow-up, which some at MRG see as caused by a lack of resources¹¹, or IT-related issues about the web platform. MRG is already dealing with a minor efficiency matter (but significant to Trainees) of providing due certificates. Overall, common 'final messages for MRG?' were 'Thanks', 'Keep on going', and 'incredible experience'.

Partner responses (46; 14 female, 30 male, 2 other) were very positive. Typical was Danseurs du Sahel's Ahmed Guerfel's, "Thanks for your support; you've been the best supporters of activists in Tunisia". Average programme ratings were 86% for 'direct, positive impact'; 82% 'responds to beneficiary needs'; 82% 'has sustainable outcomes'. MRG ratings were even higher: 94% 'a positive force'; 91% 'open to criticism; 87% 'expert' and 81% 'able to help... secure funding'. The 'modal¹²' answer was 'Absolutely. 96%-100%'. Exceptions (e.g. Sustainability, whose mode was equally 'Strongly 80-96%' and 'Mostly 60-79%') support the evaluation's case (in Section B's conclusions) that the results are meaningful and legitimate. Extensive results are reported in pie-chart form in Appendix 4. Partners learned about advocacy, research, and consultation, gained deeper theoretical understanding of capacity building. They called the MRG programme reliable – 'honored all promises', professional. and useful in helping tackle discrimination. MRG training was almost universally seen as positive. Improvements suggested: were **fundraising accompaniment**, building on MRG's examples with AIMPO, UCRT and WOPU¹³ in E Africa, until Partners can successfully bid independently¹⁴; and **communication-networking-follow-up**,

⁸ Agnes Kabaujuni, Head of MRG Africa, says 'our interventions... should be triggering people to act, to link with others, to get people to fundraise'. An excellent example since 2016 is ex-Trainee Sajjad Hassan's South Asia Collective's initiative <https://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/4151/1/e-Book-SA-SoM-Report-2016-291116.pdf>

⁹An MRG newsletter has also been suggested. This would keep MRG in Trainees' inboxes but would only be significantly useful if it was read. If time and resources are spent, these might be for a 'quick and dirty' trial publication, with a genuine attempt to find out how many people actually read what; alternatively a web-based trial could give actual results of views, and the number of seconds spent reading the publication.

¹⁰Faith Tushabe, AICM Executive Director opines that this maybe 'unrealistic' with time and translation costs. This list is offered as a summary of respondent views, not as evaluation recommendations

¹¹ Carl Söderbergh says 'Trainees have MRG accounts which are closed after the training simply because of lack of resources... the tutor... shifts to other... groups of people... We have 1200-strong Trainee groups with whom we would love to maintain contact. But we are still seeking funding to do this... it costs to maintain contact and sites'

¹²OECD/DAC = 'value of the variate... possessed by the greatest number of members of the (data) population'

¹³ MRG Partners African Indigenous and Minority Peoples Organization, Women's **Organisation for Promoting Unity**
Union des Coopératives de la Région de Tori and

¹⁴ AIMPO has achieved this; UCRT leads a consortium, WOPU is considered to be on the way to success. MRG now informs Partners of funding opportunities through MRG Facebook, a good small step in offering fundraising support.

again, a facilitation, resource, and expectation-management issue. Again, these 'more of the same' answers are encouraging; refresher trainings and more tailor-made, collaborative, localised projects and intensive capacity building. MRG is stretching to achieve this; e.g. the MRG Sida 2018 Work Plan aims to exponentially reach more people with training, advocacy and small grants. The 2018 target was to train 40 additional journalists, but for 2020 was 200 additional. All targets from 2018 to 2020 in every category are at least doubled. A specific technical issue was the difficulty (e.g. for elderly and visually impaired activists) of registering and using the online course via the **web platform**. It was seen as complicated, with insufficient administrative support and frequent changing of MRG staff.

Main findings

The full list of recommendations can be found on page [41](#) and in the visit country [sections](#). The TORs' strategic evaluation purpose is to 'inform the strategic review... setting strategic goals...request strategic support on priorities, shared objectives, methodology, intervention and ways of working'. From 2012-18 MRG has shown the ability to shift focus to emerging global actual needs and opportunities.¹⁵ The TORs for this research focused on 2012-18 at two levels (i) capacity building, addressed mainly in Section B and (ii) all of MRG's operations, the strategic level for which the evaluation was accelerated to provide 'big themes' input for the MRG/MRGI¹⁶ Strategic Planning, in which staff step back from the normal 'spend[ing] our time feeding donor needs'.¹⁷ At this level, visit and questionnaire research encourages MRG to further reflect on four high-level, inter-related themes (i) MRG growth/global reach/optimal scale, staff, budget etc) (ii) visibility, particularly social media (iii) taking opportunities around 'new minorities', with and without the use of intersectionality (iv) the role of evaluations. The main recommendations for these are:

(i) Partners, Trainees and staff believe MRG could usefully grow. 'I think they maybe don't have enough funds for us'¹⁸ Making it grow is not so simple. And it is for MRG to decide how it grows; extended Partner work, more Trainees, more income, more offices, more employment stability? Trying to 'stand still' may be the riskiest option; the margins for mid-sized organizations are small, and one staff member believed that 'the Arab Spring saved us'. Recent progress has been made on diversifying statutory funding¹⁹; exceeding fundraising targets, using the '50th birthday' to re-engage with donors and seek support from around 12 potential new trusts, and on mitigation strategies for Brexit permutations²⁰. The best chance of continued

¹⁵e.g. MRG's objectives in Strategy 2013 – 2016 and Proposal to Sida were '1. Countering discrimination against minorities and IPs and ensuring they benefit equitably from development 2. Protecting the existence of communities under threat and... persecuted 3. Strengthening.. voices of minorities and IPs'. The recent increased challenges of Religious Persecution, Migration and the Environment were reflected in Strategy 2017 – 2020's objectives of '1. Countering religious and ethnic persecution, a root cause of forced migration and 2. Promoting the inclusion of minorities and indigenous peoples in sustainable development and society'

¹⁶ Elements of this evaluation will be differentially relevant to MRG and MRGI. In terms of the Strategic Planning process, its likely readers will usually be better equipped to judge these intricacies than the evaluators, so 'MRG' is used - as the smaller entity to whom all of it applies - as a cover-all, with the understanding that some issues will also apply to the larger MRGI.

¹⁷ This was a constant theme of interviews with MRG staff

¹⁸Green South KII

¹⁹ including a re-connection with DFID after a long absence, and a new programme with NORAD.

²⁰ including targeting of the EU's European Institute of Democracy (AMIF) which may continue to be applicable; successful use of the Budapest office for SE Asia funding; initial steps in the opening of a Brussels office.

growth is for strategic planning to set an optimal size on the above criteria, optimal % of unrestricted income, a timescale and strategy including organisational messaging on direction and priorities, and an investment strategy on 'fundraising' and communications, including staffing. This issue is not new; 2013 findings were "MRG could usefully handle much bigger budgets [and] spend it on fewer countries. The need for its work remains critical and overwhelming, the issues are even more topical and MRG... [is] punching above its weight in terms of reputation... MRG is working within an intensely competitive field, and facing... competition from... consultancy companies... as well as mushrooming NGOs²¹'. Certainly, competition for funding remains intense and the evaluator can point to organisations with shorter track records who quickly access and use greater funding levels than MRG has access to at 50. Growth may follow from filling immediate need or demand, and MRG's sustainability over 50 years is to be valued. But campaigning organisations' (Avaaz, 360) outstanding, ongoing growth shows that investment in fundraising and communications can bring rapid results and attention to critical rights issues.. Insider-outsider and majority-minority issues are now even more globally topical and publicly contested. In visit countries, Partners could usefully have been funded at higher levels, and possibly been longer and continuous²². MRG knows the value of unrestricted funds; 'The main problem is that we rely for our funding on projects... in my 5 years, my work has been implementing, running against time to satisfy donors²³'. One staff member feels 'hamstrung by an exclusive link to projects'; e.g. the Tunisia project has achieved much in 18 months, but may lack funding after another 18 months. MRG could boldly set a timescale to double its size. Current pushes for greater unrestricted funds and communications-reach are to be welcomed and accelerated. There are real decisions about how far MRG is an advisory think-tank serving INGOs/UN –the CEO comments 'expert reports for experts is not the way the 21st Century works... [experts] will respond first to the crowds clamoring outside the doors, and we do not reach those people' - and how far to campaign on unfashionable issues and 'surf' hot topics. Growth is not easy, nor to be advised for all NGOs at all times. But strategic planning and a settled CEO is a good time to plan to reach optimal levels.

(ii) MRG could usefully be more visible; this was a constant theme of KIs (Findings; 'MRG has no visibility²⁴'), including visibility in social media, the theme MRG has taken for its, laudably leaner²⁵, 50th birthday briefing for 'Peoples Under Threat'. Initial comment is made on how MRG is developing a Social Media strategy, with a Digital Communications Officer, its website, in-house discussion, staffing, and investment in Facebook and Instagram. The pattern for investment results is clearest with general MRG 'reach'. Without investment, Quarter 1 of 2019 received a 'reach' of 95,000 (95K), Shares of 200 and an Audience Growth Rate (AGR) of 0.2%. An investment of 1600 GBP was made in social media, after which the equivalent figures were 650K (an increase of 666%), 512 (253%) and 9% (4010% rise) in AGR. For 'Peoples Under

²¹ An example is given under the Social Media Findings; 'Forest Peoples' budget exceeds that of MRG, despite it being under half MRG's age

²² Although there would of course be competition for their use towards 'matched funds' and reserves

²³ Silvia Quattrini, MRG

²⁴ Dorra of Partner NGO 'Chouf' in Tunisia

²⁵ This was previously a report of several hundred pages; now a summary of around 10 pages is provided, along with a regular Press Release.

Threat' alone, investing 530 GBP coincided with²⁶192k people reached and 53k engagements; only 22.5% by women and 77.5% by men, which deserves further analysis.

For technological innovation elements of creating visibility, the findings show staff willingness both to train and be trained²⁷, and the start of considering strategy and structure. If MRG is to increase its 'reach', internal collaboration between departments will be key, as will investment, staffing and flexible working. The evaluation recommends increased engagement with popular (and even populist) themes in the language that most people use – the social [media](#) section shows how this is not now the case - and more creative quality material e.g. cartoons, podcasts, quizzes, gifs, clips, 'Top 10s'. 'Advising UN... doesn't reach many people, politically, it needs to [reach them] now²⁸' MRG can build a social media strategy on partnership-based activity and research, to amplify Partner voices. Traditional media can be enhanced by effective use of social media. Radio is still a relevant, popular medium in most of Africa, and television journalism recently brought MRG Ik Partners in Uganda to the attention of national decision makers. Africa must also be visible on social media, both in 'wave-riding' issues such as Maasai or Batwa, but also awareness-raising issues of the Benet, Ik, Ogiek etc. MRG must use journalist briefings, and the new CEO 'Joshua going out and speaking about different topics; [he is] an excellent speaker²⁹ -.

Part of the 'visibility' call is constant interviewee demand – in 2013 and 2019 - for in-country offices. At MRG's current scale this is unrealistic, but some MRG staff advocate Asia and Latin America offices, with growth through investment in fundraising and communications. Other options may include in-country representatives hosted by a Partner organization. These are for strategic planning process to address, and then for case-by-case consideration, not an evaluation recommendation. But findings suggest that MRG has work to do in expectation management -presenting itself realistically to trainers and Partners as a mid-scale organisation and in creating and communicating strategic messages on any growth rationale and ambition.

(iii) The evaluation concludes that MRG should not try to do what "the UN has failed to agree (namely) a definition of what constitutes a minority³⁰ MRG knows very well why 'minority rights' cannot be subsumed into 'human rights' or 'anti-discrimination³¹. It should keep bringing its expertise to the table, convincing others that identity matters. MRG can keep re-formulating its terminology; it will continue to "secure rights for ethnic, national, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples worldwide", including less fashionable causes. 'Minorities of concern to MRG [will still be] disadvantaged ethnic, national, religious, linguistic or cultural groups,,, fewer in number... and who may wish to maintain and develop their identity... also... indigenous peoples³². Its understanding of 'minority' will still flow from power analysis, self-

²⁶ It is impossible to guarantee the level of causal effect, but a proportional relationship seems clear.

²⁷ for example, Marco Cadenas has recently offered to provide social media training to staff

²⁸ Cecile Clerc, MRG

²⁹ MRG staff member

³⁰ Antonija Petričušić The Rights of Minorities in International Law, p.3 https://bib.irb.hr/datoteka/421246.CIRR_Petricusic_MR_IL.pdf

³¹ MRG's Neil Clarke told of the frustration of Afro-Swedes; the same timescale had provoked two deaths at the hands of fascists and 5,000 from suicide, but the only money available was for a narrow definition of 'anti-discrimination'

³² https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MRG_Strategy2013_ONLINE.pdf p.4

definition and wish for affiliation. Caution in treating 'hot minority topics' and 'trending issues' with large constituencies or interest – e.g. environment/climate change linked to land rights³³, migrants including so-called 'boat people', People Living With Disability (PLWD), caste, LGBT+³⁴, and (possibly less fashionable) stateless people, albinos³⁵, older people³⁶ and street children - may result in missed opportunities, income and exposure. On climate change 'there is a clear message... Everyone's talking about it... lots of our communities are affected... we should be engaged'³⁷, using creative media to deliver simple, powerful messages about stewardship and culture-shift. Carl Söderbergh, MRG Director of Policy and Communications says 'in 20 years, the minority rights field will look different... across all sorts of different groups'. Examples are burgeoning Black Lives Matter, Standing Rock alliances, younger generations indifferent to national, sexual, political or religious boundaries. Historic minority definitions are unlikely to survive. MRG should not jump rashly into sectors where it does not have expertise, nor be meekly 'donor-driven'. But it should be on-board with global changes, and accelerating with them. Staff appear ready. The Tunisia visit showed how partnership with DAMJ provided acquired expertise to work successfully on 'traditional minorities'³⁸ and also within and alongside them on that country's currently most critically discriminated³⁹ minority of LGBT+. This successful model also showed that programmatic realities do not always allow an entirely theoretical basis; even one with such currency and potential as intersectionality⁴⁰. Discriminated individuals should not need to be also from a linguistic, racial, cultural or national minority; and turning away an LGBT+ male Maliki Sunni Arab from an 'ADC'⁴¹ would itself be a form of exclusion and discrimination. In some contexts, e.g. with LGBT+ gitanos or Afro Cubanos, an intersectional approach will be appropriate; in others MRG needs to be clear on how to handle what might be experienced as a restriction.

It is not whole-scale, public change or abandonment of overlooked-groups which is called for, but organizational, strategic (SWOC⁴²) reflection and appropriately inspiring messaging to staff to be bold in meeting needs and taking opportunities. After that, business should be conducted in the usual way; case-by-case decisions made based on needs, competence and opportunity, and decisions through MRG's management and governance structures.

(iv) The report process produced learning on evaluations from the evaluation team's direct, lived experience; the positive aspects raised the quality of findings and the negative provided

³³MRG has an impressive track record and current business on land rights e.g. on Ogiek and Batwa, in Kenya and Cameroon, and particularly at the Africa Commission

³⁴This report will use LGBT+ to include all gender and sexual minorities (GSM). The full list is in flux <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-most-current-full-length-acronym-for-LGBT>

³⁵ another interesting example, as Albinos are only perceived to be racially different, which in some places such as Tanzania may lead to murder for 'witchcraft' as well as discrimination and isolation.

³⁶ As Deputy Director Claire Thomas says 'age does not generate the same levels of identification', but this may also change

³⁷ Cecile Clerc, Director of Development and Partnership

³⁸For MRG, ethnic, religious, linguistic, indigenous people (IP)

³⁹According, overwhelmingly, to KIs who were from other minority groups

⁴⁰First conceptualized as 'a critique of the way relatively powerful white feminists were deemed to have dominated the movement without due consideration to issues of racial identity and discrimination. <https://www.newstatesman.com/lifestyle/2014/04/kimberl-crenshaw-intersectionality-i-wanted-come-everyday-metaphor-anyone-could> The 2013-2016 Strategic Plan used the term 'Multiple Discrimination'

⁴¹Anti-Discrimination Centres, providing safe spaces and support across Tunisia for all minorities, but primarily Black and LGBTs.

⁴²Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints'; 'Threats' is a more common usage in SWOT

obstructions. This evaluation was flexibly and better resourced financially⁴³. It was atypical; selection of visit countries came late, activities had ceased in two of the four countries, and so staff were not ready to host an evaluation. It was centrally supported by extensive, appreciated effort from MRG. TORs discussions between Sida and MRG led to 'The evaluation... beginning 2-3 months later than planned, with almost identical finishing dates'⁴⁴, and thus compression of work. MRG staff may, in future evaluations, usefully provide a first draft skeleton schedule for KII in visit countries. A utilitarian approach is recommended for the time-cost of evaluations. Despite the challenges, evaluators are confident this evaluation presents a fair view, and can safeguard the accuracy of the results from a large sample size. Responses very clearly show pronounced satisfaction from Partners and Trainees, and thirst for more-of-the-same MRG capacity building intervention.

⁴³, A marked improvement from previous MRG evaluations conducted by members of the evaluation team.

⁴⁴ Evaluation contract

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C. Evaluation Team

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<https://www.linkedin.com/in/david-hampson/shows> his independent work for MRG over 25 years eg Capacity Building Evaluation <https://minorityrights.org/evaluations/global-advocacy-programme-evaluation/>: Programme: <https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Capacity-Building-for-Minority-and-Indigenous-Activists-in-Eastern-Africa-Final-Evaluation-Report-2018.pdf> and Batwa ('Pygmies') Gender https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Evaluation_Gender-Based-Discrimination.pdf. He served at senior/consultant levels for DFID, UNFAO, IFRC, Oxfam, SAVE, Christian Aid, VSO etc. on humanitarian development in 60+ countries.

Ava Batay-an was Editor and Advisor. Seen at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ava-batay-an-3046606/> she is an IP and grass-roots environmental professional, e.g. <https://www.gdrc.org/uem/disasters/disenvi/erm-meha.pdf> http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/eserv/UQ:108321/n02_Byers_Batay-FINAL.pdf. She has worked with MRG on: <https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Capacity-Building-for-Minority-and-Indigenous-Activists-in-Eastern-Africa-Final-Evaluation-Report-2018.pdf> and at senior/consultant levels with CARE, CRS, DFID and VSO

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Specialist working on anti-violence at the 'Crisis Centre for Man; Serbia'. He has long experience of qualitative research including with EU INTERREG III C CADSES⁴⁵ and IFRC's 'Red Cross Guidelines on Working with Vulnerable Roma..' [https://www.linkedin.com/in/zoran-ostojic-4031118/detail/treasury/position:708449667/?entityUrn=urn%3Ali%3Afs_treasuryMedia%3A\(ACoAAAFwpgMBN60kYmBiOCvdIHypU962kbdPt_c%2C50798587\)§ion=position%3A708449667&treasuryCount=1](https://www.linkedin.com/in/zoran-ostojic-4031118/detail/treasury/position:708449667/?entityUrn=urn%3Ali%3Afs_treasuryMedia%3A(ACoAAAFwpgMBN60kYmBiOCvdIHypU962kbdPt_c%2C50798587)§ion=position%3A708449667&treasuryCount=1)

D. Introduction: MRG/SIDA, Global Context, Evaluation Purpose, Project Aims and Objectives

The overall objectives of Minority Rights Group International (MRG) are to secure the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples and to improve cooperation and understanding between communities. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) contributes towards financing the core activities of MRG.

MRG's current strategy⁴⁶ names some global challenges: 'a shocking rise in religious and ethnic persecution...an unprecedented increase in forced migration... global inequality... leaving many communities behind; accelerating environmental degradation, with the natural indigenous guardians... facing land-grabbing'.

Its strategic objectives are 'Countering religious and ethnic persecution, a root cause of forced migration and promoting the inclusion of minorities and IPs in sustainable development and society'. <https://minorityrights.org/fifty/activity-map/> groups 16 activities groupings towards this e.g. combating hate, defending land rights, minority rights/climate change.

'This evaluation covers more than one programme, so to describe it as "a programme" is not... accurate... Sida contributes unrestricted funding and therefore contributes to all of the work of [MRG]⁴⁷. Aims and objectives⁴⁸ were 'linked to... [MRG's] mandate; desired beneficiaries of ...capacity interventions were... Staff... in minority / [IP] ...led organisations... many... [of] limited capacity, all should have strong links to grassroots'... Community leaders... organisers, paralegals... activists, monitors... allies⁴⁹. 2012-18's budgets ranged from ' £500K to £1M... in 40-60 countries many of which involve civil space restrictions'.

The evaluation spans the years 2012 - when the Eastern Partnership Minorities Network was established, visible in the civil space [results](#)- through an early MRG's use of the intersectionality concept, the Ogiek land rights victory and the anti-slavery victory against Mauritania⁵⁰ in 2018.

⁴⁵ Trans-national EU fund' was its former name

⁴⁶ 'Countering persecution, promoting inclusion, MRG strategy 2017 – 2020'

⁴⁷ MRG Deputy Director Claire Thomas

⁴⁸ All of the next six paragraphs are taken from the TORs, until the paragraph beginning 'Answers...'

⁴⁹ Evaluation Terms of Reference

⁵⁰ African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child ruling in favour of Said and Yarg Salem

The programme focused - and most of the money was spent on - capacity-building, research and advocacy⁵¹ in over half of the world's countries and 5 continents. Targeted training topics were many and varied. They included integrating gender, grants workshops and small grants, knowledge sharing, project and finance management. MRG is not a direct service provider addressing deficits in health services, shelter, water, etc - although some Partners would welcome such services for minorities/IPs⁵².

The purpose of this evaluation⁵³ is to review and assess the work between 2012-18 of its target audience - MRG and Sida and capacity-building Partner organisations, community leaders, influencers and other allies'. It is not aimed at the public, and assumes a degree of familiarity with the remit of the organization and its work⁵⁴. It is 'not to review minutiae of project delivery. [but] should focus on long term... sustainability... methodology ... innovation. It is specifically timed to feed into a new 2019/2020 round of strategic planning, to 'determine priorities... inform ongoing learning within MRG. Its scope covers the sum of MRG's work, including programmes funded by SIDA's unrestricted contribution. It does this against the criteria of Relevance, Impact and Sustainability, broken down further as:

Relevance: To what extent have MRG's capacity building interventions helped secure the rights of its beneficiaries, and has MRG been able to respond to the needs and priorities of its beneficiaries?

Impact: What is the overall impact of MRG's capacity building interventions in terms of direct or indirect, negative and/or positive results?

Sustainability: Is it likely that the benefits (outcomes) of the project are sustainable?

Answers to the extensive additional, detailed questions in the TORs are provided in Section B: on p.13, which provides the bulk of the assessment of MRG's 2012-18 capacity-building, with some further, overall findings on 'Relevance, Impact and Sustainability' in Section D on p.37.

Evaluation results are aimed for use by 'Partners , allies and influencers... considering capacity building priorities and intervention modalities... by SIDA... to inform... ongoing support... and partnership with MRG.

The higher-level focus, on 'Qualitative Global and Strategic' issues, is provided in Section C: As the TORs state, 'The... results... will [also] be... discussed in detail by MRG's International Council... and disseminated... via MRG's evaluations webpage on its website'.

⁵¹ p.9, MRG 2013-16 Report to SIDA

⁵² Faith Tushabe of AICM says 'that on 'funding. there is need to have a review of the MRG program areas in order to widen the funding opportunities which go beyond minority rights but improve the lives of minorities'

⁵³ Publishing evaluation reports is a USP of MRG and a symbol of its integrity; however, as shown in the Social Media appendix, technical evaluations on the MRG website might expect to be opened only five times per month, including by those with 'inside knowledge'; as argued in this report, the public is not a useful target for such work

E. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation followed the Terms of Reference and the Inception Report agreed by the Steering Committee. It draws on and cites project documents, reports and third party documents for the countries visited.

Quantitative and qualitative questionnaires ([Appendix One](#)) were composed by the Team Leader, with an additional question from MRG's Deputy Director, and one request by Steering Committee member Meena Varma. They were sent to a 1200+ sample, to ensure that the ambitious target of 150 responses would be met; it was surpassed at 178. Minority and gender self-identifiers were used. Great emphasis was put on allowing key informants to freely share their experience with an absolutely open final question.

Two categories were: (i) 'Partners, Allies, Influencers' (henceforth 'Partners' a generic term comprising 90%+ of the group in the narrowest financial definition (ii) 'Trainees, Activists and Researchers' (henceforth 'Trainees', who comprised over 90% of the group in the 'having completed MRG training' definition, including those in the second largest group as 'Journalists')

The Partner questionnaire was sent to all 116 Partners, and with repeated reminders, achieved an unusually high return of 46 (40%)⁵⁵. Responses from Partners declaring gender were from 14 females, 30 males and 2 others - 30.5% female, 65% male and 4.5% others. Differences may partly be explained by continued lack of females in a senior position to appear on contact lists.

Trainee questionnaire samples came from a Trainee list of 2637, with 8 factors considered. Exclusions were made for (i) MRG staff and (ii) any handwritten ambiguous email– but where these were high, e.g. in Mauritania, a re-weighting was made to increase questionnaires sent to legible email addresses (iii) language; translations were made from English to Arabic, French, Russian, Thai and Ukrainian which significantly increased the workload, after which a cost-benefit calculation prevented further translation (iv) security of Trainees/Partners. Targets were set for participants for each training course, aiming for (v) 50-50 gender split (vi) a geographical spread, consciously doubling Asia and Africa responses at the expense of numerous European participants (vii) A bias was set to double emails to 'visit countries', because a late start to the evaluation risked an inability to 'drill down' on answers from Partners and Trainees. Ultimately this meant that in every country, at least some questionnaire informants were contacted. (viii) More focus was put on later years, to boost responses from those participating in 2017-18. This bias was offset by some use of the team leader's capacity building evaluation of the earliest years, 2012-13 (see 'Team').

No distinction was made between the subjects of training (e.g. 'advocacy' or 'gender'). At all stages, the hard-working interns, Emma and Parul, were encouraged to use their skill and judgment and to communicate preferences and dilemmas.

⁵⁵The highest comparator I found was 39% for NGO Partners in Keystone Accountability's 2010 research. Keystone were 'delighted about how the survey has worked... NGOs deserve great credit' <http://cercle.lu/download/partenariats/KEYSTONE1partner1survey12011.pdf>

For Trainees, responses were from 62 female, 68 male and 2 self-defining as 'other' responded, giving 48% female and 51% male and 1% other.

Partner responses were from 14 females, 30 males and 2 other giving 30.5% female, 65% male and 4.5% others. Questionnaires were sent to 50% - 50% male and female, so the small difference appear to be one of volition.

The visit country and post country-visit⁵⁶ methodology was mostly face-to-face Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Some telephone and email KIIs were conducted. Most KIIs were from programme participants with some exterior informants. Notable absences were from the EU in Tunisia, where Samia Gabsi / Maria Casado wrote that they 'can't participate'. Sida participated with comments on preliminary findings.

The total number of Key Informant interactions was 84; 44 females and 40 male. In 2013, a smaller total of 47 key informants - of whom 28 female and 19 male – plus 34 Trainees – 15 female and 19 male - were interviewed. In all, the views of 165 informants (87 female and 78 male) have fed into this evaluation report.

Most semi-structured interviews with key informants began with a 'Tell me what you know' question, with the emphasis on qualitative data, before narrowing to pre-set questions attempting to gather data against aims in project documents, and evaluation hypotheses.

In Sri Lanka and Thailand, groups and individuals made a country contextual timeline, discussed within those country sections. Case studies were gathered from the more open environments of Tunisia and N. Macedonia.

A four-page Preliminary Report (extended Executive Summary) received comments from SIDA's Jessica Jansson and Steering Committee member Meena Varma. At the end of the research, using all data, the project was evaluated against relevance, impact and sustainability⁵⁷. It focused at two levels (i) capacity building (Section B: with extra attention at the request of MRG on the extent to which varying levels of civil space affected Partner and Trainee satisfaction, and how MRG might respond programmatically). (ii) all of MRG's operations; the strategic level covered in Section C:

F. Detailed Terms of Reference Questions, Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations

The report set out to answer the following detailed questions in the TORs. Vast amounts of data were collected, much of it in Appendix Four. Summary answers are necessarily provided here

⁵⁶Mostly with MRG staff

⁵⁷ OECD/DAC quality criteria , <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

from questionnaires and KIIs - designed specifically to provide material - and primary sources. As is commonplace in research, respondents are more likely to be those particularly positive or negative about the subject.

1.a How effective has MRG been in working with Partners, allies and influencers to assess gaps in their capacity to influence change?

Full questionnaire answers are provided as Appendix Four.

This evaluation finds that MRG has been effective in helping Partners meet capacity gaps.

Partner's modal answer was 'Absolutely' (97%-100%) and the average 88% for whether MRG is 'Actively working with Partners, allies and influencers to assess gaps in their capacity to influence change?'. For 'interventions helped secure the rights of its beneficiaries', the modal answer was between 'Absolutely' and 'Strongly' (80-96%), with an average score of 81%.

Trainees⁵⁸ voted an average 82.13% and Partners 86.11% for MRG having 'a direct, positive impact', with the scores 75.58% and 82.45% respectively for MRG 'responds to the needs of its beneficiaries'. The questionnaires and KIIs did not provide a single example of criticism relating to capacity-building content or approach; many participants want 'more of the same'.

Previous MRG reports to Sida have provided multiple examples of capacity support making a difference to CSOs. Some 2019 examples include the case studies of the Ukraine's 'NO Borders' Social Action Centre⁵⁹ whose Director said of its small grant function, 'For us it was definitely capacity building'. Also detailed is the anti-slavery work of Haratine women in Mauritania⁶⁰ 'Before [MRG's work...] very few people knew about slavery in Mauritania'.

From primary sources, abundant evidence was found for the effectiveness of paralegal training, which was 'emblematic of the capacity-building that was evident throughout the project⁶¹'. In East/Central Africa, paralegal training 'came out as the most desired and important activity for future endeavor⁶²'. 'At community level, committed paralegals are articulate and cite multiple successes, Batwa women are accorded more importance, and some gains are apparent of practical rights such as land, housing, and equally-paid employment'. Its efficacy was also demonstrated amongst the Batwa of Central Africa, the Ik of Uganda, and in the headline land victory for the Ogiek of Kenya⁶³ which was, 'hugely motivating for other IPs in Africa as it provides a very rare and bright beacon of hope for the Ogiek and others... like the Endorois'.

1.b. What capacity building interventions have worked well and should continue?

⁵⁸ As elsewhere, Trainees often overlap with Partners, Allies and Influencers

⁵⁹ p.37 MRG 2013-16 Report to SIDA

⁶⁰ p.27 MRG 2013-16 Report to SIDA

⁶¹ p.35 p.27 MRG 2013-16 Report to SIDA

⁶² IA3 Report p.17 <https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Capacity-Building-for-Minority-and-Indigenous-Activists-in-Eastern-Africa-Final-Evaluation-Report-2018.pdf>

⁶³ IP rights advocate Dr Kidd, IA3 Report p.10

The quantitative answers have established that the initiatives did work well. The specific question 'what?' (which parts?) is partly answered by a collation of qualitative Trainee and Partner comments from the questionnaires as follows:

'All parts of training was worked well , I was very much satisfied with the information I got'; 'MRG made strong contributions: press outreach, report editing and formatting, substantive analysis'; [MRG]... 'Honored all promises'; 'Created Advocacy strategies/provided the opportunity to practice human rights advocacy'; 'Working on the field was an amazing opportunity'; 'Theoretical part of the course; media, minorities, migration'; 'The content, specially the UN mechanism and tools'.

Specifics were added in KIIs. Taking N. Macedonia as an example, Mediator Rahman Jakupi, said 'The mediators received a good training in... approaches to communities; methods and techniques of communication; paralegal training... This, as well as personal attributes and motivation enabled them to serve as positive models'. Geographical reach was appreciated by Tetovo Olivera of SONCE NGO. 'It focused not only on Roma in the capital Skopje, but it made the services available to other communities where the need is sometimes more acute... Roma Advocacy Network that took place in June 2017... is the largest of its kind in N. Macedonia...'

MRG's Reports to Sida make it clear that Specific Target Results have been achieved or exceeded (19/19 targets in the 2013-2016 Report and an expected minimum of 15/19 for the 2016-2020 period⁶⁴).

1.c. What capacity building interventions did not work well but should be strengthened? What capacity building interventions did not work well and should be discontinued?

The two main deficits identified in capacity building related to (i) a perceived lack of follow-up from MRG and (ii) difficulties accessing learning materials via the web platform.

(i) There were multiple references to follow-up and communication in both questionnaire answers and KIIs. Some examples of quotes against a 'How to Improve?' question are: 'No follow up'; 'no continuation of partnership/networking after the capacity building'; 'We are unsure of feedback mechanism'; 'I know we would all benefit from a more coordinated effort to share...campaigns/constructive feedback' 'Communication'.⁶⁵

(ii) Online problems varied from access to staffing. Quotes include: 'Online courses are not... appropriate... with local/state institutions... elderly employees'; 'The online course was very difficult to use via web platform; local tutors were not mentored by MRG although... foreseen'; 'registration at online platform was too complicated'; 'no administrative support by MRG staff

⁶⁴ p.5 Annual Progress Report for Sida, January 2018- December 2018

⁶⁵ A constant refrain also in the 2018 IA3 evaluation, which recommended 'more communication with Partners'

for enrolling'; 'too frequent changing of MRG support staff'; 'some quizzes couldn't be evaluated by system'

KIIs added: 'The problems appeared with technical difficulties in use of the Platform'; 'wasn't able to connect to the Platform'; 'IT administrator asked for help from the tutors to keep the Platform functional, although that was the job of the External Expert. The Tutors didn't have enough instructions to do that'; 'Only [sorted out] once we had communication with the Project Coordinator'; 'software problem, because the External Expert wasn't available, and in the middle of the process a new one was hired... Many of the Trainees... didn't know how to use computers'. In North Macedonia 'many Trainees actually migrated to Western Countries thereafter, so the whole [online]activity didn't bring much benefits to the Program'.

To prise out more information, the questionnaires added a similar, additional question which brought the following results: 'Which one thing should MRG start or improve? Why?' Responses included: 'Follow up of Trainees and involve them in it programs'; 'A regular contact with its alumni members'; 'Share information which will strengthen the individual and the organization'; 'Fostering networking and creating new understanding by implementing new strategies'; 'Funding opportunities of organizations working in key fields of interest'; 'networking and one platform for all participant to keep the discussion ongoing'; 'Sustained engagement with those that have been trained and tap in their skills. This will strengthen MRG'.

Apart from the online platform comments, nothing was marked out for discontinuation in the programme. A total of nine voices called - in one way or other - for 'localisation' of content in the course materials. The problematic relationship with the representative of the coordinating organisation in Deep South Thailand is treated under the Thailand findings; it was not representative, and dismissed by a KII as 'MRG chose the wrong partner'.

In its Annual Progress Reports for Sida, MRG is meticulous in addressing rare short-term temporary shortfalls on targets. For example, the 2018 report states that MRG 'only partially achieved our capacity-building objectives as we did not manage to train as many activists as expected... some delays in launching the new phase of our East Africa Capacity Building program... programs like our Ukraine work have now entered into their final phase which is about applying learnings ...advocacy and the implementation of pilot projects rather than "being trained"...we had exceeded our target in 2017 by some margin so that across the two years we are very much on track to meet the planned numbers over 4 years... new initiatives targeted training events... will ensure...training beneficiary numbers are on the rise next year.⁶⁶

The careful reporting of such exceptions to meeting and exceeding of targets is to be welcomed, and an integral part of what appears to be a healthy MRG-SIDA relationship.

⁶⁶ p.5 Annual Progress Report for Sida, January 2018- December 2018

2. How do Partners, allies and influencers perceive MRG? Do they see MRG as open to feedback and criticism? Do they value MRG’s expertise as well as MRG’s ability to help them secure funding? Do they feel equal and able to steer projects and programmes in line with their communities needs and priorities even against MRG’s advice when necessary?

MRG is very highly regarded by its Trainees, Partners, allies and influencers.

The relevant quantitative average results from the questionnaire are

Trainees and Partners

89.96% and 93.89% for 'MRG as a positive force'

84.25% and 91.25% for 'MRG is open to criticism'

75.58% and 82.45% for 'responds to the needs of its beneficiaries'

86.83% and 87.46% for 'MRG is expert'

75.93% and 81.45% for 'able to help its allies to secure funding'

The Partner rating on the extent to which ' MRG “accepts when communities, Partners... refuse MRG's advice and take a different approach' is seen as high at 77.33% (but predictably lower than 'open to criticism'). Despite a qualitative question, no exemplary evidence was provided.

The mode was 'Absolutely' (97%-100%) for whether MRG 'Actively seeks equality with its Partners, allies and influencers in steering change in line with community needs and priorities?' (88% average), with 85.69% average for “works with Partners... to assess gaps in capacity to influence change?”

MRG's sincerity and patience draws positive Partner comment as shown by the text box quoting PP Sivapragasam ('Siva', Founder, Director) and Ponniah Logeswary ('Loges', Program Coordinator)⁶⁷ from Sri Lankan rural land rights movement HDO.

Siva: 'MRG played a very important role in bringing us to the Forum on Minority Rights, several Committees. I participated and spoke there twice with MRG support... also we worked on the EU... Human Rights Commission, Human Rights Council... they brought a demand on economic rights and that SL offer citizenship to disenfranchised Tamil plantation workers. We got signatures and emails from all over the country. In 2003, they brought a new law and citizenship to around 300,000. people... an example of grassroots to international... now they enjoy their civil and political rights. MRG supports civil society to stand up for itself... a clear mission... their policy was very adaptive, their strategies were well, and independently (from donors), worked out... they also respect the policies and ethics of the local NGOs... the practical working style, including reporting, funding, communication are very productive, very good... their Monitoring system,

every three months, self-evaluation and self-monitoring system... we worked during the civil conflict period, good at helping us to protect ourselves, work with the local human rights actors, to bring safety for us... it... differed with others..[.who just told us] 'EU asked this, asked that' Before we did not receive EU funds, MRG trained us in the EU system,... a good experience for us... they encouraged minority women to participate in the project;... they guided us... monitored but not interfering... They understand the environment and they respect us. Others do not, it can be a bitter experience, we face pressure and delays. With MRG, it was easy to implement [in the] period of civil conflict... we re-worked the agreement.... MRG did not push us, they also took some of the burden on themselves....

Loges: MRG's flexible and practical support was instrumental in our success. We need this support; not only for two or three year programs but for longer. We know the funding situation is difficult for MRG, and so we can only say that we have a responsibility for our beneficiaries'.

3. How do MRG's capacity building interventions support women within minority and indigenous communities to develop their skills and abilities to ensure that issues are taken up with their communities and by MRG?

'Absolutely (97%-100%) was the modal answer (and indeed half of the answers) to whether MRG is 'Actively supports women within minority and indigenous communities to develop their skills and abilities to ensure that issues are taken up with their communities and by MRG?'. Of the other answers almost 60% were ' Strongly (80-96%)', and the average rating was 86.86%

The Haratine and Batwa examples featured above have brought a desire amongst some KIs for more, 'MRG can specifically design [more] programs that exclusively target ethnic indigenous women since they are doubly marginalized as women and ethnic indigenous minority.

A N Macedonia female KI commented, 'Women are well represented in the Programme, both in management and direct implementation'. A female activist in Sri Lanka argued for the logic of MRG's modus operandi of working with women, 'I train women, I see qualities from them, special qualities... we have to have heart and brain... to think of others and then to provide an answer... ' Another spoke of her journey through ethnic and religious pursuits to where she felt her work counted most 'I now work on women's rights and transitional justice'. Another described her work on 'the quota for women to be represented at Local Government and at Provincial Government' and a female activist working on Plantation Workers specifically lauded MRG, who 'encouraged minority women to participate in the project; normally minority women have a specific space for their voice... MRG guided us'

Men from conservative contexts are also being reached by these inclusion messages, eg in Thailand.. Hasan Yamadibu of Bungaraya relates 'I'm from Naratuwat... Deeper South... in Pattani... second year of University, I joined social programmes... became a volunteer of Bumaraya... in Yala far from here. For my first activity, I trained about women's rights, justice, emergency law... that programme impressed me,.. [eventually] I became President... worked on women's rights, family relationships, train the father on care-giving to reduce violence' The evaluation team only met men from the Civil Society Council of the Southernmost Thailand, but they talked proudly of how one of their members, Peace Agenda of Women (PAOW), had implemented a proposal for safe zones for women.

4. MRG is conscious that minority activists who have disabilities are rarely present. There may also be age imbalances and other barriers to participation (statelessness, rural/urban) that MRG has not been able to overcome. MRG would appreciate a review of our work in overcoming these and other imbalances and recommendations as to how MRG can improve our efforts.

The average Partner answer was 83.76% for whether MRG “reduces/eliminates participation barriers (Inc. disability, age, statelessness, rural) for minority activists?”

However, the words 'rarely present' also mostly answer this question. The questionnaire responses revealed little on People Living with Disabilities (PLWD), no reference to age, and no advice on ways forward. Attempts to follow up interviewees in Tunisia, Sri Lanka and Thailand brought little more enlightenment. Visually impaired activists had faced problems registering and using the online course via the web platform There was a sense in all three countries that PLWD did not want to discuss the 'disability' itself, but rather to discuss minority advocacy issues. An example was an email from a KI in Tunisia in response to 'disability questions'. It is representative in its other points, but terse on 'disability'; 'First of all yes i am a person with disabilities... I was part of an ADC in Sousse last year... i want to see MRGI program fill the entire country and any organization should be open to others opinions... Any organization should bring... funds to minority groups so they could survive and live under the shadow of economic lack...I hope you get your answers sir have a nice day'. In order to harvest information from these groups, MRG will need to first prioritise and actively engage with them.

5. Some gains can be made by developing the skills of individual activists. Other gains can be made by ensuring that organisations have in place the systems needed to function effectively. How has MRG balanced these two aspects of capacity building? What consequences has this had for any gains made?

Trainees and Partners 'voted' 77% and 85% respectively that MRG had got the balance right.

Those who had not voted that MRG had got it 'absolutely right' were invited to choose between greater Individual Activist Skills -an option chose by 5 people - or Partner Systems, which received 14 'votes'. And when asked 'How will this strengthen future minority rights?' Partners

mentioned that MRG should develop more programs. They requested that the role of MRG should expand, so it can promote minority rights especially in conflict areas. Partners mentioned that the role should be 'more efficient' but without elaboration.

Interestingly, both individual Trainees and activists and Partners suggested that Partners' systems should take precedence if the matter were put to a binary choice, although many were uncomfortable with that choice, and pointed out the complementary nature of doing both. 47% of Trainees wanted more focus on individual activist skills, and 53% on Partner systems. 26% of Partners wanted more focus on individual activist skills, and 74% on Partner systems.

6. In situations of shrinking civil society space, MRG is seeing that conflicts can arise between organisations as they are not able to operate and communicate sufficiently openly and routinely to coordinate among themselves. How can MRG encourage Partners, allies and influencers at local level to strengthen their cooperation and work together? What should MRG's role be, if any, in strengthening conflict-resolution capacity and mediating such tensions, and how best should MRG proceed.

Unsurprisingly, questionnaire respondents and KIs were not prepared to discuss individual conflicts, except for KI statements such as 'they can exist'. In Sri Lanka and Thailand, KIs welcomed MRG's encouragement of co-working between Partners, even where this had not been ultimately successful e.g. from HDO 'We worked as three organisations together; one [was] so far behind us.... But it is a good style, networking is important'.

MRG was interested to know the extent to which civil space affects Partner and Trainee satisfaction and whether/how this may influence MRG's approach. The CIVICUS Monitor research tool was used. This analyses with close-to-real-time data the extent of civic space and freedoms of 196 countries divided into 'Closed, Repressed, Obstructed, Narrowed, Open'.

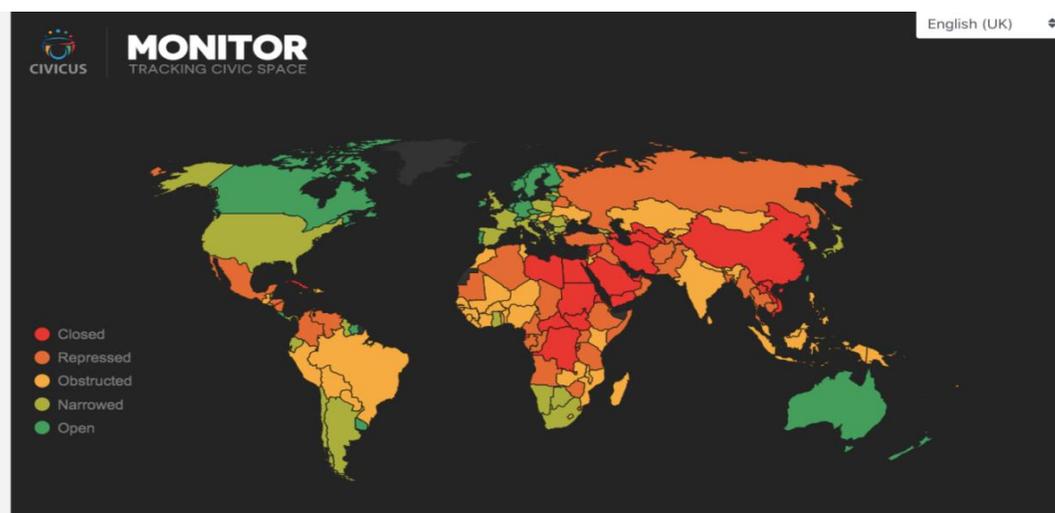


Table 1: 48 MRG Partner answers to 8 questions ([Appendix Two](#)) were used from 17 countries:

Closed	Repressed	Obstructed	Narrowed	Open
DRC (Congo) 2 ⁶⁸	Iraq 7	Hungry 1	Botswana 1	
Egypt 2	Rwanda 2	Morocco 1	Macedonia 1	
	Pakistan 1	Sri Lanka 2	Slovakia 1	
	Uganda 3	Tunisia 10	USA 1	
	Cameroon 1	Ukraine 9		
	Thailand 3			
4 respondents	17 respondents	23 respondents	4 respondents	0 respondents

Table 2: Total average scores for country, with higher being more positive, is shown as follows:

Closed	Repressed	Obstructed	Narrowed
DRC 67 ⁶⁹ %	Iraq 80%	Hungary 91,5%	Botswana 73%
Egypt 86%	Rwanda 91%	Morocco 53%	Macedonia 58%
	Pakistan 92.5%	Sri Lanka 81%	Slovakia 85%
	Uganda 86%	Tunisia 88%	USA 88%
	Cameroon 87%	Ukraine 83%	
	Thailand 70%		
Average Closed 76%	Av. Repressed 84%	Av. Obstructed 80%	Average Narrowed 76 %

Analysis on Civil Space from Partner responses:

A sample size of 4 individuals each for 'Closed' and 'Narrowed' (Table 1), and significant variations in positivity between different 'country answers' within those categories, does not allow for assertive analysis on their results. It is noted that these categories are given lower average scores than the 'middle categories' of 'Repressed' and 'Obstructed'.

'Repressed' countries were given highest - and more statistically valid - scores (Table 2). In particular, 7 answers showed solid support of 80% from Iraq, and 3 answers averaging 86% similarly from Uganda. With a low score of 70%, albeit from only 3 participants, Thailand lowers the average from almost 90%. The challenging Deep South Thailand context and programme difficulties are outlined in that country's visit report ([Appendix Five, Thailand](#)).

In 'Obstructed' countries, Tunisia stands out at 88% as a programme highly welcomed by its Partners.

The lower scores for 'visit countries' than the 'average countries', particularly Macedonia at 57% and to a lesser extent Thailand at 70%, suggest MRG's integrity in selecting visit countries about which it wanted to learn, rather than 'showing off' its best work.

⁶⁸ This number is the number of respondents from 'Closed' country DRC etc.

⁶⁹ The average 'positivity' to questions from DRC was 67%, rounded to the nearest whole %. Percentage figures of exactly 0.5% are retained.

A hypothesis which may be worthy of further investigation would be that MRG Partners offered support in relatively new and dramatically dire contexts (such as Egypt at 86%, Iraq at 80%, Pakistan at 92.5%, Hungary at 91.5⁷⁰% and Ukraine at 83%) may experience a greater additional impact of support than in more protracted unchanging environments (Thailand 70%, Morocco 53%, Botswana 73% and Macedonia at 58%

The exercise was repeated for 132 Trainees from 26 countries with 10 questions ([Appendix One](#)):

Closed	Repressed	Obstructed	Narrowed	Open
Congo DRC 2	Iraq 38	Hungry 9	Bulgaria 7	Czech Republic 1
Egypt 15	Somalia 2	Maldives 1	Greece 1	
	Bangladesh 1	Moldova 1	Macedonia 5	
	Cameroon 1	Lebanon 2	Poland 3	
	Myanmar 1	Morocco 2	Slovakia 3	
	Rwanda 5	Nigeria 2		
	Thailand 2	Sri Lanka 3		
	Mauritania 1	Tunisia 16		
	Uganda 6			
	Zimbabwe 1			
17 respondents	58 respondents	36 respondents	19 respondents	1 respondent
Av. score⁷¹ 68%	Av. score 82%	Av. score 76%	Av. score 91%	Av. score 61%

Analysis of the Trainee results is that:

* Sample sizes allowed more confidence in category analysis, apart from for 'Open'.

* A similar pattern is seen that Closed countries, albeit only Egypt and DRC, again recorded relatively low scores. Between Partner and Trainee results, a hypothesis can be offered that the political context of Egypt and DRC might offer both mental challenges to concentration and practical disruption to internet, communication and peer support.

* Similarly, 'Repressed' countries reported some of the highest levels of satisfaction for Partners and Trainees. A hypothesis might emerge that critical need, fewer alternative opportunities to activism and study, coupled with some freedom to do so might increase satisfaction ratings.

* For Trainees, relatively wealthy and free environments eg Slovakia, Bulgaria, N Macedonia and Poland scored high satisfaction; this could possibly reflect the relative ease of study.

⁷⁰ Some 'country responses' are only from one person, but 20 'dramatic' country answers against 7 'stable' may suggest some pattern.

⁷¹ Average score to the 10 questions in the Appendix, with higher scores being more positive.

The hypothesis that MRG Partners offered support in relatively new and dramatically dire contexts may experience greater impact does not carry through for Trainees (if the average scores in the Appendix for Egypt, Hungary, Myanmar, Somalia, Lebanon and Iraq are compared with the less dramatic situations of Morocco, Macedonia, Moldova, Bangladesh, Thailand, Maldives etc, the results are almost exactly the same at 77%). One explanation for this could again be the difficulty of studying in the latter situations.

Overall findings:

The main overall finding is that the diversity of situations confronting minorities in different countries means there can be no one blueprint solution for working in any one country. The conclusion is that successful programmes are best built on: rigorous contextual analysis - of provinces, not countries - which assesses need, MRG/ Partner capacity and opportunity; careful selection of Partners; longer-term, financially significant interventions.

The above results are indicative rather than conclusive. Closing civil space tends to reduce trust to outsiders and increase insecurity. Information is not best reached in such contexts through questionnaires and quick visits involving cold-calling. Mitigation was provided by MRG sending most of the questionnaires from the Deputy Director's email, and the Team Leader using his personal network in Sri Lanka to reach KIs. The commonalities in countries visited are treated in the section 'All visit countries'; specifics are treated in the sections on individual countries.

KIs in Sri Lanka felt lingering civil society impact from previous closing of civil society space and acute fear of the previous regime's return. Like CSOs in Deep South Thailand (severely closed civil space) they strongly expressed support for the building of civil society solidarity. As in questionnaire responses, they want their MRG accounts to stay open after training, networking meetings to continue, and - despite frustrations - to co-operate on the Existing-Emerging Partner model to deliver programmes together. MRG is a trusted partner, to the extent that Thai Partners wanted its involvement in intra-CSO conflicts, and even to links with Government.

MRG's programme closure caused a keenly felt loss of networking; the report suggests renewed funding applications to resurrect it, and meanwhile to delegate it to Facebook groups. There is no formula for programme continuation; the cost-benefit of resuming programmes in Sri Lanka and Deep South Thailand will deserve attention, but only after careful contextual analysis. It is suggested that in Tunisia, Macedonia and all ongoing MRG capacity building programmes, attention is paid to sustainability of networks within or outside MRG's auspices.

The evaluation questionnaire deliberately added a 'free question' to capture material which may have eluded the conception of the Team, the Steering Committee, MRG and Sida.

What message would you like to send to the Capacity Building Program of the Minority Rights Group and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency on Capacity Building 2012-2018?

Five sample answers were:

(i) Minorities all over the world are in a better situation with better tools because of (2012-18 capacity building) (ii) We offer our pride and gratitude for your tremendous efforts... in Iraq. (iii) MRG capacity building was very relevant to various issues in Uganda, especially... discrimination in education. (iv) I thank MRG for including me... and I wish [for] another opportunity... as a lawyer who pleads for... minorities. (v) MRG equipped me with a skill that no one will take away - understanding and appreciating Minority rights that are most times swallowed up in general human rights - Most importantly, I was exposed and empowered to engage in...advocacy at regional level. This empowerment... grew in my career as an activist for social justice...to vulnerable and minority communities. When I look back at my journey of career growth, MRG has a big footprint to be proud about.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

MRG's own summary in its Sida reporting was ' While it is difficult to prove or evidence counter-factual results it is at least arguable that, apart from clear gains in some areas, the situation of many minorities and indigenous peoples would have been far worse had MRG and our Partners not taken action. We would argue that these examples include minorities in Egypt, Iraq, Kenya, Pakistan and Tanzania⁷².

Trainees and Partners in KIIs and questionnaires were more robustly positive. Advice was clearly for MRG to extend its successful training to more Trainees, and create more partnerships. One main area for improvement is the online platform/accessible technology. The second is follow-up/networking. Until successful fundraising permits this, MRG should manage Trainee /Partner expectation, and encourage them to trigger their own networks.

From a large sample size, the questionnaire answers are an overwhelmingly positive vindication of MRG's programme, and of the organization itself.

It is positive that Partners – who have a fuller, longer-lasting, more intricate relationship with MRG – give higher ratings than Trainees, but that both are extremely high; the lowest score being a very high 75.58% (Trainees, on whether MRG 'responds to the needs of its beneficiaries'), and the highest at 93.89% (Partners on whether MRG is 'a force for good')

The evaluation finds a sophistication and logic to the answers which suggests respondents' substantial engagement and reflection. There was no single example where a Partner or a Trainee gave identical scores to every question. And there is a logic in the scoring; extremely difficult areas – such as meeting the needs of beneficiaries, sustainability, helping allies access funding and accepting 'when communities, Partners... refuse MRG's advice and take a different approach' - score slightly lower, in the 70s and 80s, percentage-wise.

⁷² p.5 MRG 2013-16 Report to SIDA

It is also telling that **both** Trainees and Partners favour an approach which focuses more on Partner systems than individuals' skills; there is also a data legitimacy suggested in the self-interest factor, where Trainees voted +6% for this option, and Partners +48%

The outstandingly positive piece of data was that for the second-highest rated statement - 84.25% amongst Trainees and an impressive 91.25% of Partners (who have a deeper relationship), that 'MRG is open to criticism'.

It is recommended that:

- MRG continue to keep evolving its courses and partnerships, keep providing a level of service which attracts such high ratings, and expand its existing programmes to reach more minority rights defenders and organizations.
- MRG continues to seek funding to manage post-training relationships to allow Trainees to maintain their accounts and share learning, but meanwhile also seeks cost-effective ways to devolve the management of country or theme groups to Trainees (such as Facebook groups), and in all events carefully manages the expectations in its relations with Trainees.
- MRG extend the fundraising functions of its Facebook site from sharing funding opportunities to fundraising advice and tips. This could begin with one post per month

G. Qualitative Global and Strategic Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

(i) Scale (ii) Visibility Findings: (iii) 'Minority' and Intersectionality (iv) Evaluations

The TORs of this evaluation gave its purpose as 'ongoing learning... on the best ways to achieve shared objectives... inform the strategic review... setting strategic goals... methodological... and intervention choices... areas of focus and ways of working... request strategic support on priorities, shared objectives, methodology, intervention and ways of working'. This research was accelerated to provide 'big themes' input for the MRG/MRGI⁷³ Strategic Planning process.

(i) Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations on the Scale of MRG:

In the 2013-2016 report 'Strategy 2013–2016 Report to SIDA' MRG describes itself as 'a small organization with a global mandate, choosing priorities and following through on programmes... a staff of around 45 people and an annual budget in the region of £3 million'.

⁷³ Elements of this evaluation will be differentially relevant to MRG and MRGI. In terms of the Strategic Planning process, its likely readers will usually be better equipped to judge these intricacies than the evaluators, so 'MRG' is used - as the smaller entity to whom all of it applies - as a cover-all, with the understanding that some issues will also apply to the larger MRGI.

In an answer to how strengthening Partner systems would benefit minority rights more than focus on individual activist skills, Partners said, that MRG “should develop more programs”. Another said, “The role of MRG should expand, so it can promote minority rights especially in conflicted areas (which) need more assistance” a third “As MRG is a sound international organisation, it should continue to expand partnership organization and cooperation with local organizations.. to make significant impact” a fourth ' We need this support; not only for two or three year programs but for longer' and a fifth 'double lobbying... access more funding to run more... programmes'. All of the above are in keeping with comments in the 2013 research quoted in the Executive Summary and 'Grow if you can'(without being donor driven)'. and 'can you have more staff/offices? 'Should MRG interpret growth as income, expanding to 2-3 times its current size within 15 years would not be simple. Competition for funding remains high and despite MRG’s mitigation measures, a post-Brexit European context for MRG is unclear. MRG’s mission has also been more about supporting local CSOs to grow than expanding its own presence (e.g. through more regional offices). These discussions should play out during the strategic planning process; in an uncertain, competitive context, the evaluation feels that it is important for MRG to be purposive; there is no guarantee of survival from trying to stand still.

The most consensual part of this broad topic appears to be MRG staff’s repeated frustration with the onerous challenge of being tied to restricted programme funding. An almost-exclusive reliance on project cycles of 3-5years of strict funding may not allow MRG to achieve other evaluation recommendations, such as communications / fundraising investment or the \$1500 dollars a month plus employee analysis time for a social monitoring tool.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

There are many examples of faster-growing organisations. Forest Peoples programme statistics are given in [Appendix Six](#), and 360 and Avaaz are quoted elsewhere. Any purposive strategy to grow will require strategy guidelines, so that MRG builds on its existing sustainable success, integrity and presence, and also investment in fundraising and communications

It is recommended that:

- In the strategic planning process, MRG determine its optimal size and the way in which that is measured (e.g. by turnover, income, Trainees, Partners, social media reach etc), for example by 2025 and 2030. For income, MRG might consider its optimal % of unrestricted funds, and its optimal % of funding tied to individual programmes.

ii) Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations on Visibility and Social Media

Starting from a low base, and choosing to engage in Social Media, particularly Facebook:

Perceptions from KIs: Quotes on MRG's public face included: 'MRG has no visibility [here in Tunisia]; no-one knows them'⁷⁴; 'Now I don't see much of MRG in Sri Lanka or in Geneva'⁷⁵; 'Respond to the problem of visibility... consolidate your name' and 'On visibility, put... social media into your reporting'. DMITAR IVANOV GANOV, a Trainee from Bulgaria commented 'I believe the website can be rationalized and made more intuitive'. One of this evaluation's Steering Committee Members, Faith Tushabe said 'It is true that MRG's visibility is smaller than her work, achievements and impact on... minorities... Partners'.

The external environment of social media, and MRG: As part of its 50th birthday publications, MRG has honed in on the potential and the dangers of social media. It has held intensive discussions internally, and re-tweeted an article pointing out that 'The greatest facilitator of race-hatred against refugees isn't a tabloid; it's Facebook.'⁷⁶

MRG has, rightly in this evaluation's view, decided to engage and sometimes invest in Facebook and other sites, to use the potential and mitigate the harm. Race-hate and other minority-hate is a battle worldwide, fought out at the highest political levels to football stadiums, in social media, popular press and taxis, food stalls and city streets. Any organization wishing to effect change must consider whether it has a role in any or all of these battlefields. And if so, it must choose the right language to reach its audience; an obvious 'blind spot' for long-educated people is the inability to use language to reach people less privileged with education. Social Media will burgeon; as a Sri Lanka KI University teacher told me of her young students' 'They are not ready... to read.. only visually... those [web] pages, social media, visuals, cartoons'.

The top three social media sites globally⁷⁷, by huge gaps from each other are, in order, Facebook at 2.2 billion, YouTube at 1.9b; and Instagram at 1b. The 'chasing pack' are far behind, with Qzone in fourth position at 0.6b, Weibo at 0.4b 27%, Twitter at 0.3b, and sites well-known in the UK and elsewhere further behind (Google+ in 12th at 0.1b and LinkedIn in 13th at 0.1b) ,

[Appendix Six](#) displays the evaluation's research of the top 3 social sites for how MRG is getting its message across (i) as an organisation (ii) on the theme of Capacity Building (iii) MRG methodologies (e.g. theatre) and (iv) 'hot topics' in media. The findings are that 'there is increasing tendency to take on hot topics'⁷⁸ but there is more to do in an organisation which traditionally 'picks up on issues that others ignore; to shift the discourse'. The Views for individual videos - often of good quality - are sometimes pitifully low, at less than 30 per

⁷⁴Dorra of CHOUF, Tunisia, Emed, and an MRG staff member respectively.

⁷⁵Shreen Saroor, minority and women's activist, Sri Lanka

⁷⁶with evidence at https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/aug/27/immigration-panic-how-the-west-fell-for-manufactured-panic?fbclid=IwAR07sEQQ5smylCI3cagBm0Dcdy66oBo4-V8piwJQtTnyMzDha-aD_r9WYqs

⁷⁷ dreamgrow.com/top-15-most-popular-social-networking-sites/

⁷⁸ Quotes in this paragraph are from different MRG staff members

decade. In visibility terms, a search⁷⁹ on google.com for 'MRG Asylum Seekers' produced a modest 9 of the top 20 answers having any link to MRG. These issues' scope is far beyond this evaluation, but data in Appendix Six suggests a need for strategic targeting of time and effort.

Internal MRG responses to the challenges and opportunities of social media: The current communications strategy does not include the public as a stakeholder. Neither are the majority public mentioned in the 2017-2020 Strategy for this SIDA-funded programme. This will change with the new strategy. MRG is now consciously building its Communications, with recent Team growth from 1.5 to 6⁸⁰ staff members. Different staff members say: 'We're making a conscious effort on the gap between what we do and what we say!⁸¹'; 'It would be great to have a bigger communications team in Budapest and London'; 'It's a disposition thing, a blind-spot... this has not been what MRG has focused on.. has been more on research; in part it will come with younger people... but...it needs more of an intentional effort to switch that thinking.... a lot of issues are sensitive and we err to the side of caution'; 'I was in a conference... campaigning organisations like Avaaz, Amnesty, Survival International did five minute interviews with an indigenous organization.,. we could create content, reach people'; 'I could start on Twitter, follow donors, tweet about MRG '; 'It takes mental re-orientation'

There is interest and talent amongst staff of all ages, evidenced by the enthusiasm to engage with the Slack platform for internal communication. Staff expressed interest in learning how to create content, which could be an important factor in raising profile of the organisation. "Twitter is very strong at UN conferences and summits... if you have people tweeting from the inside.... [and can also] approach journalists [who] are hawkishly following. One staff member suggested a 'brown bag' on innovation at MRG. The above need the appropriate levels of training, time-resourcing and external input to be optimally effective.

The Executive Summary and Social Media [Appendix Six](#) show that investment in Facebook has worked well. It has been understood by MRG's relevant manager that strategy and structure is currently missing. This is being addressed by the development of a Social Media strategy by Marco Cadena, Digital Communications Officer in Budapest, looking at data from the past year. He says 'Key Change was launched in June...needs more resourcing capacity. One problem with medium-size organisations is that Social Media comes last. I think it is a big mistake... some small organisations do much better... Avaaz and 360.org which did not exist before 2010, both now have around 400 staff'. Both organisations are fast-growing, with very flexible, staff-friendly employment practices, a huge communications component, intensive use of technology and a widespread, constant appeal to huge numbers of mainly-younger constituencies for small amounts of money (starting at 5 pounds).

Investment in one social media site shows knock-on to another; Google shows 1K page views for the Key Trends report since July 2019. This can be compared to less-fashionable, less-

⁷⁹ 19 September 2019

⁸⁰In Budapest; Anna, Szentes (0.5), Marco, Ifra, In London: Samrawit, Carl (0.5); In Kampala:, Hamimu

⁸¹ Marco Cadena

promoted MRG sites, such as 60 views over a similar timescale to an Ireland Aid evaluation⁸², and multiple MRG YouTube sites with less than 30 views.

The website:

The new MRG website is clean and interesting, a big improvement. The leaner treatment of 'Peoples Under Threat' is impressive. There is further progress to be made. There are places where the site claims to be inter-active, but the potential for inter-action is minimal. MRG's descriptor is also passive, activity-based (see Social Media appendix). Perhaps, at 50, it's time to look at a more dynamic, forward-looking descriptor, focused on what MRGI does and why, without mention of offices but of achievements. Much of the website shows activity (advocacy, publications, films, legal cases, street theatre) rather than change, which is alluded to by vague claims such as 'overwhelming evidence' (that minority community inclusion leads to stronger, more cohesive societies'). Successes could be more boldly championed, e.g. once fears for the security of Nobel Laureate Nadia Murad have died down, MRG may consider publicizing its own role in her career, on the back of training her and organizing her first statement at the UN. The website, television interviews, a speaking engagement etc might be suitable arenas and the above examples could be displayed in a 'success page' where MRG articulates its achievements.

Comments on fundraising presence on Facebook (calls for proposals, tips and advice) apply equally to the website. Similarly, it may be worth MRG reflecting on the five categories of 'minority. In MRGI's website, 'national' is sometimes dropped, but ethnic, religious, linguistic and indigenous are constant, as elsewhere, inclusivity of all minority focus is recommended.

Other channels:

As throughout this evaluation, MRG is trusted not to 'throw the baby out with the bathwater'. Social media is of overwhelming importance, and it can interface with other media; the successful breaking down of the Key Trends report into social media pieces; the role of radio and television particularly in Africa; the importance of approaching journalists as well as tweeting from conferences; the successful example of MRG engaging with Reuters; the need to ensure that Partners, who form the roots, are both consulted AND informed via media available to them. And if MRG wants to 'set the agenda' and have donors knocking on its door⁸³, it may need to use some of the future space created by unrestricted funding to create the visibility through active membership of networks.

Conclusions and Recommendations on Visibility / Social Media:

A major obstacle is our – most of us - generational 'blind spot'. Team members of this evaluation are all over 40 years old; and while - like MRG staff - being open to Social Media,

⁸² which happened to have been written by two of this evaluation's team; a historic report on the Batwa still gets 30-40 views per month after more than eight years; one could conjecture that it is the subject matter which attracts views and keeps readers for longer (average 8 minutes

⁸³One senior staff member lamented the shackles of project funding 'I agree it is a survival thing; others network...donors come to them... nobody has ever come to me!'

they are only partially aware of its possibilities. Relevant experience and advanced years puts staff in the position of decision-makers, but they need to seek constant collaboration with fresh waves of the digitally-savvy. Similarly, a 'blind spot' for highly-educated people in the rights sector can be to use accessible language to reach larger numbers of people with messages (insider - outsider; majority - minority) which are simple to grasp for all people.

It is not suggested that MRG try to 'become avaaz.org' (any more than Human Rights Watch, Amnesty, The Refugee Council etc). MRG should maintain its strengths of integrity, legal-focus, representation, solidarity with unfashionable issues etc. It is concluded that it should expand from them, taking serious, well-formulated messages also in simpler more active and dynamic language and media – see for example how prosaically MRG is described in [Appendix Six](#) under 'Google Search' - to much bigger, different audiences. On media, to choose one cartoon, the banned Greenpeace 92-second cartoon made for Iceland, [YouTube.com/watch?v=JdpslIW12o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdpslIW12o) has over 6M hits, and is an example of a successful popular collaboration between commercial, creative and NGO stakeholders. Without corporate backing, CHS created the simple, watchable 4-minute <https://vimeo.com/80874744> to explain Accountability. Arguably the insider-outsider issues of MRG are even simpler to explain, and much more globally topical. On unfashionable issues, MRG should still be pushing the agenda, making the case in the required legalistic language at representative bodies within Government, UN, EU etc. It should also be prepared to 'ride the wave' of other popular issues, adding its voice for genuine political change, creating alliances (both with popular broad-based movements, and with strategic Partners such as IRRI on refugees in Uganda) and creating visibility which gives all of its work a bigger audience and potentially greater impact. The decisions on what the organization becomes and in what proportions, are properly those of the strategic planning process. If MRG is to grow and be more visible, communications, strategy, structure and investment will be key.

The bottom line is impact, which MRG tests through monitored trials. For example, on the potentially fertile issue of asylum seekers, the MRG questionnaire to asylum lawyers about issuing letters of support to individual asylum seekers received low levels of interest and replies, and was not continued. However, targeted work with (student) journalists in four critical Eastern European countries is influencing popular opinion. 'The feedback is consistently fantastic... I went on about five of the study visits, a privilege to see people grow in front of your eyes... We can monitor the impact of the articles... The challenge was... getting articles published, so we have planned a round table with editors'⁸⁴. This case is further evidence (in line with the Tunisia LGBT partnership with DAMJ) that MRG itself, in a range of diverse partnership, can transfer existing expertise from the Global South to a Northern (currently European) context. Agnes Kabajuni, Head of MRG Africa, points out the possibilities and responsibility to broaden this migration message to the realities of intra-African migration and the related reactions of xenophobia eg in South Africa and Sudan. MRG staff also commented that the content of existing work should be checked to see if people of average education within their country are likely to engage with the terminology of the campaign, the words used, the length

⁸⁴<https://minorityrights.org/what-we-do/europe-minorities-migration-media/> Minorities, Media and Migration project is a free 8 week online course, working with student/journalists to get the minority view across; MRG is also raising awareness on the issue through street theatre

of reports. Even if only to put them into context, populist terms like 'boat people' or 'Pygmies' should be used somewhere within reports, giving a possibility that people using those terms might come across MRG's work, as well as the work of the populist press.

As for any change process, there are dilemmas, possible wrong turns and dangers. It is assumed that MRG has the organisational integrity to not be led only by donor-funding or visibility, not only take on winnable public cases (or, even worse, almost won, so that no change is effected). The premise is that some organisations could usefully do more unfashionable, evidence-based, detailed, real-change work, but that MRG, which does this, could also usefully do more to make positive change in primary actors' lives by bringing its solid work to wider public attention.

It is recommended that:

- MRG consider the optimal size and structure of its Communications Team, based on its decisions of future organisational directions and optimal size of MRG itself. When funding allows a move away from exclusively project-funding, a larger Team and effective strategy may need: close liaison between Programmes, Campaigns and Communications; strategy, investment in the inter-active nature of the website and social media; training of staff in creating video content; social monitoring tools, and greater staff time to optimise their use.
- 'Brown-bag sessions' are organised on 'How does MRG deal with innovation?' Staff might invite relevant experience from outside, and consciously value the digital literacy of younger staff members including interns. Such sessions – suggested by an MRG staff member – could also feed into strategic planning.
- MRG should review its current prioritisation of target audiences, with a view to also engaging more with the general public. It could usefully accelerate its 'commitment to those 'hot topics'[1] for which it has some capacity and added-value, using popular, dynamic language and media (such as cartoons[2], tweets[3], clips, podcasts, quizzes, 'Top 10s') which may resonate with the new potential target audience.
- MRG should train willing programme/advocacy staff to produce content within conferences (and elsewhere). MRG should be utilitarian in prioritizing resources of training, time and money on content for those social media interventions which may attract significant interest. It should set targets/carefully monitor how successful these interventions are and come to serious judgments about why/why not. It might make two exceptions. It might assess how much (further) positive change might be effected at the early stages of 'unfashionable' issues (the point being to get them onto the agenda over time). MRG might also make exception for the publication of evaluations (which are a 'Unique Selling Point' of organizational integrity 'we share this transparently within the organization and externally'⁸⁵, may be a primary reason that MRG can attract

⁸⁵ Strategic Plan 2013-16, p.7

evaluators, and may open possibilities for MRG to take credit for predicting events⁸⁶). These examples could be displayed on 'Success Pages' for MRG to articulate its achievements on MRG's website and social media sites.

- The MRG website trials a 'success page'
- The MRG website extends its focus from 'traditional' minorities, where need, capacity and opportunity arise, to groups now understood to be minorities e.g. PLWD and albinos.
- MRG try to create space to be active in networks, as successfully undertaken in Uganda.

(iii) Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations on 'Minority' and Intersectionality

Definitions of Minority: Despite the title of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities ...the UN has failed to agree a definition of what constitutes a minority... [which] some explain... would deny certain rights to certain groups of people in some countries... Efforts... have been unsuccessfully undertaken within the ... Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities...), the only existing legally binding international instrument for minority protection, contains no definition of the notion "national minority".

However, the Proposal for an Additional Protocol on the Rights of National Minorities to the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms contained a definition of a "national minority group⁸⁷." According to the proposal expression "national minority" refers to a "group of persons in a state who reside on the territory of the state and are citizens thereof; mainly longstanding, firm and long-lasting ties with a state; display distinctive ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics; are sufficiently representative, although smaller in number than the rest of the population of the state or of a region of the state... The absence of the exact definition of minority in international law can [also] be substituted by... a person's individual choice⁸⁸⁸⁹.

MRG rightly 'bent the rules' 20 years ago, by expanding the above definition for itself and adding Indigenous Peoples⁹⁰. Otherwise 'the old terms were the first ones, and that gave us a claim'⁹¹; MRG has operated within the above space, successfully, sustainably, but at a low turnover and with low growth. Its analysis is a power-analysis; it can be argued that women, or the black majority in Apartheid South Africa can form a political minority, or that whilst the

⁸⁶Carl Söderbergh: 'Interesting... we don't...go to the backlist [and say] 'There is a crisis right now, eight years ago we warned about this'....

⁸⁷Which of course excludes stateless people

⁸⁸Antonija Petričević The Rights of Minorities in International Law, p.3 https://bib.irb.hr/datoteka/421246.CIRR_Petricusic_MR_IL.pdf

⁸⁹<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/Pages/internationallaw.aspx> and a1977 definition by Francesco Capotorti, Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

⁹⁰ For IPs, the distinction is ethnic; some also identify as 'minorities'; others do not.

⁹¹ Neil Clark

Tamils are a regional majority, they comprise a political minority in Sri Lanka. The current CEO is clear that a main factor of 'minority identity' is lack of 'proximity to power'.

Some MRG staff feel restricted by the definition of 'ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic' (albeit with MRG's addition of IPs), whilst appreciating that this is a live issue for the organisation at management and Board levels. 'In advocacy... our job is not to deliver a UN framework... [but to] use our advocacy in Geneva to shift... the definition of minorities'.

Intersectionality: MRG's 2016 research underpinning its annual key trends report⁹² led it down the path of intersectionality, with the observation that 'minorities are especially vulnerable to exploitation, not only by majorities and official power structures, but also by others within their own' - as borne out by this report's Tunisia LGBT text [box](#) and quotes. The term intersectionality still has currency in modern intellectual discourse and can provide a practical way to address urgent issues; 'It's essential to experiment, break new ground... we need to support LGBT+ to work with their communities, exceptional, experimental... we can't... compromise. We need to reflect, to find balance [and reach] minorities within their own definition, showing solidarity⁹³'. The greatest strength of the intersectionality discourse is that it facilitates listening to, and creating solidarity based on peoples' real-life experience⁹⁴. It is an invitation, not an exclusion or a points system. It originally exposed specific discrimination and negligence within a rights-based struggle⁹⁵; it does not equally relate to all struggles at all times. Intersectionality⁹⁶ questions are not academic but relate to real programmes and real people. . The Accountability movement suggests that rights-based approaches should begin by understanding where the discriminated are coming from, and listening to them. In a programmatic sense, dogged adherence to theory could lead MRG down some blind alleys. Staff of Partners or MRG should not be given the extra task of having to 'prove' that people facing violent, illegal abuse are also economically poor, or have some other disadvantage. Nor should MRG, as one staff member told me, be limited by theoretical definitions so that to meet urgent needs it is pushed to 'break our own rules when it suits us'. Discrimination ebbs as the tide; the LGBT+ community in Tunisia is currently facing acute oppression; should Articles 230 be revoked, the findings from Tunisia suggest that oppression would be greatly relieved. In Tunisia, MRG's programme is based around ADCs. Inclusivity is essential for the functioning of such centres, and extremely difficult to achieve. An ADC could not be set up by NGO staff committed to combating anti-Black discrimination, and also effectively deal with the very different issues faced by Shi'a. And it would be unthinkable for a centre dealing with the gravest discrimination cases⁹⁷ against the LGBT+ community to exclude Sunni Arab Muslims on the grounds that they were not facing intersectional discrimination.

⁹²<https://minorityrights.org/publications/life-at-the-margins-the-challenges-of-multiple-discrimination/>

⁹⁴MRG staff member

⁹⁵ see earlier footnotes on intersectionality

⁹⁶ see <https://www.newstatesman.com/lifestyle/2014/04/kimberl-crenshaw-intersectionality-i-wanted-come-everyday-metaphor-anyone-could>

⁹⁷ in the opinion of my Amazigh, Black and Baha'i informants outside the LGBT+ community

More important to both definition and intersectional questions is an approach which analyses context carefully, and where programmes are carefully devised on the basis of need, capacity to support and opportunity. At times, this will encourage coalition-building between MRG and better-placed organisations, even if not formal partnerships. At other times, MRG may feel it has the Partners and the added value (eg of its legal expertise) to become involved in a new area, as with the DAMJ partnership in Tunisia, and eventually hire or acquire the knowledge, research and links to be seen as an authority.

It is recommended that:

- the current strategic planning processes produces a clear message that staff are encouraged to respond primarily to areas of greatest (i) minority (in a broad sense) client need (ii) MRG capacity and (iii) opportunity - including as an active member of coalitions - and to make operational cases for initial experiments which extend MRG's learning and competences and may lead to mainstream programmes.

iv) Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations on Evaluations

The evaluation's late start⁹⁸ seems to have been caused mainly by detailed and slow TORs discussions with Sida - 'in good faith by people with a genuine interest... consensual... in a massive bureaucracy... taking time to answer⁹⁹, until SIDA's main point of MRG reference returned to work. The delay was not matched with commensurate relaxation of the end dates; one factor in a quicker-than-welcome pace and sometimes a loss of a conventional evaluation sequence from literature search to questionnaires to KIIs etc. With the extra workload created, the evaluators are confident that a fair view is presented, and can safeguard the accuracy of the results; the point is raised rather to suggest that actions have consequences. The evaluation was atypical in many ways; the countries were chosen after MRG had signed the contract with the evaluator, it was a foreign national going to one new context, two programmes had long-finished, and research destinations mostly involved long internal travel within short seven day periods. It was accelerated and compressed to feed into the strategic planning process. The evaluation was imposed late on country-level staff, and unsurprisingly their commitment to the evaluation did not match the high level given by MRG Headquarters; they could not always provide timely contacts, documents or guidance in advance when this competed with other MRG priorities. An inordinate amount - perhaps the majority of working visit time - was spent by the evaluator's Team Leader trying to set up meetings, and finding the obstacles of cold-calling, emails going to Spam folders etc. With longer lead-in time. MRG support in creating an itinerary and a programme that had been delegated to Partners, the N. Macedonia research brought a calmer, more organized visit¹⁰⁰ involving 'drilling down' into responses from Partner and Trainee questionnaires. The question is not of hierarchy or importance - an evaluator's job

⁹⁸ The research had been planned for 2018 but was first delayed for a year by mutual MRG-SIDA agreement due to MRG CEO transition. In 2019, research was planned to start in April, but began at the end of June.

⁹⁹MRG staff

¹⁰⁰Other factors were that the programme was ongoing and run through the partner. This is also true for Tunisia; the point is still held to be true.

is to provide service - but of the optimal approach to arranging visits; often best achieved through an existing 'warm' contact. When partnerships are new or programmes have finished, MRG staff might usefully provide the first draft skeleton schedule. Similarly, a utilitarian approach could usefully be adopted in using time. The social [media](#) section demonstrates that such reports have limited readership; the engagement of senior stakeholders might better focus on big-picture insights and ideas than the editing process.

On a positive note, the evaluation was more adequately¹⁰¹ financially resourced, which may be a good reflection on Sida and/or MRG's commitment to doing the job properly. This is a marked improvement, and has allowed for extensive travel and write-up. The return of a truly impressive 178 questionnaires can partly be attributed to the flexibility in sending initial questionnaires from the Deputy Director's email address¹⁰². This weight of evidence is important; the quantitative and qualitative responses unambiguously show very high satisfaction levels of Partners and Trainees, and a thirst for more MRG capacity building interventions. The scale of the sending / receiving questionnaires task left gaps which were filled by alternative approaches from the Deputy Director and Team Leader (sometimes from different email addresses, risking 'Spam' delivery and the creation of parallel systems). Overall, however, the huge operation of questionnaire-sending was a commendable success.

It is recommended that:

- MRG maintain its current more realistic costing of evaluations, and its current practice of providing an overall fee to include all costs.
- Adequate, realistic lead-in time, and total time, be given to an evaluation of this scope and focused more on the generation of ideas than editing. Where possible, evaluations should be conducted before project end, and the length of delays at the start of the process be added to the end.
- Where evaluators are not familiar with either the country context or the MRG programme within it, when partnerships are new, or programmes long-finished, that appropriate MRG staff members are requested to put together a draft meeting schedule agreed with Partners and Trainees. Mutually-agreed amendments or additions may later be made to ensure evaluator independence.

¹⁰¹ The contract was for 21,326 GBP, minus 5,220 expenses = 16,106. The three evaluators spent a combined 1101 hours, making an average 14.62 per hour, compared to the London Living Wage of 10.55 GBP and a previous MRG consultancy fee in 2018 of 7.96 GBP per hour.

¹⁰² GDPR prevented the evaluator sending the questionnaire, which would have been common practice

H. Summary: Relevance, Impact and Sustainability

The objectives of this evaluation are "to evaluate the **relevance, impact and sustainability** of the selected capacity building interventions and formulate recommendations on how to adjust design of future interventions and to inform MRG's whole strategy moving forward in this area"

Relevance: To what extent have MRG's capacity building interventions helped secure the rights of its beneficiaries, and has MRG been able to respond to the needs and priorities of its beneficiaries?

The overall relevance of MRG's work appears obvious, from the critical need, to neglect of minorities and IPs to topicality of issues: Respective Strategic Plans 2013-16 and 2016-20 state: 'It is clear that levels of inter-community and religious tension are again rising' and point to 'accelerating environmental degradation, with the natural indigenous guardians of the land in many regions facing land-grabbing and expropriation'

For the 2012-18 work, Partners, Trainees and KIs repeatedly hailed the content. No criticism or suggestions were made for themes; MRG are trusted to be attuned to these, and the move towards climate change/environment will clearly be of growing importance. The overwhelmingly high questionnaire scores from p.14 are taken as Partner and Trainee satisfaction that the programme met their needs in performing their role securing rights alongside or within minority groups. To repeat the most relevant answers, Trainees and Partners scored 75.58% and 82.45% respectively for MRG 'responds to the needs of its beneficiaries'. 48 of 49 Partner respondents answered the question that 'interventions helped secure the rights of its beneficiaries' with an average score of 81%.

MRG seeks to be both innovative and reaching to grassroots levels; Tunisia Trainee Meriam Alayeb, currently working in a range of women's and environmental NGOs stated that "MRG is the most flexible [donor] in accepting small organisations'. In her case, the programme was particularly relevant because of its innovative approach ' After... training, I co-wrote with MRG funds on discrimination; documentation of two FGD with people recently discriminated and a theatre piece, writing, graffiti, poetry. The EU evaluation of the 10 Arabic-speaking countries' minority street theatre project of 2014-17 found that 80,000 audience members' 'awareness of the value of cultural diversity will be increased.'

There were multiple references in questionnaire responses to the relevance of the programme to the needs and priorities of beneficiaries. A female activist working with the Batwa in Uganda commented 'The exposure visit to the African People and Human rights committee of the African Union seating in Ivory Coast.. gave us opportunity to advocate hands on with the policy and political experts that shape the human rights agenda. For once in my life, I presented a... statement on the position of a minority'.

A Bulgarian journalist who had been trained in Thailand commented 'I really enjoyed it the way it was. Maybe more time/opportunity for field work',

A female activist in Iraq simply said 'All parts of training was worked well, I was very much satisfied with the information I got'.

Impact: What is the overall impact of MRG's capacity building interventions in terms of direct or indirect, negative and/or positive results?

MRG's positive impact is consistently outlined through a wealth of evaluations, e.g. 'This report encountered confidence... that indigenous land rights issues are gaining ground, even in an unfavourable global environment of closing borders and profit maximisation.'¹⁰³

As outlined in Findings, MRG has consistently met its Specific Target Results from 2012-18.

Partners' questionnaire answers listed MRG's remarkable impact within complicated contexts. Trainees were helped to find their voice and increase their problem-solving efficiency. Local issues e.g. the Ogiek and Enderois reached international level; Batwa in Uganda advocated at the Prime Minister's Office. MRG was seen to have impact in strengthening the rights of affected people, and improved their situation, Partner's outreach and skills development.

Each visit country had evidence of demonstrable impact. Examples are found throughout this report. Some examples are:

In Tunisia, the Anti-Racial Discrimination Law is a very concrete impact of this programme, in alliance with others. Impact is also seen at project level. Meriam Alayeb (see Relevance above) stated that for her small funds project, 'The impact is richer knowledge, [encouragement] not to discriminate. People came who had denied the existence of anti-black discrimination; in the end they recognized it. With all our efforts, we succeeded'. Droit a la Difference talked of the huge stir – positive and negative reaction – created by their video on the Imazighen.

In Thailand, Green South stopped 'fake'¹⁰⁴ Environmental Impact Assessment approvals for a dam, a deep sea port and (maybe temporarily) a coal power plant. Previous evaluations found significant impact through small grants; a rigid system of 30.000 euro grants meant that some were too large, and some too small. Impact was 'pin prick', due to multiple reasons of political context, security and relationships. Networking was a positive experience; a recommendation is made to keep some of this alive until the context is more favourable for MRG work.

¹⁰³<https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Capacity-Building-for-Minority-and-Indigenous-Activists-in-Eastern-Africa-Final-Evaluation-Report-2018.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ The organization contends that Government had fabricated both participation and data

In Sri Lanka, a host of more liberal laws and institutions were established, such as the Office of Missing Persons, Enforced Disappearance Act, Right to Information Act, citizenship for previously-stateless plantation workers etc.

In Sri Lanka and Thailand, INGOs have been withdrawing for more than a decade due to donor focus away from middle income country' and (ii) difficulty working with Government and accessing resident permits (iii) negative scandals recently hitting INGO income. The relevant engagement and strength is weakened and it has an impact on Partners in those countries. NGOs in both countries expressed a feeling of being abandoned.

In Macedonia, the setting up of the Roma Action Network in 2017 has shared planning and implementation skills widely. It now comprises the biggest network in North Macedonia

On the wider organizational scale, MRG is constantly trying to maximize impact. It has just set up 'brown bag sessions; on 'Changing policy on domestic level' led by Head of Law Jennifer Castello to create more impact-oriented programmes. Great steps forward have also been made on communications' impact: the recent work with journalists in Eastern Europe is set up to monitor the impact of the articles. MRG is for the first time able to monitor views, comments etc on its sites; documentation is being written – such as Key Trends, Climate Change and Minorities - to be leaner, lighter, and having more reach and impact.

Sustainability: Is it likely that the benefits (outcomes) of the project are sustainable?

For a mid-sized organisation with limited unrestricted funds, programme sustainability depends on ongoing donor funding; MRG is 'hamstrung by an exclusive link to projects'. The Tunisia project has achieved much in 18 months. Street theatre elements of the programme¹⁰⁵ were found to 'have significantly contributed to the capacity building of local cultural operators... Almost all sub-grantees are still active in the field'¹⁰⁶. It 'succeeded in building a regional cohort... with the capacity to link minority rights, cultural rights and drama... tangible evidence of (i) technical and soft skills development (ii) awareness of discrimination... (iii) engagement with ... minority.. rights after the project (iv) higher motivation...' The career success of numerous Black and Imazighen Trainees from marginalized backgrounds is chronicled in project reports, as well as the founding of a club for word and street theatre in Gebeli, and ongoing street theatre in Tunisia. It is, however, unclear if this current MRG work will be funded after another 18 month; Macedonia and Bulgaria are at similar stages.. Continental litigation work is particularly unsuitable within such timeframes, and MRG has ended up doing pro bono work¹⁰⁷

Programme sustainability is also strongly related to context; it is no surprise that the more hopeful environments of Macedonia and Tunisia give a better sense of impact durability. The Sri Lanka and Thailand work is latent, and a revival will depend on political context, which In

¹⁰⁵Via the Tunisian Association for Children and Youth Theatre which ran a street theatre festival from balconies in the South; Danseurs Citoyens (who later received Ministry of Culture core funds), DAMJ, the Medenine Centre for Dramatic Arts

¹⁰⁶AAA DDD final narrative report MRG to EU

¹⁰⁷According to Head of Law, Jennifer Castello

Thailand's Deep South is operationally difficult with NGOs / CSOs relatively weak and divided. Personality and professional difficulties both within the co-coordinating agency PEF, and between PEF and MRG did not improve the chances of programme sustainability.

Trainees in the quantitative research want MRG to maintain their MRG accounts, so they can access them post-training. There are cost and prioritization aspects to this, but MRG may usefully look into its cost-benefit and continue to seek networking funding.

MRG's practice of forming pairs and triads of Partners to work together - in line with the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan¹⁰⁸ ' was generally welcomed by Partners, even when it didn't work out. The networking in itself was seen as important. A Tunisian Trainee suggested support for MRG's policy in taking on the pain, with the potential gain, of growing fledgling organizations 'MRG is the most flexible in accepting small organisations'.

There is strong evidence elsewhere of good sustainability in MRG's work, in 2013, 2018 and 2019 research of the East Africa fundraising work of Partners, the South Asia Coalition, and of former Mindanao Trainee Johaira Wahhab taking messages of autonomy and peace-building to Pattani in 2017.

Trainees gave this programme a rating of 77.31% for sustainability of outcomes, and Partners 82.07%. These were lower than their average ratings. Some outcomes will be sustainable, others not, and main factors in maximising sustainability are seen as organisational strengthening and networking. It is significant that both Trainees and Partners felt that MRG should be putting more focus on its Partners' systems rather than on individuals, and citing sustainability as the reason. MRG's path suggested by this evaluation report is to try to increase unrestricted income. For donors, it is to make strategic funding decisions and continue support, even if this means investing in fewer countries. The creation and dashing of expectations is a theme throughout this report, as are calls by Partners and Trainees for a longer-term view; both MRG and Sida have a role in advocating their laudable attempts to provide this.

Conclusion on Relevance, Impact and Sustainability:

With the numerous examples and constructive criticism throughout this report, MRG's programme can be seen to have very successfully delivered overall on the counts of relevance and impact, and to a high degree in the more challenging area of sustainability.

List of Recommendations: "It is recommended that:

- MRG continue to keep evolving its courses and partnerships, keep providing a level of service which attracts high ratings, and expand its existing programmes to reach more minority rights defenders and organizations.

¹⁰⁸ p.24 'Where this is needed, we will contribute to the building of capacity of Partner NGOs to carry out joint work'

- MRG continue to seek funding to manage post-training relationships to allow Trainees to maintain their accounts and share learning, but meanwhile also seeks cost-effective ways to devolve the management of country or theme groups to Trainees (such as Facebook groups), and in all events carefully manages the expectations in its relations with Trainees.
- MRG extend the fundraising functions of its Facebook site from sharing funding opportunities to fundraising advice and tips. This could begin with one post per month
- MRG should review and seek to improve the functionality and accessibility of the online platform/accessible technology, in general, and for the elderly and visually-impaired.
- In the strategic planning process, MRG determine its optimal size and the way in which that is measured (e.g. by turnover, income, Trainees, Partners, social media reach etc), for example by 2025 and 2030. For income, MRG might consider its optimal % of unrestricted funds, and its optimal % of funding tied to individual programmes, and to accelerate its search for donors able to accommodate unrestricted funding.
- MRG consider the optimal size and structure of its Communications Team, based on its decisions of future organisational directions and optimal size of MRG itself. When funding allows a move away from exclusively project-funding, a larger Team and effective strategy may need: close liaison between Programmes, Campaigns and Communications; strategy, investment in the inter-active nature of the website and social media; training of staff in creating video content; social monitoring tools, and greater staff time to optimise their use.
- 'Brown-bag sessions' should be organised on 'How does MRG deal with innovation?' Staff might invite relevant experience from outside, and consciously value the digital literacy of younger staff members including interns. Such sessions – suggested by an MRG staff member – could also feed into strategic planning.
- MRG should review its current prioritisation of target audiences, with a view to also engaging more with the general public. It could usefully accelerate its 'commitment to those 'hot topics'[1] for which it has some capacity and added-value, using popular, dynamic language and media (such as cartoons[2], tweets[3], clips, podcasts, quizzes, 'Top 10s') which may resonate with the new potential target audience.
- MRG should train willing programme and advocacy staff to produce content from within conferences (and elsewhere). MRG should be utilitarian in prioritizing resources of training, time and money on content for those social media interventions which may attract significant interest. It should set targets/carefully monitor how successful these interventions are and come to serious judgments about why/why not. It might make two exceptions. It might assess how much (further) positive change might be effected at

the early stages of 'unfashionable' issues and peoples' work (because the point is to get those unfashionable issues onto the agenda over time). MRG might also give an exception for the publication of evaluations (which display a USP of organizational integrity, may be primary reason that MRG can attract evaluators and may allow MRG the possibility of taking credit for its achievements in predicting events). The above examples could be displayed on 'Success Pages' for MRG to articulate its achievements on MRG's website and social media sites.

- The MRG website should extend its focus from traditional minority groups, where need, capacity to engage and opportunity arise.
- MRG try to create space and devote time and effort to be active in networks, as successfully undertaken in Uganda.
- The current strategic planning processes produces a clear message that staff are encouraged to respond primarily to areas of greatest (i) minority (in a broad sense) client need (ii) MRG capacity and (iii) opportunity - including as an active member of coalitions - and to make operational cases for initial experimentation leading to mainstream programming. Experiments and pilot projects extending MRG's learning and competences should be encouraged.
- MRG maintain its current realistic costing of evaluations, and its current practice of providing an overall fee to include all costs.
- Adequate, realistic lead-in time, and total time, be given to an evaluation of this scope and focused more on the generation of ideas than editing. Where possible, evaluations should be conducted before project end, and the length of delays at the start of the process be added to the end
- Where evaluators are not familiar with either the country context or the MRG programme within it, when partnerships are new, or programmes long-finished, that appropriate MRG staff members are requested to put together a draft meeting schedule agreed with Partners and Trainees. Mutually-agreed amendments or additions may later be made to ensure evaluator independence.

NB: More recommendations are in [Appendix Five](#) for Visit Countries; 3 general, 4 for [Tunisia](#), 2 [Sri Lanka](#), 3 [Thailand](#) and 4 for [Macedonia](#).

I. Appendices

Appendix One: Questionnaire questions

Questions 1. and 2. are contact details and identifiers

All quantitative questions has the options of: Absolutely (97%-100%); Strongly (80%-96%); Mostly (60-79%); Average (40-59%); Partly (20-39%); Weakly (4%-19%); Absolutely Not (0-3%)

3. Overall, in my opinion, MRG-SIDA 2012-18 capacity building interventions
Had a direct, positive impact,
Helped secure the rights of its beneficiaries
Responded to the needs and priorities of its beneficiaries
Will have sustainable outcomes/ benefits

4. I regard MRG as:
"A positive force"
"Open to feedback and criticism"
"Expert"
"Able to help its allies to secure funding"

5.a Some gains can be made in Minority Rights by building the skills of individual activists. Other gains can be made by building Partners' systems. MRG tries to do both. Does MRG have this balance right?

5.b If the balance is not Absolutely right, MRG should increase its focus on:
Individual Activist Skills/Partner Systems

6. Which one thing should MRG start or improve? Why?

7. This is the most important question. What message would you like to send to the Capacity Building Program of the Minority Rights Group and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency on Capacity Building 2012-2018? (Please write as much as you want):

Additional Questions to Partners¹⁰⁹

4¹¹⁰. I regard MRG as:

- Actively seeking equality with its Partners, allies and influencers in steering change in line with communities needs and priorities?

¹⁰⁹Partners were assumed to know more about MRG and able to answer deeper questions

¹¹⁰Quantitative and qualitative questions were bunched for ease of response; obviously this affected the entire numbering of questions. For ease of reading and space, not every Trainees' question is repeated under Partners

- Able to accept when communities, Partners, allies and influencers refuse MRG's advice and take a different approach?
- Actively working with Partners, allies and influencers to assess gaps in their capacity to influence change?
- Actively supporting women within minority and indigenous communities to develop their skills and abilities to ensure that issues are taken up with their communities and by MRG?
- Actively reducing or eliminating participation barriers (including disabilities, age, statelessness, rural/urban) for potential and actual minority activists.

5. If your previous answer is not 'Absolutely', how can MRG actively reduce or eliminate participation barriers? (please specify)

6. To realise minority rights, MRG puts some time and budget in building the capacity/skills of individual human rights defenders. It also puts some time and budget into building the organisational systems of MRG's NGO Partners. Is MRG's current prioritisation between individuals and Partners good?

7.a If you answered in 6. anything except "Absolutely Right", should MRG should increase its focus on: Individual Activist Skills or Partner Systems

7.b How will this strengthen future Minority Rights?

8.a Have you experienced conflicts between organisations in this programme?

8.b (if you answered NO, please ignore this question) I YES, Are these conflicts are mostly because of shrinking civil society space?

8.c Is there a problem that organisations operate and communicate without enough openness and/or frequency?

8.d If yes, how best to proceed? (please specify)

8.e Is it MRG's role to strengthen co-ordination and co-operation?

Q8.g What impact (quality and quantity) was made in strengthening the Minority Rights of affected people? (specific examples are very welcome)

8.i What are the Key Learnings from this programme? (please specify)

Appendix Two : 8 questions chosen and analyzed for Partner answers in regard to civil space:

Overall, in my opinion, MRG-SIDA 2012-18 capacity building interventions:

"Had a direct, positive impact": (question 1)

"Helped secure the rights of its beneficiaries": (question 2)

"Responded to the needs and priorities of its beneficiaries": (question 3)

"Will have sustainable outcomes / benefits": (question 4)

Is MRG:

Able to accept when communities, Partners, allies and influencers refuse MRG's advice and take a different approach? (question 5)

Actively reducing or eliminating participation barriers (including disabilities, age, statelessness, rural/urban) for potential and actual minority activists (question 6)

If your previous answer is not 'Absolutely', how can MRG actively reduce or eliminate participation barriers? (please specify) (question 7)

To realise minority rights, MRG puts some time and budget in building the capacity/skills of individual human rights defenders. It also puts some time and budget into building the organisational systems of MRG's NGO Partners. Is MRG's current prioritisation between individuals and Partners good? (question 8)

10 questions were analyzed for Trainees relating to civil space impact on their satisfaction

Overall, in my opinion, MRG-SIDA 2012-18 capacity building interventions:

"Had a direct, positive impact":

"Helped secure the rights of its beneficiaries":

"Responded to the needs and priorities of its beneficiaries":

"Will have sustainable outcomes / benefits":

I regard MRG as:

"A positive force"

"Open to feedback and criticism"

"Expert"

"Able to help its allies to secure funding"

To realise minority rights, MRG puts some time and budget in building the capacity/skills of individual human rights defenders. It also puts some time and budget into building the organisational systems of MRG's NGO Partners. Is MRG's current prioritisation between individuals and Partners good?

If you answered in 5. anything except "Absolutely Right", should MRG should increase its focus on:

Appendix Three: Average scores by country from Trainees on civil space:

Closed Civil Space Countries-

DRC- 63.81%

Egypt- 71.36%

Averages From **Repressed** Civil Space Countries-

Iraq – 77.31%

Somalia – 86.89%

Bangladesh – 50.05%

Cameroon – 75.44%

Myanmar – 89.55%

Rwanda -89.50%

Thailand – 91.99%

Mauritania- 98.5%

Uganda – 78.28%

Zimbabwe – 78.8%8

Averages From **Obstructed** Civil Space-

Hungary- 85.11%

Morocco-90.61%

Sri Lanka- 73.61%

Tunisia- 83.43%

Nigeria- 74.89%

Lebanon- 84.66%

Moldova- 63.7%

Maldives- 51.55%

Averages From **Narrowed** Space-

Macedonia- 92.71%

Slovakia- 83.77%

Bulgaria- 87.98%

Poland- 95.77%

Greece- 94%

An Average From **Open** Civil Space-

Czech Republic- 69.28%

Appendix Four: All Questionnaire Results

Question List for Trainees and Partners:

1.a Name

1.b Have you been a trainee at an event organized by MRG between 2012 and 2018?

1.b Were you/your organisation part of MRG/SIDA Capacity Building 2012-18 ?

1.c If YES, were you mostly a: Researcher/Activist/Other please specify-

1.c If yes, was your organisation a partner of MRG or how else you were involved?

1.d In which country / countries were you a Trainee / Researcher / Activist / Other in this MRG 2012-18 work (please specify)

1.d In which country / countries were you a Partner / Ally / Influencer / Other in this MRG/SIDA 2012-18 work (please specify)

1.e Are you: Male/Female/Other

1.f Please specify, if you identify as a member of one or more Minority:

1.g Nationality:

1.h Where (country) will you spend most time in the next 6 months:

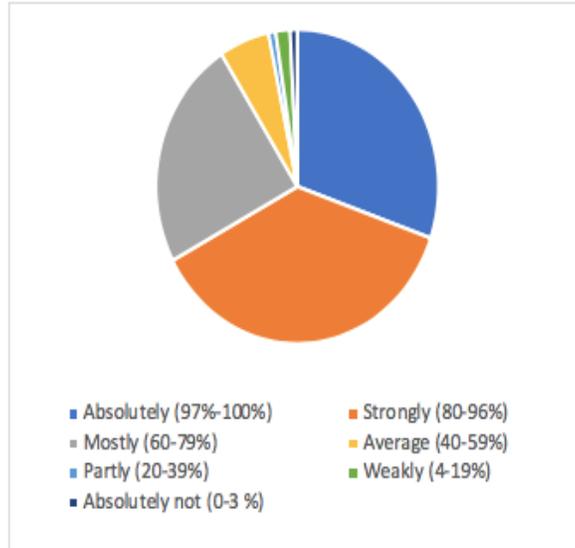
1.i E-mail address:

1.j Telephone (with country code written as eg +254)

3. Overall, in my opinion, MRG-SIDA 2012-18 capacity building interventions

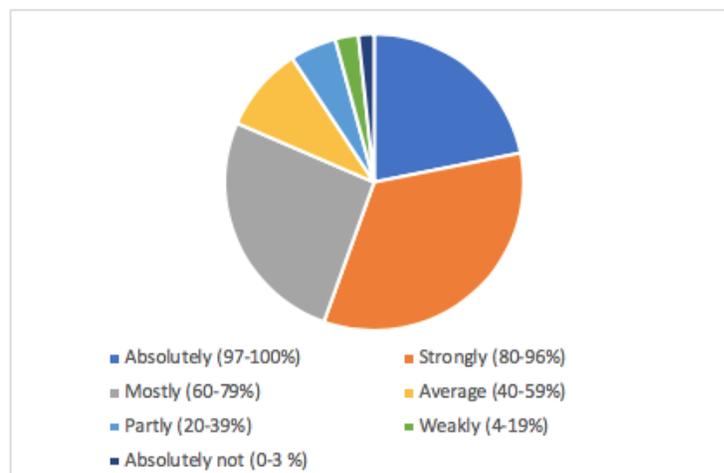
Had a direct, positive impact

Absolutely (97%-100%)	37
Strongly (80-96%)	45
Mostly (60-79%)	29
Average (40-59%)	7
Partly (20-39%)	1
Weakly (4-19%)	2
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	1
Total	122



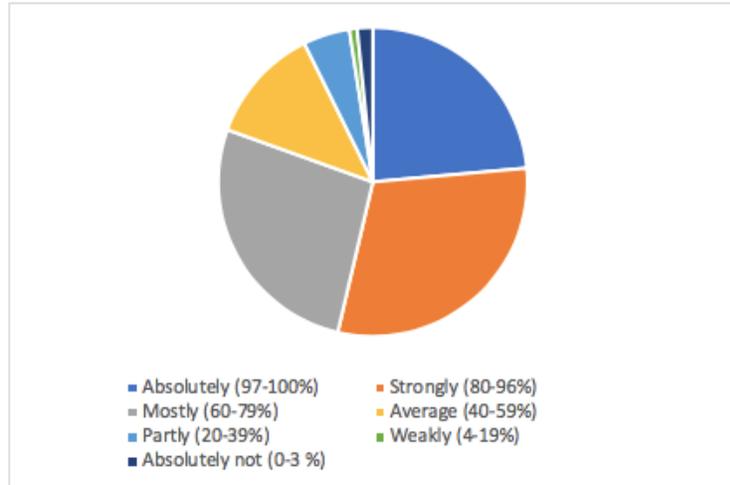
Helped secure the rights of its beneficiaries

Absolutely (97-100%)	26
Strongly (80-96%)	40
Mostly (60-79%)	31
Average (40-59%)	11
Partly (20-39%)	6
Weakly (4-19%)	3
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	2
Total	119



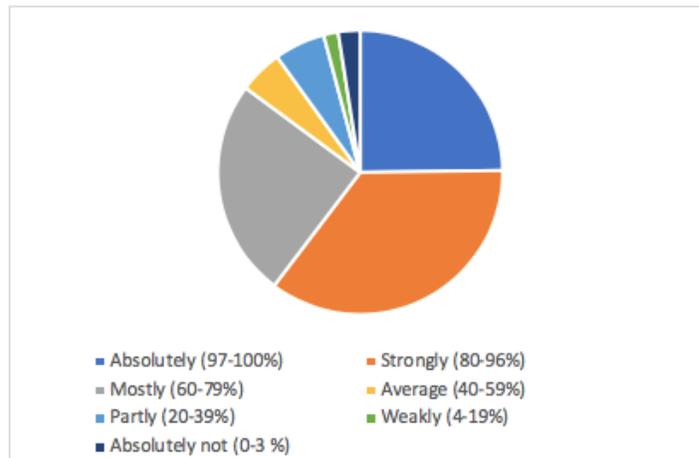
Responded to the needs and priorities of its beneficiaries

Absolutely (97-100%)	29
Strongly (80-96%)	37
Mostly (60-79%)	33
Average (40-59%)	15
Partly (20-39%)	6
Weakly (4-19%)	1
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	2
Total	123



Will have sustainable Outcomes/Benefits

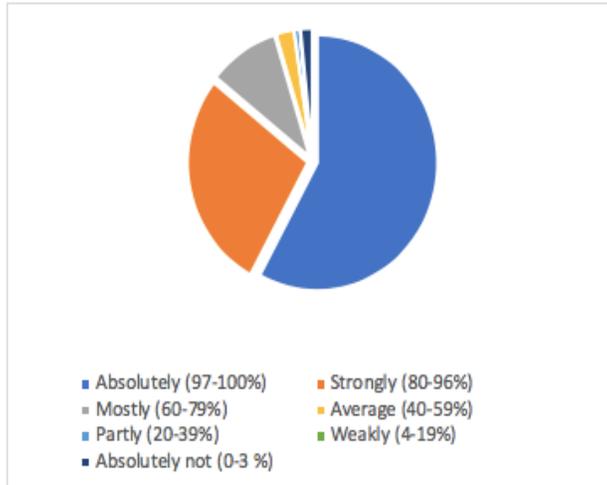
Absolutely (97-100%)	30
Strongly (80-96%)	43
Mostly (60-79%)	30
Average (40-59%)	6
Partly (20-39%)	7
Weakly (4-19%)	2
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	3
Total	121



4. I regard MRG as:

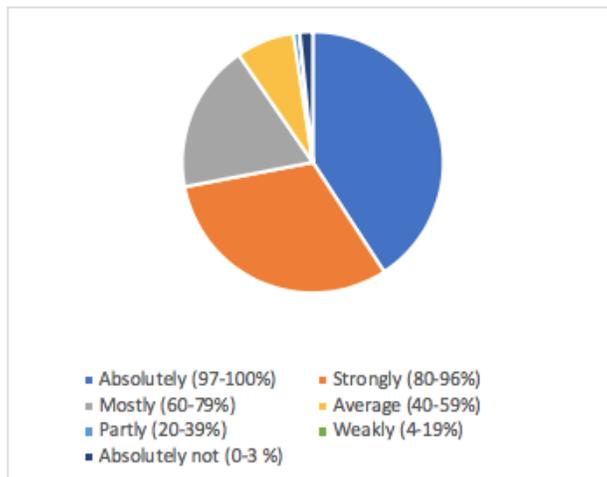
“ A positive force”

Absolutely (97- 100%)	73
Strongly (80-96%)	35
Mostly (60-79%)	12
Average (40-59%)	3
Partly (20-39%)	1
Weakly (4-19%)	0
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	2
Total	126



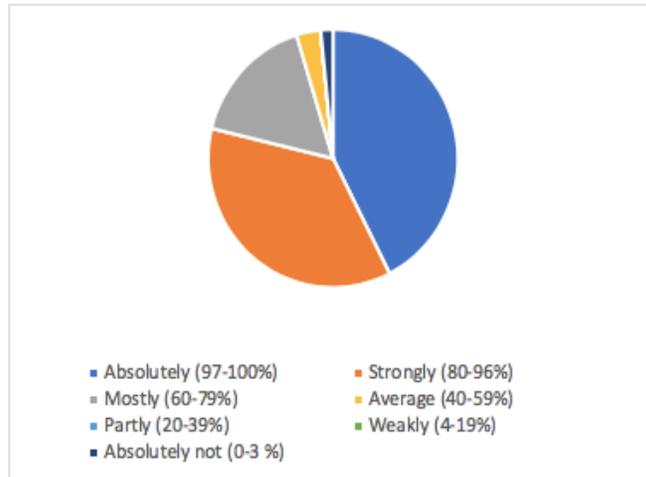
“Open to feedback and criticism”

Absolutely (97-100%)	51
Strongly (80-96%)	39
Mostly (60-79%)	23
Average (40-59%)	9
Partly (20-39%)	1
Weakly (4-19%)	0
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	2
Total	125



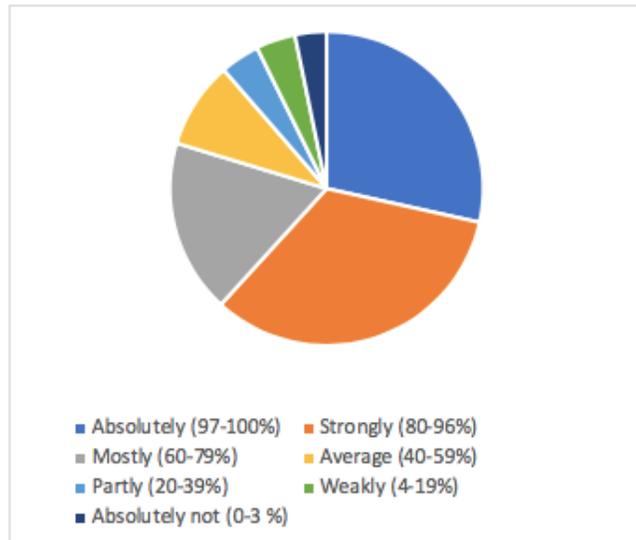
“Expert”

Absolutely (97-100%)	54
Strongly (80-96%)	46
Mostly (60-79%)	21
Average (40-59%)	4
Partly (20-39%)	0
Weakly (4-19%)	0
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	2
Total	127



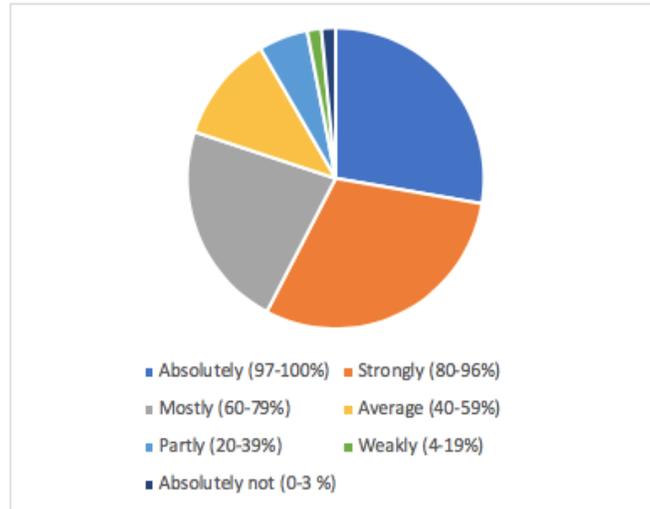
“Able to help its allies secure funding”

Absolutely (97-100%)	35
Strongly (80-96%)	41
Mostly (60-79%)	22
Average (40-59%)	11
Partly (20-39%)	5
Weakly (4-19%)	5
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	4
Total	123



5.a Some gains can be made in Minority Rights by building the skills of individual activists. Other gains can be made by building partners' systems. MRG tries to do both. Does MRG have this balance right ?

Absolutely (97-100%)	36
Strongly (80-96%)	39
Mostly (60-79%)	29
Average (40-59%)	15
Partly (20-39%)	7
Weakly (4-19%)	2
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	2
Total	130



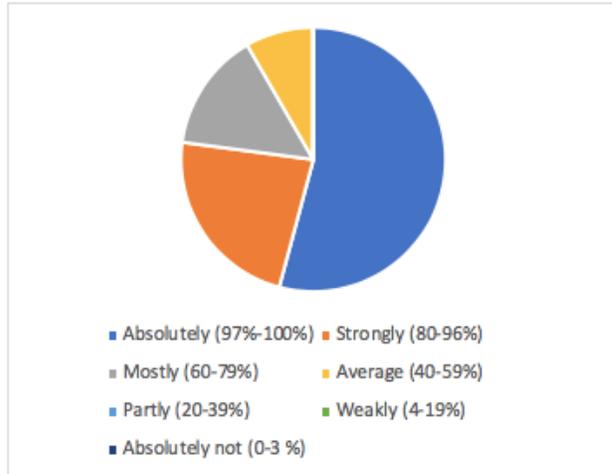
6. Which one thing should MRG start or improve? Why?

7. This is the most important question. What message would you like to send to the Capacity Building Program of the Minority Rights Group and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency on Capacity Building 2012-2018? (Please write as much as you want)

Additional Questions to Partners-

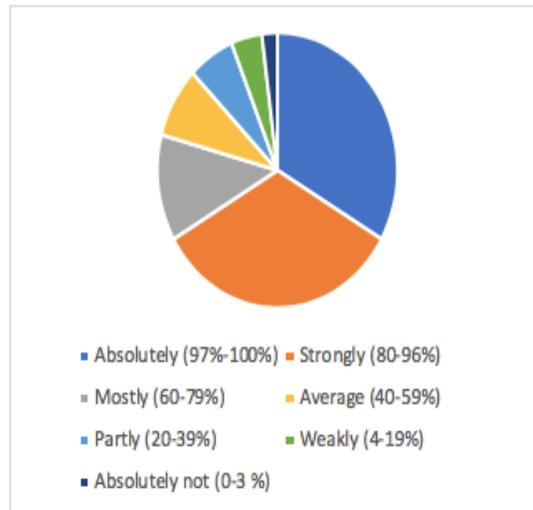
4. I regard MRG as- Actively seeking equality with its partners, allies and influencers in steering change in line with communities need and priorities ?

Absolutely (97%-100%)	26
Strongly (80-96%)	11
Mostly (60-79%)	7
Average (40-59%)	4
Partly (20-39%)	0
Weakly (4-19%)	0
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	0
Total	48



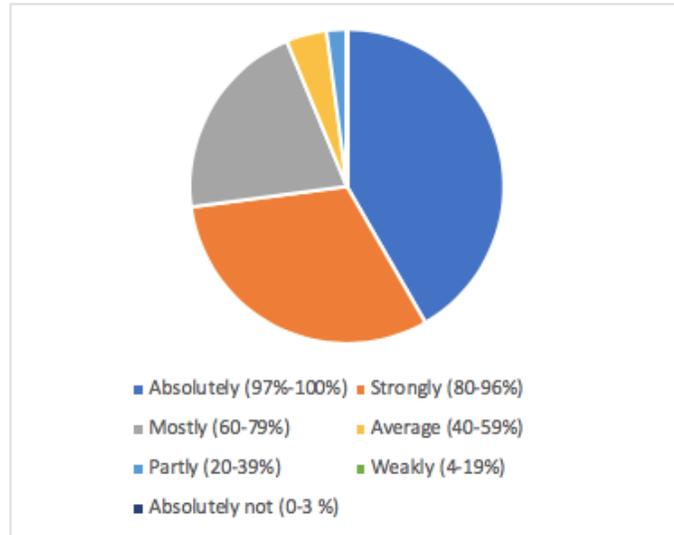
Able to accept when communities, partners, allies and influencers refuse MRG’s advice and take a different approach ?

Absolutely (97%-100%)	16
Strongly (80-96%)	16
Mostly (60-79%)	6
Average (40-59%)	4
Partly (20-39%)	3
Weakly (4-19%)	2
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	1
Total	48



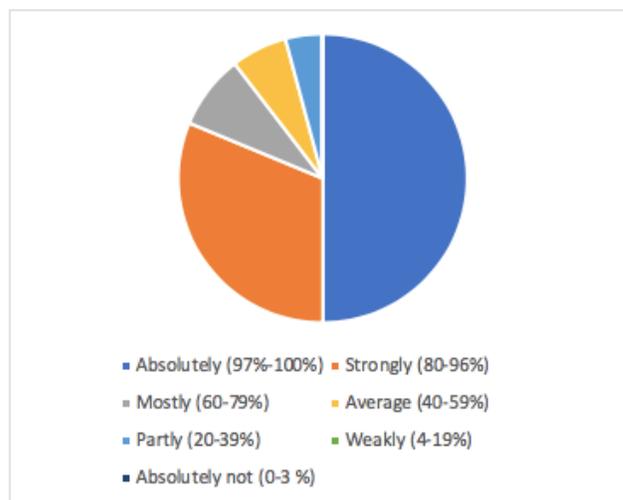
Actively working with partners, allies and influencers to assess gaps in their capacity to influence change ?

Absolutely (97%-100%)	20
Strongly (80-96%)	15
Mostly (60-79%)	10
Average (40-59%)	2
Partly (20-39%)	1
Weakly (4-19%)	0
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	0
Total	48



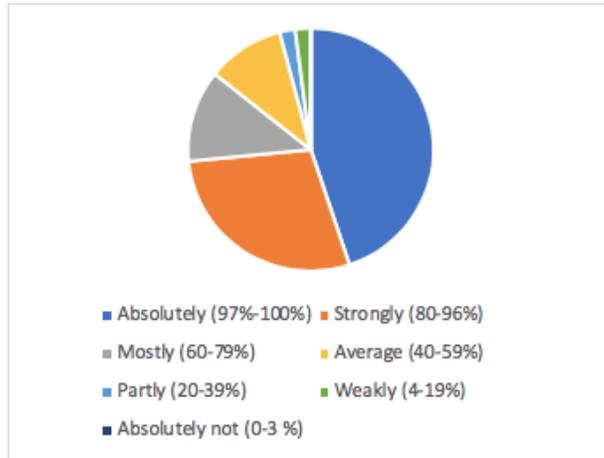
Actively supporting women within minority and indigenous communities to develop their skills and abilities to ensure that issues are taken up with their communities and by MRG ?

Absolutely (97%-100%)	24
Strongly (80-96%)	15
Mostly (60-79%)	4
Average (40-59%)	3
Partly (20-39%)	2
Weakly (4-19%)	0
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	0
Total	48



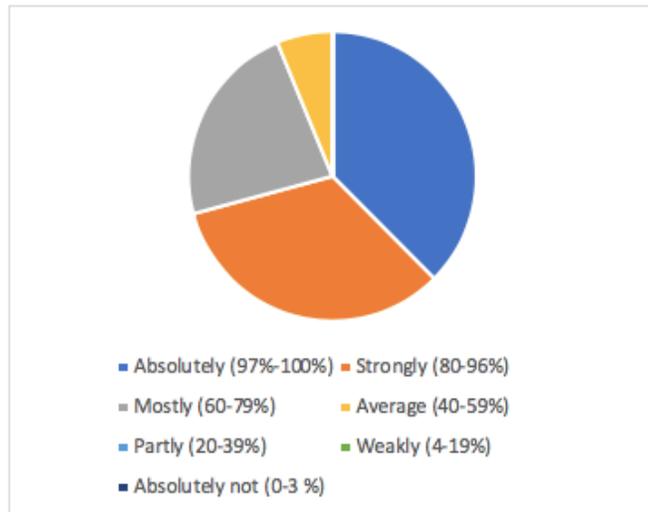
Actively reducing the eliminating participation barriers (including disabilities, age, statelessness, rural/urban) for potential and actual minority activists.

Absolutely (97%-100%)	22
Strongly (80-96%)	14
Mostly (60-79%)	6
Average (40-59%)	5
Partly (20-39%)	1
Weakly (4-19%)	1
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	0
Total	49



6. To realise minority rights, MRG puts some time and budget in building the capacity/skills of individual human rights defenders. It also puts some time and budget into building the organisational systems of MRG's NGO partners. Is MRG's current prioritisation between individuals and partners good?

Absolutely (97%-100%)	18
Strongly (80-96%)	16
Mostly (60-79%)	11
Average (40-59%)	3
Partly (20-39%)	0
Weakly (4-19%)	0
Absolutely not (0-3 %)	0
Total	48



7.a If you answered in 6. anything except "Absolutely Right", should MRG should increase its focus on:

Individual Activist Skills -5

Partner Systems-14

7.b How will this strengthen future Minority Rights?

Majority of partners selected the improvement in Partner system rather than Individual Activist Skill and when asked how that will strengthen the future Minority Rights they mentioned that they should develop more programs. The role of MRG should expand, so it can promote minority rights especially in conflicted areas as they need more assistance. Partners mentioned that the role should be more efficient.

8.a Have you experienced conflicts between organisations in this programme?

8.b (if you answered NO, please ignore this question) I YES, Are these conflicts are mostly because of shrinking civil society space?

8.c Is there a problem that organisations operate and communicate without enough openness and/or frequency?

8.d If yes, how best to proceed? (please specify)

8.e Is it MRG's role to strengthen co-ordination and co-operation?

Q8.g What impact (quality and quantity) was made in strengthening the Minority Rights of affected people? (specific examples are very welcome)

MRG made some remarkable impact as mentioned by the Partners, some of very complicated situations were possible to be resolved by MRG. The training helped the people to stand for their own voices and it made them efficient in problem solving. The local issues reached the international level. The examples below are the proof that how impactful MRG is in strengthening rights of affected people, qualitatively it can be said that it has improved the situations of affected people, partner's outreach and developing their skills.

8.i What are the Key Learnings from this programme? (please specify)

The program has implemented a lot of useful skills such as advocacy, research and some life and problem solving skills. The partners gained insights of their own communities or minorities that are affected in their area locally. At last some said that there is still a lot of things that are needed to be done.

Appendix Five: All visit countries: commonalities and comparisons; Tunisia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, N. Macedonia

Qualitative Country Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations for:

All visit countries: commonalities and comparators in Findings, Recommendations and Conclusions:

Political, economic and minority contexts:

All four visit countries had predominantly new or developing NGO Partners: 'One strand of this work has been to identify communities who are not organized or who are just beginning to get organized and support nascent organizations to form and develop. Organizations were offered one-to-one capacity-building support and also opportunities to come together to learn from what others were doing and share strategies¹¹¹. This is in line with MRG's 2017-2022 strategy 'For "emerging" Partners, on the contrary, capacity- building efforts will have to be geared towards establishing and developing minimal capacity. At MRG, our approach is to work with [both] existing and new Partners'¹¹²

All visit countries shared the 'insider-outsider' dynamic between majority and minority populations, with inferior status and well-being generally experienced by minority populations.

Macedonia currently appears to on a promising economic, political and rights path. The same clear link was made in the other visit countries between an economy providing jobs and opportunities, stable government, and minority rights. However, all three of these factors were not present in the other countries. KIs in Tunisia, Sri Lanka and Thailand described the economic and political situation as fragile or weak, and only in Tunisia was optimism expressed regarding rights. All of the visit countries have much to achieve before there is any parity between minority and majority populations, and the relative willingness of government - as recently experienced in Tunisia and Sri Lanka - is not sufficient to achieving it, without stronger economies and stable government.

Very strongly in Sri Lanka and Thailand, markedly in Tunisia and to some extent in North Macedonia¹¹³ was the frequent reference to huge gaps between metropolitan and 'provincial' human rights defenders, CSOs and NGOs. This is a constant issue; in my 2013 research, a senior manager interviewed in OHCHR Bangkok commented at length on the unsatisfactory nature of minorities being represented consistently by non-minority intermediaries, and by metropolitan professional minority intermediaries who do not share their lives and experiences. MRG has always tried to provide alternatives and opportunities; in 2013, a small majority¹¹⁴ of its

¹¹¹ Report to Sida, 2013-2016 p.11

¹¹² MRG Strategy 2017-2020, p.17

¹¹³ where physical remoteness of CSOs in Berovo also felt like a real factor in distance from power and influence.

¹¹⁴ (34 out of 60)

participants at the UN Forum came from minority communities, against the overall trend: 'For human rights defenders in particular, they do not use the UN human rights mechanisms. It will only be people in Bangkok or whichever capital'

Inter-minority relations were a mixture of solidarity¹¹⁵ and fractiousness. In all visit countries, some activists found it difficult not to reflect divisions within and between minorities. In Sri Lanka, I was told that "minorities never came together", and Highland-Lowland Tamil divisions, and Tamil-Muslim divisions (pronounced since 2013) were more evident than at any time during my visits over the last 15 years. When discussing how 95% of Muslim suspects had been released within two months of the Easter Bombings, a KI said 'When it came to Tamils, they would languish forever...'. In Tunisia, activists declared themselves 'fed up' with the attention given to other minorities, or denied that status, for example to Imazighen. Among MRG Partners, Buddhist-Muslim tensions were clear, and in Macedonia some Roma were cynical about MRG Mediators "' You fill up your pockets, and I get nothing.". Nobody should be under any illusion a common experience of oppression and discrimination is enough by itself to minority peoples' together.

The contexts for research differed greatly. In Macedonia, interviews could take place comfortably in a foreign language by a foreign national (Serbian) in restaurants. This is normal practice in the country; no one paid attention. This level of relaxation was greater than that found in Tunisia (moderately relaxed, with some changing of places depending on the subject and who was listening), Sri Lanka (moderately relaxed but with fears expressed as to whether content was being monitored for future use by a possible new authoritarian government, under which there was a common foreboding that such openness would again be impossible) and the Deep South in Thailand (relatively careful, occasionally anxious). This report has advisedly refrained from using case studies and photographs from Thailand (which is currently politically suspicious and tense) and Sri Lanka (which my become so). Instead it uses the contextual monitoring tool of timelines to 'tell the story'.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Quantitative findings show a very clear, very strong appreciation for MRG's training content.

For all visit countries, it is recommended that:

- MRG continue its practical focus; management skills, economic and social rights; advocacy and legal support on real life-changing issues such as dams, and support for the real daily-life fears and issues of minority groups.
- MRG aim to extend its training content to more minority rights defenders worldwide

¹¹⁵ For example <http://nceasl.org/2019/05/15/statement-on-the-recent-violence-against-muslim-communities/> In Tunisia, a Baha'i KI, Ahmed Zouhaie Ben Hassine told me c The indifference of onlookers [to victimization of Black and LGBT+ people] is felt by other minorities

- Contextual planning is key. Impact on a national scale is closely linked to context; progressive laws have been achieved in Tunisia and Sri Lanka because of relatively favorable political contexts to minority rights. Where the context is unfavorable, such as in the Deep South of Thailand, where the sustainability of the MRG programme seemed more questionable, MRG needs to either choose not to engage, or to aim lower, closer, more engaged, more long-term.
- MRG is rigorous in its operational choices, ensuring the close consideration not only the meeting of undoubted need and solidarity, but also the likely cost-benefit impact. Whether Thailand and Sri Lanka are fertile ground for significant MRG programmes may depend on movements in the national political direction of those countries.

Tunisia

Tunisia political and minority context:

Tunisia has one majority people, 'Maliki¹¹⁶ Sunni Arabs' promoted for decades as synonymous with 'Tunisian' under the two previous autocratic Presidents¹¹⁷. Under the current MRG (and UN) definition, it has as minorities: the indigenous Imazighen (singular 'Amazigh'), a word which means "free people" in the Indigenous Tamazight language; religious and atheist converts from Islam; a longstanding Jewish population; Black populations both indigenous and migrant; Christians; Baha'i; Shi'a and non-dominant Sunni Muslims. Outside the definition are LGBT+ communities - whom the majority of my non-LGBT+ KIs described as facing the greatest discrimination of all groups¹¹⁸- PLWD and (arguably, as in all countries) a vast constituency of women.

Since the 2011 Revolution, Tunisia has successfully established a functioning democracy and taken some positive human rights interventions, including a more progressive 2014 Constitution 'guaranteeing' freedom of religion - although only Christian and Jewish communities are currently recognized - and legislative pro-minority changes including the criminalizing of racial discrimination.

Other religious groups that are not recognized, such as Bahá'í and Shi'a, face significant restrictions on their ability to worship freely. Pre-revolutionary legislation on apostasy is also still used to penalize Tunisians who have chosen to convert to Christianity or identify as atheist.

For decades, successive Tunisian governments have defined its national identity as Arab and Muslim. This has not only marginalized religious minorities but also sidelined the country's indigenous Imazighen population through a long process of assimilation. The same is true of the

¹¹⁶ Maliki is one of the four major madhhab of Islamic jurisprudence within Sunni Islam.

¹¹⁷ Bourguiba and Ben Ali

¹¹⁸ Some KIs stated that atheists and LGBT+ are the groups facing most discrimination; none chose any other group.

country's Black population which, while until recently largely invisible in the country's public life, has long been subjected to racial discrimination.

Tunisia's achievements since the revolution have been driven by a growing recognition of minorities, women and other groups, as well as a willingness to provide a space for these marginalized voices to express their demands freely. However, much remains to be done to realize full equality for all and complete the country's remarkable transition to a vibrant, inclusive democracy. This includes not only the repeal of pre-2011 discriminatory legislation and the implementation of its commitments in international law, but also engagement and education at all levels of Tunisian society, including police, judiciary, religious leaders and the general public.

Once again in the recent September 2019 elections, the Tunisian Constitution excluded candidature for the Presidency from non-Muslims, those under 35, and those heading charitable organizations (as well as those recently funded from abroad for political advertising, and with criminal records). Effectively supported by digital groups, independent Kais Sa'eed – described as socially conservative, an outsider and a populist¹¹⁹ – became President after the 13 October second-round runoff. The election was also notable for the rejection of the nomination of the first ever would-be openly-gay candidate for President in the Arab world. Reaction internationally had been almost uniquely positive towards Mounir Baatour's campaign¹²⁰, but a coalition of LGBT+ activists, including my interviewees, distanced themselves from his bid, claiming to have received sexual abuse cases against him and being opposed to his reportedly aggressive 'outing' and Zionist views. They feared a backlash against all of the LGBT+ community; 'The rhetoric he uses is great, and his courage undeniable... but it could be a poisoned chalice'. The absence of coverage of complaints about Baatour's campaign in international media was notable, aside from African-based comment such as <https://rightsafrika.com/2019/07/24/lgbt-tunisia-rift-over-israel-tactics-morals-of-gay-candidate/>. The official reason for rejecting his candidacy was that he had not reached the required 10,000 registered voters' signatures amongst the reported 19,565 he had collected; media reported that 'the LGBT community rejoiced'.¹²¹

As everywhere, culture is always changing and contested, values always in balance, as shown by new openness across the Arab world, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48926282>.

Deeper political and minority context is provided by Silvia Quattrini's exclusive focus on the country in 'Identity and Citizenship in Tunisia: The Situation of Minorities after the 2011 Revolution' <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1117031/download>

¹¹⁹ 1843magazine.com/1843/tunisias-new-president-how-memes-and-viral-videos-led-to-a-robocop-revolution

¹²⁰ ntpolicydigest.org/2019/07/05/mounir-baatour-first-openly-gay-candidate-in-tunisia-is-running-for-president/

¹²¹ raseef22.com/article/1074816-openly-gay-tunisian-presidential-candidate-fails-to-qualify

Tunisia Itinerary:

Dates of first interviews with Informants (follow-up conversations are not listed all on itinerary are Partners unless specified)

25 July: Arrived early morning to Tunis. KII with Zied of MRG and Dorra of CHOUF

26 July: National Holiday (unplanned, as the next three days, for mourning of President¹²²); met Saloua Grissa of Droit a la Difference and ADC Coordinator. To Bizerte.

27 July: National Holiday: KII with Mehdi Echi & (virtual) Gheada Ben Saleh, Trainee Meryam Alabad

28 July: National Holiday: To Tunis. Met Meher Triki of MRG. To Sousse

29 July: National Holiday: To Monastir, Met ATP¹²³ at ADC Safe Space in Monastir; staff and seven participants. Met Ahmed Zouhaie Ben Hassine (Baha'i) Travelled to Gabs.

30 July: Met Ahmed Guerfel (Amazigh, hip-hop dancer, Danseurs du Sud) Travelled to Djerba

31 July: Bacem Hbaieb (Community worker with Imazighen)

WhatsApp call with Mohamed Ben Mousa (Baha'i)

My ability to conduct interviews was hampered in Tunisia by the death of the sitting President¹²⁴This was not only because of the period of national mourning, but because elections for his replacement were brought forward from November to September, providing a pressing priority for many activists.

Tunisia: Findings on the MRG programme:

The nature of the discrimination against these groups is extremely different, providing little common ground for programming. It is impossible to hide the colour of one's skin. The religiously-converted, including atheists, may have some commonality with some LGBT+ individuals in finding it painful and/or dangerous to show their identity even to their own families, as well as to wider society. Some religious groups, such as Shia and, to a lesser extent Jews, feel the need to be underground; others such as Baha'i are 'prohibited' by their own religion to be secretive (and those I interviewed claimed no affinity with the term 'minority'). PLWD face considerable infrastructural as well as societal problems with feeling 'normal in society'. The Imazighen feel entitled to rights, but some KIs suggested that they have been assimilated, and coerced to pretend to be the same as 'Maliki Sunni Arabs'.

The MRG programme, and its ADCs across the country, are directed mostly at anti-Black and anti-LGBT discrimination. MRG's coordinator commented "We have eight¹²⁵ Associations... who are passionate, and who work... it is going well. Set up through the relevant, competent organisations with a background of either anti-racism or anti-LGBT, they naturally employ the

¹²²[Tunisia's president Beji Caid Essebsi dies aged 92](#)

¹²³L'Association Tunisienne de Prévention Positive

¹²⁴<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/25/tunisia-president-beji-caid-essebsi-dies>

¹²⁵ "7 Partners, and another to whom we have given communication responsibility"

relevant staff and develop a specific (LGBT+ or Black) constituency. Although willing to engage, and refer the problems faced by others outside this constituency, they do and must use their specialism, irrespective of whether their clients face ethnic or poverty-based inter-sectional discrimination, or are from the Malaki Sunni Arab majority. To do otherwise would be a contradictory exclusion from a programme whose very basis is inclusion and service.

I spoke with 12 KIs involved in 5 ADCs, and numerous others who knew of the work. The impression of both theory and practice was favourable; they were seen as meeting critical needs from well-defined minority groups. Training was especially valued.

Constructive feedback was freely provided; issues were raised about limited or inadequate funding, short-term MRG-SIDA interventions and poor response to email communication by some MRG organisers. The Anti-Discrimination Point I visited in Monastir had repeated problems with its ability to fully use the Martus database system which is the M&E foundation of the programme, but nonetheless had records to hand e.g. 22 cases of severe anti-LGBT+ discrimination for June and July 2019. Their requests were for

1. More communication/information
2. Improve monitoring of activities, orientation and share of work between the ADCs
3. Adequate finance and benefits, to organise activities to attract client involvement.
4. 'We did not know we could pay for an emergency lawyer' and 'the timing of the lawyer has to be quicker'...

Perhaps most seriously, they also commented 'We work for beneficiaries, but we are never asked about them'. This is spite of MRG's coordinator's own passion 'We must never lose sight of our beneficiaries'.

On anti-Black discrimination, MRG played an important role in the passing of anti-racial discrimination in 2017. Through its training of activists and support of NMENT and others, Maher Teiki of DAMJ, an LGBT+NGO, said "We made a network with the Black community, they were solid, they got their law".

As the case study in [Text Box 1](#) shows, there is much more to be done. Saloua Grissa from MRG Partner Droit a la Difference and ADC Co-ordinator added "In the south... they are in denial..they say racial discrimination 'does not exist', but there is a cemetery for Whites and Blacks, a village for Blacks also! For MRG, we did an awareness campaign on the right to difference in Turba in the South... we talked of colour and of Tamazight language in our report. Meryem Alaba used her MRG-SIDA training to co-write on discrimination "We documented two FGDs with people recently discriminated and a theatre piece, writing, graffiti, poetry.. The impact is richer knowledge, [encouragement] not to discriminate. People came who had denied the existence of anti-black discrimination; in the end they recognised it. With all our efforts, we succeeded."

Within the LGBT+ community, some such as Meher Teiki believe that the criminalising Article 230 could be suppressed within one year of active, effective campaigning by Tunisian NGOs backed up by international solidarity. He believes that single change would mean that LGBT+ were no longer the group facing the most discrimination in Tunisia. Dorra of CHOUF feels the process will take longer, but agrees that 230 is critical, "For us, our visibility as gay is difficult, there is still the (article 230 of) the law." One side of the law is obvious ' I would love to have all that without the fear of prison¹²⁶' A pernicious side to 230 is how it creates fear of LGBT+ to access any justice "It might be you who stays in the police station or prison.. not your attacker... when there are homosexuals arrested, there are not many who will defend¹²⁷" Much depends on the homophobia - or otherwise - of police; Text Box 2 is an individual story from Monastir reflecting both. As with the successful creation of the anti-racist law, LGBT+ needs will not be eradicated with the suppression of 230. An anonymous KI at ADC Monastir said 'We need freedom of association ..we must change 226 also - it is not only 230". And social change is a longer, harder trek again. But suppressing 230 may be a start with huge impact.

The evaluation considered whether Tunisia's current political space might mark it as a possible base from which MRG could view other North African countries' minority issues. Opinions of KIs differed. Positive interest was rather vague and rhetorical 'This is an example for all of North Africa,.. even more (now there are) demonstrations in Algeria'... 'How can the Arab/Muslim African countries pursue democracy and justice?'... 'Tunisia has kept hope alive'. Others pointed out that Morocco and Tunisia - once similar - have evolved differently, and that LGBT+ issues are currently a relatively small problem in Morocco; that Algeria is still unstable and dangerous, and Libya even more so, despite the way the country is heavily influenced by Tunisia. MRG staff are well-placed to advise on any future infrastructure and scope for a potential North Africa programme.

Text Box Title: Mehdi showed me his broken arm and videos of stone-throwing, dead mice, passive neighbours.

'Racism here comes from a history of slavery, it comes from the Gulf countries.

Since my birth, I saw my father Ahmed [being ordered] 'get this, get that!' [because he was Black] as if he was a servant. Racial discrimination is something that can affect everyone...

Life is better in the South, at least a black person can live there a little, there are more Blacks. But here [in Bizerte], there are only 2 or 3 families and no solidarity between us. I have been here since 90 in the region (the best times, I was the only one there) and 2000 ... In the countryside, they did not know about Black people, they were innocent.. Different here in the city, I even had to go to Court... In 2011 before the Revolution I worked in a factory which makes yachts, The workers went on strike.

¹²⁶ From the testimony of an anonymous KI client in ADC Monastir

¹²⁷ Dorra of MRG Partner CHOUF

I said, you need to pay me... [The employer said] 'No I will not pay you'... The same day [knowing I would have no money] I entered [to squat] a burned-out house of the ex-President.. I asked neighbours if it was possible to live there, they said yes,... I repainted it.

But my neighbour [wanted and still] wants me to leave. He has white skin, and he [also] lives on land which is not his...He worked with police security before, now he is a taxi driver.. he still has some links with the police. His son is a soldier, and from 2012-2014 he aggressed my wife, he threw stones. The police said, give me your telephone number, but they have never called, I waited one month [before taking action]. In court, the Judge said 'It was you, Mehdi, who beat your wife'. The neighbour threw bags from the roof, mice also, cut my television antenna... Here, I have some videos, Other neighbours waited outside, they looked and said nothing... They put him in jail for a night. Also the worst one is the wife, she spits when you look at her and says 'black thing!'

I was a founder member in 2011 of Mnemti, an anti-discrimination NGO and MRG partner. Together, we made this anti-discrimination law in October 2018,. There was nothing before that, you would get shot. The last time I went to Court, I asked the judge 'What does my neighbour want of me, why does he call me a slave, a black?' His mother, an old woman, said 'He was arrested 15 days ago, please forgive him, get him out'... I said to the Judge, 'If he re-offends, I will not pity him'.

On 5 June the man broke my arm, I was in plaster. I was 6 weeks in plaster. I lost 30% mobility. It is him who did the bad things, but the others supported him, they did not stop him. If one is not a friend, and one says 'hey negro', it is not funny. It is racist. it is done to injure, to hurt.

I have contact with Sa'adia, and with Zied of MRG, I have... two lawyers And this latest trial will be in October for the arm-breaking incident on 5 June. I said to my lawyer to go to Tunis, but he told me that even in Tunis justice is not reliable... '

LGBT+ kept in the dark

I heard from other LGBT+ that the police had been easy on them. They said 'Don't make a sign of it'...just keep it in your bedroom'. But we have this law, and then some can practice their homophobia... and of course there is a double discrimination if the policeman is gay; he has to hide it. For myself, I have had to invent a character; you must act like a man, talk in Arabic, it is itself a kind of discrimination. One night, we were in a car kissing at 1am, a bad place, so we did not expect company. Three soldiers arrived, put us on our knees, and said 'Are you homo'? etc. We said 'Not at All!' They did not believe our denials, and they menaced us with their guns, 'We will arrest you, you want to change the law? It will never happen etc". I was being filmed and they were mocking me. The Chief arrived. He told each of us in turn, including the soldiers. To tell the truth. It was difficult. He asked "Why do you kiss a boy?" I said "I am not interested in girls". He just told me to go; it was very unexpected".

Conclusions and Recommendations in Tunisia:

For Tunisia, it is recommended that:

- MRG - supported by Sida and others - should continue and expand from its pilot programmes on anti-Black and anti-LGBT+, taking its lead from context, need and opportunity, and expanding to other groups where these three are present, without recourse to justification on the grounds of intersectionality. On the basis of successful pilot projects, an expanded, inclusive, mainstream programme in Tunisia is recommended. MRG may usefully reflect on whether the country can currently be used as a base from which to consider minority issues in Morocco and possibly Algeria.
- Specifically, MRG, supported by Sida and others, should seek alliances and seek niches (probably legal and communication) in the campaign to suppress Article 230 of the Penal Code, which criminalises homosexuality. MRG should play an active part in suppressing Article 230
- MRG should seek continuous improvement in the areas of communication/information, activity monitoring, ADP-networking, adequate and flexible financing and Partner ability to use its database tools. Tunisia project-level reviews identify the most common gaps reported by Partners, and this report repeats some of them; MRG should re-double efforts to address them.
- MRG staff are visibly committed to Primary Actors ("beneficiaries"); this commitment is also often the most important motivating factor for grassroots Partners. MRG and Sida reporting frameworks should be reviewed to see if they communicate commitment to Primary Actors.

Sri Lanka:

Sri Lanka political and minority context:

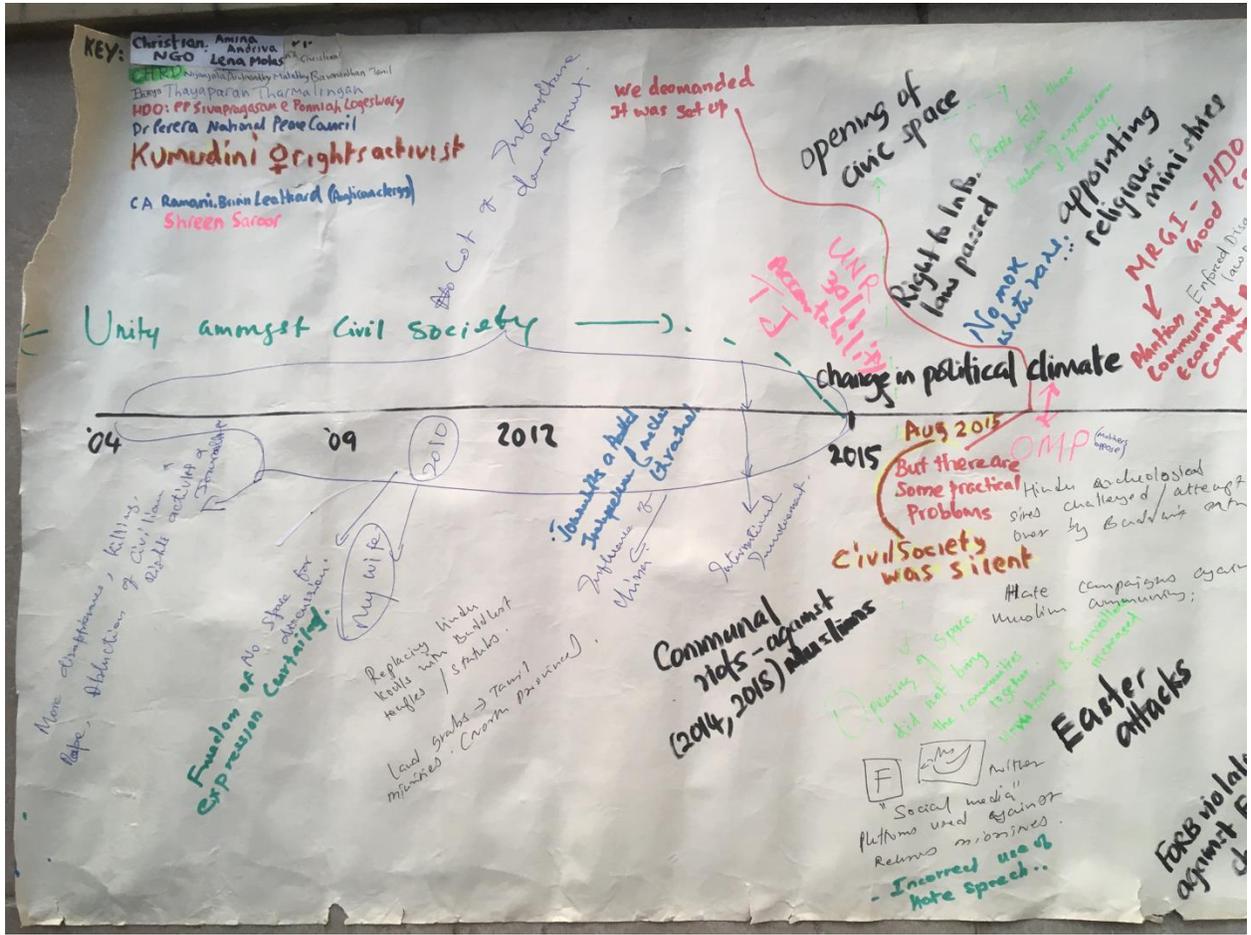
Sri Lanka Itinerary:

- 8 August: Arrived on overnight flight to Colombo home at 17.30
Ruvanthi Sivapragasam, Australian Volunteer Program
- 9 August: Faith-based rights organization: Mary D Elina & May Ines
Thayaparan Tharmalingan, reconciliation activist
Ramani Leathard, Christian Aid & Brian Leathard, Church of England

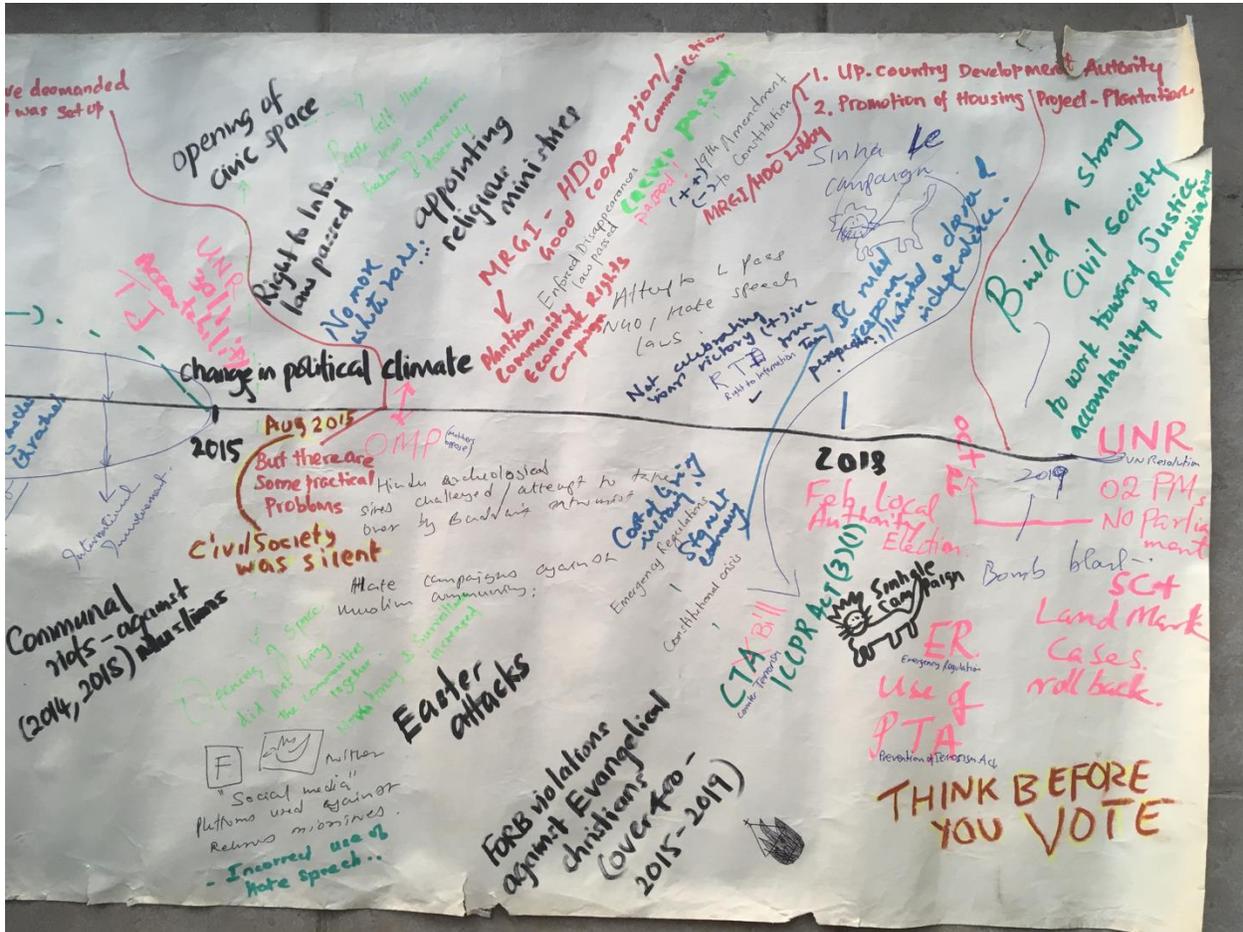
- 10 August Bhavani Fonseka, Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) and two female peers
Shreen Saroor, minority rights activist and Women's Action Network
CHRD: Niranjala Arulnandhy and Malathy Rajapihilla
- 11 August: Travelled Colombo to Kandy
- 12 August: HDO: PP Sivapragasamand Ponniah Logeswary
Kumudini Samuel, women's rights activist
- Travelled Kandy to Colombo
- 13 August: Dr Jayampathy Wickramaratne MP, Institute for Constitutional Studies
National Peace Council, Dr Jehan Perera
Dr Perera, Niclas Cramer, V. Thusandra, H A N Kurmara, Sumadha Weerarnar-
Perera
Dr Udan Fernando, Human Rights Defender, CEPA (Centre for Poverty Analysis)
Ameena Hussein (publisher) and Sam Perera (publisher)
- 14 August: Brito Fernando, Right to Life (for Disappeared People)
Flew to Thailand:

(i) Contextual monitoring tool: Sri Lanka Partners' and informants' timeline:

Methodology: The above comprised activists from two big cities (mostly Colombo and two in Kandy). As groups or individuals, they were shown a horizontal 'timeline' in the centre of a long sheet of plain white wallpaper. This incorporated the dates of key political events, and of the MRG project. They were asked to write or draw what they regarded as significant and positive above the line, and what they saw as significant and negative below the line.



Sri Lanka: Timeline Key, and KII comments on the positive and negative events of 2004-2016 Photo: D.Hampson



Sri Lanka: Timeline Key, and KII comments on the positive and negative events of 2014-2019 Photo: D.Hampson

Timeline Findings: Some of the striking findings in the 'positive section' were:

- * The majority focus (15 observations to 12, or 56%¹²⁸ to 44%) in the positive section were of laws or government institutions made during the current administration 2015-19.
- * Overwhelmingly (20, or 74%), positive observations were made in the 2015-2019 period of government. One of these was the stopping of the Rajapaksa-era 'white vans' associated with disappearances of civilians.
- * Only one positive observation ('a lot of infrastructure development') was made for the Rajapaksa years of government
- * Few of the positive 2015-19 positive observations were about MRG or about practical gains which might be expected to make significant positive change to the daily lives of Sri Lanka's

¹²⁸ For ease of reading, all % figures in this report are rounded up or down. Where further calculations are made, these use the original figures rather than those rounded up or down, to give a more accurate picture.

majority ('Good co-operation with HDO; Plantation Community Economic Rights campaign; Promotion of Housing Project')

Some of the striking findings in the 'negative section' were:

* 36 comments were made; 57% were therefore negative and 43% positive comments

* Whereas the positive section was characterised by laws, the negative section was characterised by direct negative experiences of people, such as death, abduction disappearance, rape attacks, land grabs, riots, the Easter Attacks, hate campaigns against Muslims, violence against Evangelical Christians, abuse of laws, or terms such as 'Counter Terrorism' 'Prevention of Terrorism' 'Emergency Regulation' 'Hate Speech'

* A general fear was expressed about the Rajapaksas returning to power; most plaintively expressed in the bottom right-hand corner of the timeline 'THINK BEFORE YOU VOTE'

Findings of the tool / Neutral:

The tool allowed disagreements to rise to the surface. For example, one KI stated that the 'Enforced Disappearance Law' had been passed. Another contested that fact. Still others confirmed that it had passed.

It also allowed for rich discussion of specific issues. For example, a KI stated that the Office of Missing Persons, set up by the current administration, had been both positive and negative. Others claimed that the process of demanding its set-up was positive. Still others claimed practical problems with it. Others stated that one of these was the opposition of Tamil mothers of the disappeared. This led to discussion on how some mothers were reportedly used as tools by Tamil diaspora groups extorting money from Tamil businesses in rich world capitals, and further discussion on the splits in the Upland and Lowland Tamil communities.



Sri Lanka: Niranjala and Malathy add their comments in green to the Timeline Photo: D.Hampson

Conclusion:

The 'gulf' between Colombo and the rest of the country was clear to both sides, and seen as a problem. The perceived unity of civil society in desperately oppressive political times was seen as a strength. Many activists were distressed by the counter-productive disunity of civil society in more open times.

Sri Lanka: Findings on MRG Programme

Partner experiences were universally positive. CHRDR's Project Coordinator reported, "We went to BKK and Geneva training... they touched on the UN mechanisms, very useful. Since 2015 we... now travel to UN very often, we participated in UPR Review, we did a Shadow Report.. working on a Convention Against Torture 2020 report, collecting our data... HRC sessions, oral sessions, meet the Rapporteurs, meet special Working Groups on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances, and on Arbitrary Detention.. We learned how do a submission, how to do advocacy, it made us more confident and gave us the guidelines... now we make Oral Submissions in Human Rights Council sessions, part of the training MRG gave us.... maybe we

need more training on the local situation... of course it is the same, localise it with (Women) Human Rights Defenders’.

A faith-based organization linked to MRG commented ‘I must compliment MRG, from 2015 they were the first organisation to support us to document Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist incidents... we were able to give an allowance to a Muslim rapporteur, a Hindu, so they could work... [as a result of MRG there are] also religious liberty activists, island-wide...we are able to use the network... continue training...’. The organization contended that it had something to teach MRG on ‘using digital media... we have pushed all our information in summary on platforms, using a lot of comic books, visuals.. My experience with [the] MRG project... was heavy, network meetings, documentation of the event, trainings, creating networks... new media was not very much part of it,... laid a heavy foundation..... MRG could start, like us, when we say documentation, we do testimonial videos, photographs, visually and creatively documenting... and more focus on youth, easily influenceable.. the older we get, the more set in our views... it's a challenge, when it comes to voting and mindsets... we spend a lot of time with youth, teaching them to be good digital online citizens.. they are the groups that ISIS etc are working with brilliantly... The ISIS theology is narrow but they are getting it across, inspiring people.... we are not doing a good enough job of reaching out to young people in an attractive way... [we need] new projects with youth focus, digital citizenship....

The 'gulf' between Colombo and the rest of the country was a constant theme from KIs, both inside Colombo and outside. In Kandy, working on grassroots issues, HDO commented ‘MRG supported us from 2008-11 and 11-13 with EU money; it was really a wonderful relationship.. MRG played a very important role in bringing it to several Committees and the Forum on Minority Rights, I spoke there twice with MRG support... also we worked on EU... Human Rights Commission, Human Rights Council... they brought a demand that SL offer citizenship,,,, we got signatures and emails from all over the country. In September 2003, Government passed a new law and gave citizenship to these 3000 people... this is one example of grassroots to international... now they enjoy their civil and political rights.. now we move to water, health, housing, social and economic rights’.

‘MRG is supporting civil society to stand up for themselves... a clear mission... their policy was very adaptive, their strategies were well, and independently (from donors), worked out... they also respect the policies and ethics of the local NGOs... the practical working style, including reporting, funding, communication are very productive, very good... their Monitoring system, every three months, self-evaluation and self-monitoring system... we worked during the civil conflict period, good at helping us to protect ourselves, work with the local human rights actors, to bring safety for us... it... differed with others..[who just told us] 'EU asked this, asked that' Before we did not receive EU funds, MRG trained us in the EU system,... a good experience for us... they encouraged minority women to participate in the project;... they guided us, if a report needed work, through Skype or visits they encouraged us... they implemented the project very well, we were leading and we finished the project... guided and monitored but not interfering, they gave a space to work... They understand the environment and they respect us.

Others do not, it can be a bitter experience, we face pressure and delays. With MRG, it was easy to implement [in the] period of civil conflict... we re-worked the agreement.... MRG did not push us, they also took some of the burden on themselves... There were sometimes delays in funding, one officer, maybe it was passed on late. Second thing; we worked as three organisations together; one [was] so far behind us.... But it is a good style, networking is important. The lack of unity within civil society, and a longing for it, were a common theme of the visit.

Panniah Logeswary, the HDO Program Coordinator said: 'We need this support; not only for two or three year programs but for longer. We know the funding situation is difficult for MRG, and so we can only say that we have a responsibility for our beneficiaries'.

From a Columbo perspective¹²⁹ 'HDO's positioning (is) where poverty is a reality, they cannot afford to address human rights in isolation without poverty, inequality and so on. What I like about their approach is that it is organic; not sure if it is always well-conceptualized, but they are not turning a blind eye. There is a strong link between social and economic rights and poverty; more indirectly political rights... HDO people know the people and live near to them... whereas the Colombo NGOs have a great knowledge of laws'.

MRG's Partners know very well what the recently-declared military impunity means: 'one of our Project Managers May Summand was kidnapped in 2009 and his whereabouts are unknown... we know what the people go through'. KIs told me that 'justice... is not at all equal'.

Some KIs predict that election results will force them away from Colombo to village-level, to work with women's or community groups, which would be a return to old tactics and a replay of my 2013 finding under the Rajapaksa regime; 'Students in (these) tough political environments...could not give high ratings for their work at national level, but they were engaged in communities, a level at which they saw greater potential and less personal risk.'

Conclusions and Recommendations for Sri Lanka:

For Sri Lanka, it is recommended that:

- MRG conduct a thorough contextual evaluation after Sri Lanka's next Presidential elections, before making programmatic decisions to seek funding. The national political context is particularly important for planning MRG's Sri Lanka work. There is a gulf between Colombo-based and other Sri Lankan organisations and work. It is recommended that MRG continue to scan multiple levels when designing projects, 'keep a finger on the security pulse¹³⁰' and liaise especially closely with Partners about what risks they are able and willing to take, and what will have impact for primary actors. In

¹²⁹Rd. Jehan Perera

¹³⁰Shikha Dilawri, MRG South Asia Programme Coordinator

the case of a Rajapaksa election victory, international advocacy may or may not be possible, and local grassroots level work may or may not be an alternative.

- MRG continue to try and promote inter-NGO, inter-CSO working to bring together civil society actors wherever possible, including via Facebook groups.

Thailand:

Thailand political and minority context: In Thailand, the context at the time of a visit was of a struggling ruling coalition¹³¹, a civilian Government which a majority of informants described, unprompted, as 'weak'... More than one KI said that real power 'as always in Thailand' remained with the Military¹³². Ex-military coup leader in 2014, Prayuth Chan-ocha was returned to effective power by Parliamentary vote as Prime Minister in June 2019, after what was widely seen as a skewed race. This was because military influence in the Senate is heavy; 194/250 senators were said to be 'handpicked by the junta council'¹³³. 2020 started with 10,000+ people registered for a 'Run Against Dictatorship' in Bangkok¹³⁴.

A Buddhist Partner told me bluntly 'The Government tolerates hate crime' from Buddhist extremists. Thailand is under military rule and continuing security laws. In some ways, not much has changed since 2013 'Thailand (is) still divided politically but very controlling of space for discussion'; but this 2019 evaluation focused specifically on the 'Deep South' (the Southern Border Territories) whose context is altogether more serious including extra-judicial killings, incessant torture, inaccessibility to justice and child rights violations. The minority people suffering atrocities are Muslims of Pattani; Buddhist Partners also bewailed the State's incorporation and appropriation of CSOs and money-wasting on attempting to create clientism amongst Muslims and Buddhists alike.

Waeromlee Waerbula of Kampong Taqwa, a village-based organization, described Government CSO assistance from SBPAC¹³⁵ as 'Money Bombs' 'They are trying to buy people, by giving them money to do nothing.. it is not good, no solution.. People need jobs, not money.. Money for Buddhists makes a problem for Muslims; money for Muslims makes a problem for Buddhists... we need thinking, planning, spending for all people, infrastructure... not little projects trying make people happy'. Green South took this further 'The Government does not really believe that civil society exists... paranoid... but it knows it is important. It created 50M baht (1.3M GBP) funding for Civil Society to shut them up. It really works well. A lot of organisations increased their role in this 10 years, they got money from UK US EU etc [who scaled down]... and to continue their mission they need more funding. But Government can separate between those who get, and those who don't. Some small organisations with strong ideology will not take it,

¹³¹https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Turbulent-Thailand/Thai-ruling-coalition-on-shaky-ground-after-party-defection?utm_source=paid.outbrain.com&utm_campaign=BA%20TH&utm_medium=referral

¹³² see also <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Asia-Insight/All-the-king-s-men-Thai-military-power-shifts-away-from-Prayuth>

¹³³ MRG staff member

¹³⁴ bbc.com/news/world-asia-51082419

¹³⁵ Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre: The Thai Government body for managing funds to NGOs and CSOs (and other duties).

want to be clean. Green South will not take SBPAC. It is clever from Government's perspective, this is one of the good non-military strategies'. KIs called the situation 'post conflict' in that the military had clamped down successfully on attacks, whilst popularizing the appeal of the separatist movements. For this reason, they presented the Thai Government as counter-productively paranoid, clumsy, weak and socially incompetent, falsely impugning civil society activists with supporting the separatist movement, whilst itself fanning the flames of separatism through incessant torture. A recent victim remained for weeks on life support, with the military claiming he 'slipped over in the bathroom', until he recently died. A medical KI said 'It was a mistake.. their water-boarding should only have lasted 5 or 10 seconds... then they did not think the hospital in Pattani could save him. They do a lot of torture'.

What creates misery in the Deep South, however, can tap easily into anti-Muslim rhetoric in the rest of the country. A KI said 'the only power Government thought it had was military power. (But] The rest of the country supported it, 'these are non-Thai' we should suppress and beat them The nationalism of Thai people and also Thai Government is very high, together with Islamophobia, of Al-Qaeeda who we [also] fear. A foreign resident in Thailand commented 'With the political instability, there is never any Government or Military strategy or planning beyond five years'.

Thailand Itinerary:

14 August: Flew from Colombo to Bangkok

16 August: Claire Thomas in London, on Thailand

17 August: Nicole Girard, MRG, and then Arida ex-of PEF¹³⁶ (by phone and subsequently by email):

18 August: Flew to Pattani: Ms.Duangjai Chisholm (Chinese Thai owner of transport company; informed public)

Dr Tuankasfee Hama – Doctor in Yelar Hospital ((informed member of the public)

19 August: Anchana, Director of Duay Jai; Yurissa Samah Secretary of Day Jai

20 August: Kampong Tawa. Waeromlee Waebula. and Kanunich Makchuchit

'A local Buddhist' working for a CSO

Supat Hasuwannakit , Founder of Green South Foundation, Thailand; Director of Chana Hospital

Awan Books (ally): Solahuddean Gariya

21 August: Somchai Krishnakan, bank worker (informed member of the public)

Bungaraya, Hasan Yamadibu

22 August: Travelled to Yala, met four female members of HAP, and talked to founder Ismaail Teh by phone

Civil Society Council of the Southernmost Thailand in coalition with The Organization of Narathiwat Civil Society Network: Rawsidee – Secretary; Ghazalee – Deputy; Muhammad Ayub Pathan - President ; Abd Shukur - Academic

26 August 12:50 Nicole Girard, MRG

5 September 2019: Email exchange with Chalida of PEF

¹³⁶Peoples' Empowerment Foundation

Findings, MRG programme:

The Deep South programme was only for 2016-18 only; an EU funding period to 75% level with no prospect of extensions. Most of the remaining 25% was filled by Sida, with the Embassies of Belgium and Switzerland each giving 15K-20K GBP

The MRG programme empowered Thai CSOs representing marginalized communities in the southern border provinces. Decades of conflict between the Thai state and ethnic Malay separatists in the region have caused tensions between Melayu-Muslim and ethnic Thai and Chinese communities. MRG's programme aimed build peace,, promote peaceful relationships, and increase constructive dialogue between ethnic communities in the region

The objective of the MRG-EU programme in Thailand was "to contribute to peace-building ... by empowering Thai CSOs representing marginalised communities to make their rights and demands heard". Its specific objective was "to build the capacity of Thai NGOs to mobilise their communities to work together to increase the capacity of Thai CSOs to increase their participation in reconciliation and decision-making processes' .

The peace process was described as 'dead' by KIs; achieving the objective and dialogue with Government as 'impossible'. The role of the Sida component was ' Monitoring and reporting human rights violations for peace-building in S.Thailand, February 2017 to January 2018. Strengthened capacities of local NGOs and activists to monitor and report human rights abuses"

In retrospect, as hopes in the peace process dimmed, this turned out to be a more realistic goal, and it certainly has been achieved, from the torture statistics of Duag Jai to the environmental accountability provided by Green South, It may, however, have been 'seen as a threat to the existing state security network in the south¹³⁷; even if abuses from both sides were highlighted, and the informants distanced themselves clearly from any violent rebel action. I was told that support to torture victims is particularly unwelcome to the state apparatus, as it highlights the practice of torture because victims remain in urban hospitals rather than being relatively anonymous in their village homes. MRG Partner staff have been harassed tortured, and accused of 'defamation' for speaking of this treatment.

Organizations in Thailand (and also Sri Lanka and Tunisia¹³⁸) are forced into a "Within-the-System" or an "Outside-the-System" status. Their approach depends on their organizational structure, their work, their ideological outlook, as well as relations between each other. Grantees attended monthly planning and sharing meetings. The programme aimed for better, wider reporting on - and better, rapid response to - human rights abuses, and greater awareness, mitigation and remedies, in order to build peace and tolerance. Key words were

¹³⁷ Operational Final Report to Swiss Embassy for a sub-programme, February 2017 to January 2018

¹³⁸ <https://prezi.com/p/y0zxsoyemxf/converging-feminist-activisms-thesis-prezi/> Célestine Fünfgeld 2019

'activists' understanding, monitoring and documenting' 'local authorities' awareness, commitment and accountability' and 'public awareness'

MRG's co-ordinator said 'Organisations are low capacity, even organisational structures are low, not always a Board or a Mission Statement.; if no Director, the organisation collapses... [it was about] making them more robust... also minority rights, fundraising...'

Partner staff and volunteers were trained on laws, standards and mechanisms; networks established, reports and articles written based on extensive original research with local stakeholders, A rapid-response mechanism – including fact-finding missions – and advocacy meetings were established.

Partners welcomed the MRG programme, with qualifications. Anchana of Duang Jai said, 'Yes, all my [questionnaire] scores are very high for MRG. And yes, there is only one which is low (20-39%), about whether MRG is able to accept the Partners' right to disagree and do its own thing. There are two aspects to this (i) the Thai NGOs here need to improve internally and increase their analysis eg of the Peace Process. And (ii) MRG needs to USE the information it gets from the grassroots to make a good situation in the South, to become.. an active supporter... in the Peace Process... with knowledge and skills. It needs good financial management, good follow-up, good bringing of funds from EU etc, and we can bid for them. Transparency is important; MRG is transparent but maybe local people are not transparent, it needs good close follow-up from MRG, timely correspondence, participation, intense control. It needs friendly and influential people at the local level'. Konunich of Kampong Taqwa said. 'Meetings took to us knowledge about UN, media platform... MRG want to work together, it was positive, I think MRG understands our work... MRG has the same idea to strengthen people... but it finished in 2018... it was only one year with MRG... not enough time or money... '

'A local Buddhist' CSO worker wanted dialogue through doing rather than meetings 'I value the CSOs who are capable to do practical things'.

This report concurs with a recent evaluation of the Thailand program¹³⁹ which found that a longer time period for the programme would have been beneficial. Green South commented on duration, scale and focus 'It is good for people in villagers to feel that they have the support of the middle classes in BKK.. but that period was very short, only 1- 1.5 years... 'I think they [MRG] maybe don't have enough funds for us. should change the mission, not support in a lot of places... continue, not only funds but networking because MRG did the network... was very important the platform for CSOs in Deep South who do not prefer [want to take Thai Government] money from SBPAC¹⁴⁰

Programme sustainability was also damaged by pre-SIDA relationships on the EU project relationships within the co-coordinating agency Peoples' Empowerment Foundation (PEF),

¹³⁹By the IBA Group, January to June 2018

¹⁴⁰ See footnote under 'Thailand: political and minority context'

and between PEF and MRG. Current and ex-staff members from PEF, gave 'no comment' on internal PEF relations, except that they would not wish to repeat the experience, just as neither MRG or PEF would wish to resume their relationship. One KI commented 'MRG chose the wrong Partner'; others were supportive. After an initial honeymoon period drafting the proposal, MRG and PEF both described their relationship as problematic; 'The PEF-MRG partnership was bad'¹⁴¹. PEF claimed poor communication from MRG, the cutting of the number of grantees from 13 to 10, changes to the budget, the over-riding of Partner Selection Committee decisions and the undermining of the PEF 'Chairman'. There were disagreements over matching funds, the use/lack of use of the office set up in Yala and the importance of being 'on the ground' or office-based. PEF's problems were also partly internal; with a claimed unwillingness of the organisation's focal point to travel without per diem¹⁴², and partly external, with contested claims that MRG staff could not leave hotels on the grounds of security¹⁴³. The PEF 'Chairman' scored the EU programme only 5/10, with limited sustainability, monitoring and advice. She said The Partner, PEF, should lead, and MRG should help them well.. The Donor should not lead but should consult with the coordinator to improve Partner capacity."

The MRG co-ordinator acknowledged that disagreements over selected Partners soured the relationship for the entire duration of the project. To some extent, this was due to the EU's pre-condition that all Partners grants must be of exactly 30,000 Euro, without any explanation of the rationale. Also, certain grantees had initially been chosen by the Selection Committee which were deemed inadvisable by MRG's grant manager at the EU delegation and were questionable within EU and MRG definitions of legitimate NGOs. One borderline organization, Fatoni Films, provided some visibility for Deep South issues and MRG, participating in a Bangkok event at which a film commissioned and paid for by MRG was showcased¹⁴⁴.

The PEF focal point who would not comment on her relationship with its Chairman said of the programme 'It was good for me because to promote Minority Rights for Deep South of Thailand I can say that MRG is the first one that plays in the role of an international organization and run a programme... [with a] clear understanding that Malay Muslims who live in the south of Thailand are recognized as 'Minority' in terms of the MRG definition... MRG did a great deal for Partners [but]... it should be more than a project and left, should be more activity and deeply..., longer and continuous... it will help to improved relationship between Thai Authorities and the Minority group.' She felt that MRG was the right organisation - not PEF - to 'lead all activities' and pointed to the achievement of having Malay women speaking at UN forums..

¹⁴¹Chalida Tachalernsak, female 'Chairman' of PEF

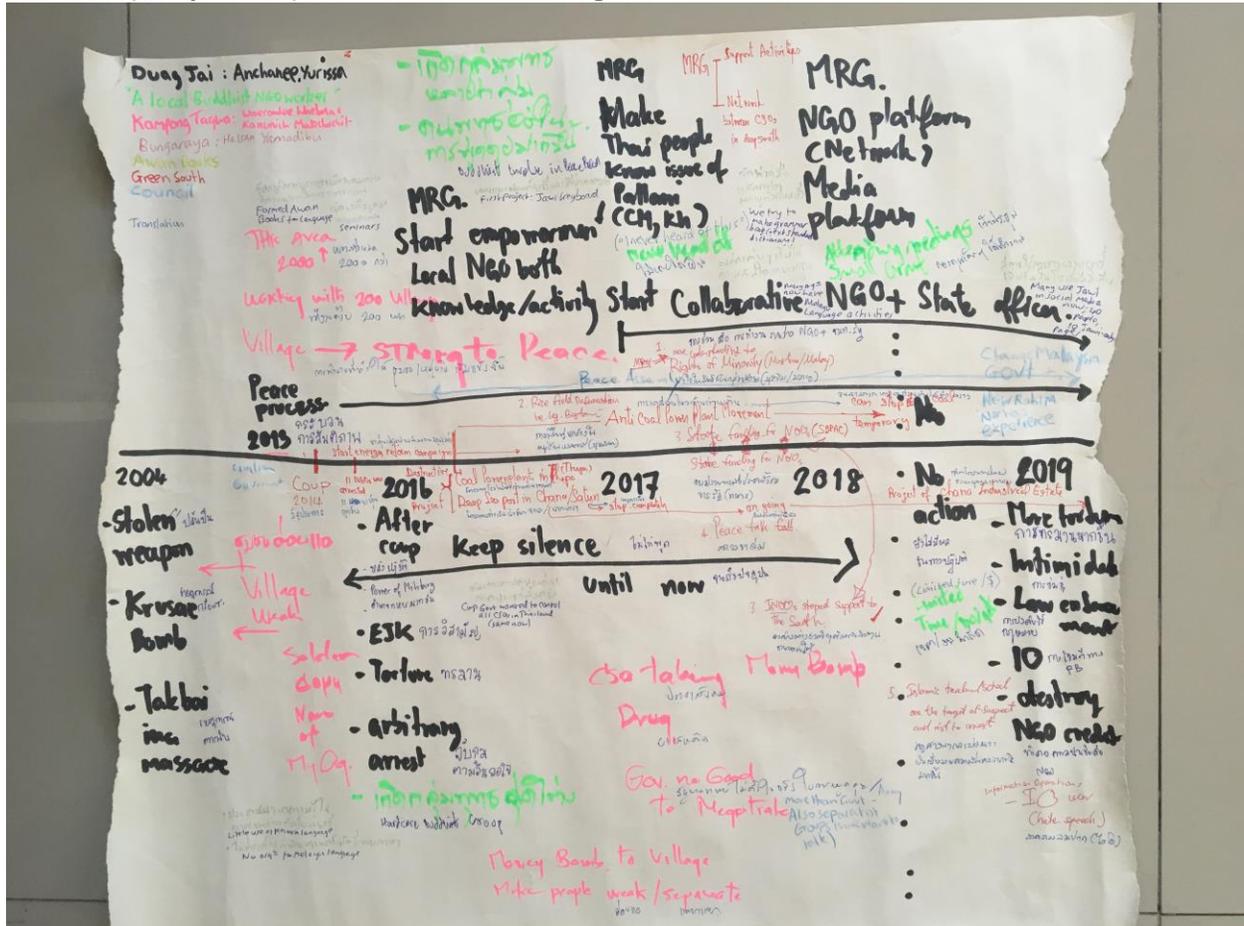
¹⁴² This tallied with my own initial discussion with Arida Awaekachi, who requested for herself and contacts three times the rate of this evaluation's Team Leader for handing over project contact information; a position on which she later partly relented. However, the evaluator's understanding is that the per diem was a routine, owed payment for travel which PEF's 'Chairman' also took.

¹⁴³ The relevant MRG staff member commented 'only a few times after the big c bombing was my movement restricted'

¹⁴⁴Screening as it did two free short documentary films at the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre with Buddhists for Peace – a CSO working on promoting peace and reconciliation between Buddhist and Muslim communities and, the Green South Foundation – a CSO that has been resisting a proposed coal fired power plant in the district of Thapa in Songkla province - and PEF, as well as MRG

The relevant staff member from an INGO receiving EU funds for CSOs in the Deep South in 2016 commented 'The EU funded LEAP and MRG at the same time. Internally we are aware that the capacity of CSOs might not... manage two grants from EU at the same time. Thus, CSOs that secured grant from MRG were not under LEAP'.

Thailand (Deep South) Contextual monitoring tool: Timeline exercise:



Thailand Timeline Photo: D.Hampson

Timeline Findings: Some of the striking findings in the 'positive section' were:

- * MRG's role in creating networks through the NGO Platform
- * The activities of individual civil society actors (anti-coal, village peace-building, energy and rice-field reform, linguistic interventions such as the Jawi keyboard)
- * Small grants
- * The existence of a Peace Process since 2013 (even if some KIs feel it now exists only in name)

Some of the striking findings in the 'negative section' were:

* Massacre, extra-judicial killing, torture, arbitrary arrest, more torture, intimidation, silence and no action

* Government and Separatists do not want to negotiate (except some separatist groups)

* 'Information Operations War' around hate speech

* Hardcore Buddhist Group; Islamic teacher/school on suspected list and liable to arrest

* INGOs stopped support to the South

* CSOs 'taking drug' of money; 'money bomb' to villages to make people weak and separate (divided)

* **60 comments were made; 60% were negative and 40% positive comments**

Findings of the tool / Neutral:

State funding for NGOs (SBPAC¹⁴⁵) was seen as mostly negative in discussions, but with the obvious positive that it provides funds for CSOs in need. KIs said it was followed by a deliberate Government policy to push out NGO / Red Cross (e.g. by foisting armed guards on convoys). Discussions were mostly negative on the policy, and seen as a 'divide and rule' tactic, by which the Government could attempt to quieten critical organisations.

The tool allowed participants to learn, for example about work done on the local language's keyboard, and also to complement; when one participant stated that the military/Government was not interested in negotiating, another said that was also the case with separatist groups, and another qualified that to 'some want to talk.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The MRG Co-ordinator feels there was a problem with MRG chasing short-term available funds at haste. The unofficial dying of the peace process and personal/professional tension between MRG and PEF did not allow the programme to flourish.

For Thailand, it is recommended that:

- Independent MRG contextual planning precedes future programme involvement in the Deep South

¹⁴⁵See earlier footnote in Timeline section

- Some important individual gains were made, on torture, grassroots peace-building and the environment, in an extremely challenging context in which ‘MRG’s project [was] too late, too small, too short... [against big gaps, they were] pin pricks¹⁴⁶.”
- It is recommended that any future involvement in the Deep South (after close contextual analysis) involves serious time and money, and without any agreement with any donor to provide a set amount across the board to CSOs of very different capacity. This should include - if necessary - the consequences of raising expectations without resources for follow up.
- MRG should reconnect with Green South and Duag Jai, and see if Facebook groups could be set up to keep networks alive at a low level.

North Macedonia political and minority context:

North Macedonia is a country with relatively free social space. The country has ratified all relevant international documents and acceded to all relevant of international organizations and mechanisms in connection to human rights and freedoms.

The country experienced armed insurgency in 2001 against Albanian separatists, but the conflict ended with the Ohrid Framework Agreement with a Government guarantee of 15 additional minority rights including co-official status to languages spoken by more than 20% of citizens.

In 2018, North Macedonia managed to resolve a long-standing historical naming dispute. 'Macedonia' is also the name of a northern Greek province; 'North' was eventually added as a differentiator to the name of the country. One of the consequences is that North Macedonia will pursue negotiations for accession to the EU, despite an initial EU rejection in October 2019. Parliamentary elections will next be held on 12 April 2020, in the expectation that N. Macedonia’s accession process to NATO has been realized by that time. This requires only the ratification of Spain, which is believed to be a technicality and a foregone conclusion.

North Macedonia is a parliamentary representative democratic republic. There are two major parties, one is the more nationalistic and conservative VMRO-DPMNE, and the other is SDSM, a center-left party. In the last election SDSM took power and so far, it seems to have progressed democratic changes and combating corruption.

According to the World Bank classification, North Macedonia is an upper-middle-income country. Economic growth is stable. Until 2009 it was over 4%, in recent years is 2-2.5%. The average salary is 500-550 EUR, but the cost of living is - in a European context - low.

¹⁴⁶ A Thai civil society KI in the Deep South

According to Freedom House's report for 2019, Republic of Macedonia falls into category of partly free countries where the media and civil society are active, but journalists and activists still face pressure and intimidation. According to the same report, the Roma minority is politically marginalized.¹⁴⁷ This has not translated into the skinhead aggression or political demonization of Roma which has been experienced in some neighboring countries. And there has been some Roma inclusion into public life, although it has been argued that this 'has more to do with a calculated effort by leaders of Macedonia's majority to offset the will of leaders of the country's ethnic Albanian minority who have threatened... secession'¹⁴⁸

The Republic of North Macedonia is officially¹⁴⁹ home to 53,879 (2.7%) self-identified Roma, with much higher figures of 134,000 - 260,000 more likely.¹⁵⁰ Roma are explicitly mentioned as an ethnic community in the Constitution¹⁵¹ During its participation in the Decade for Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015, the government adopted its first Strategy for Roma.¹⁵² This has since been followed by a focus on five priority areas: education, health care, employment, housing and culture.¹⁵³ At present, despite some progress in areas such as school enrolment, implementation of the strategy is considered to remain poor.¹⁵⁴

Macedonia is firmly on a path of democratization, accession and growth. The process will likely be slow and stable. In minority rights terms, there appears to be some sustainable willingness of the State to engage, in a 'providing' way, rather than as part of a holistic programme to support rights-strengthening.

N. Macedonia Itinerary

26 August: Arrived in Skopje, Republic of Northern Macedonia
Igor Jadrovski MRG Legal Officer (10.00). Travelled to Tetovo.
Olivera (Project Assistant of Partner CSO "Sonce
Rahman Jakupi, mediator for Tetovo. Travelled to Debar.
Rehana Kurtisi, mediator.
Returned to Skopje
Travelled to Stip.

27 August:
Denis Amedov, mediator in Stip.
Travelled to Vinica
Ibrahim Saliou, mediator in Vinica

¹⁴⁹ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/north-macedonia>

¹⁴⁸ [Opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/roma-political-life-macedonia-pride-and-prejudice](https://opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/roma-political-life-macedonia-pride-and-prejudice), Chuck Sudetic, 2003

¹⁴⁹ according to the 2002 census

¹⁵⁰ Council of Europe, 'Document prepared by the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for Roma Issues', July 2012.

¹⁵¹ Amended by the Ohrid Framework Agreement in 2001.

¹⁵² Government of Macedonia, Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia, December 2004.

¹⁵³ Government of Macedonia, Strategy for Roma in Republic of Macedonia (2014 -2020), June 2014.

¹⁵⁴ European Commission, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: 2018 Report, Strasbourg, April 2018, p.33.

Viber call with Firdeska Zekirova, mediator in Berovo.
Returned to Skopje

Findings on the MRG programme:

MRG is free to work in N Macedonia. During the visit, no mention was made of the State trying to unduly control the work of the NGOs (which would be in contravention of NGO-related laws). A problem is that the State does not always show understanding of NGO work, is passive in tackling social issues, and is sometimes resistant to cooperation. From an NGO and CSO perspective, the State needs to be pushed to tackle the issues of the Roma e.g. MRG is actively working to convince the State to mainstream the work of paralegals. This may take time.

MRG and the Roma Democratic Development Association (RDDA) SONCE launched a joint three-year project, 'From Action to Equal Rights for Roma' (2017-2020), funded by the EU, to combat discrimination through litigation, advocacy and capacity-building. In May 2017 MRG and RDDA SONCE trained 31 Roma mediators in human and minority rights, discrimination, advocacy and community outreach, of whom 12 now work regularly visiting the six target municipalities (Tetovo, Debar, Kiev, Ship, Venice and Berovo), map human rights violations and identify incidents of discrimination for litigation and advocacy.¹⁵⁵

A program success was the setting up of the Roma Action Network in 2017 which has shared planning and implementation skills widely, now comprising the biggest network in North Macedonia. MRG has built upon solid local traditions of intercultural dialogue and cooperation, for example in the close-knit society of Debar. The Government's "Decade for Roma Inclusion 2005-2015" has brought tangible practical benefits. Civil society support is seen to further motivate Government to effectively tackling critical education, health, social and infrastructural (critically, sewage) rights of Roma people. Increased school-enrolment is seen as the path to higher-level jobs and stability. Hate discourse was not reported in interviews, but in some areas there were segregation of schools, false allegations and denial of access to social spaces, with one guard at a club reportedly explaining 'Brother, what can I do? I was ordered not to let them, and I must obey because I might lose my job.'

Mediators were unanimously said by KIs to have received good training on approaching communities, methods and techniques of communication and para-legalism. This strengthened work competence - added to personal attributes and motivation - enabled Trainees to achieve and to serve as positive models.

Problems include low stipends for mediators¹⁵⁶, a low IT skill base, inadequate technical IT support, and migration of graduates to the West. Suspicion and cynicism was reported from one 'no go'¹⁵⁷ area' in Stip; 'You fill up your pockets, and I get nothing.' Impatience for solutions

¹⁵⁵Minority Rights Group International, Roma in the Republic of Macedonia: Challenges and Inequalities in Housing, Education and Health, November 2018.

¹⁵⁶Stipends were only provided at all at Partner insistence

¹⁵⁷Police, paramedics and taxi drivers apparently refuse to go to the 'Radinski Road' area

provides pressure for Mediators as they go through the long process of arranging meetings with government bureaucracies. It is practical results which are motivating - direct scholarship funding to the poorest families and communities and for decent clothes and food - rather than the hiring of exclusionary luxury hotels for seminars by some NGOs, which can erode trust. Moving forward, there was seen to be a need for greater reliance on local resources and local experts, of whom there have been good examples such as a medical interviewee: "I, myself was raised in one of the poor settlements which helps me to know and understand their problems and mindset." Negotiations are ongoing with Government to institutionalize the Paralegal adviser role; with precedents in Štip of Government taking over NGO Mediator roles. Program focus might usefully evolve from visit-based detection, monitoring and reporting on human right violations/discrimination to group dialogue and other interactive methods. These may be used at social centers supporting practical rights such as child care, preventive health care, public participation, education, employment and culture. The aim would be capacitation to self-protect rights and to integrate in society.

Continuation of the program is seen as important; more training and knowledge update and continuous learning, with mentoring and supervision. MRG is urged to better recognize and recompense the roles, effort and results of the Mediators/Paralegals, for which one CSO "Sonce" redirected a staff field visit/monitoring budget line to provide basic fees.

Title: Practical MRG and community support to Roma in North Macedonia:

"A man without personal documents (whose house was burned down), addresses me for assistance to get a new set of documents. I'm the first he asks, and we go together to the Police, and Municipality. Normally he wouldn't be able to finish the job alone... he is not skillful in communication and lacks 'red tape skills'... underprivileged Roma are not familiar with complicated legal procedures and institutional structures. It often depends on the goodwill of the clerks. His outfit is not neat and clean and nobody takes him seriously. However, I know a man who works in the Police and we finish the documents easily."

Title: 'As long as we speak of 'you' and 'us'... :

Text Box: Ibraim Saliov, MRG Mediator, is a hairdresser and a previous owner of a local TV/radio station, He works as an administrator in the Center for Social Work in Vinica and as a Mediator for the MRG program.

"With community representatives and authorities, I listen to them justifying themselves, apologizing...and then I say "Fine.. let's speak openly for once! ... The Mayor tells me, come to my office, and I say.. "No. come to the restaurant in the City square!" He says there are 1000-1300 Roma people in Vinica, with one settlement lacking electricity in many households and a Health Center 4 km away. "When I ask local authorities about local investments, they ask if there any new donor projects... I tell them it should be covered by the people's money (from the local budget) not by donors, Discrimination is subtle and perfidious. "Roma people would like to be something more than cleaners or mere physical workers: " Who digs? A Roma person. Who cleans? A Roma person..."

The Mayor keeps telling me: 'You are not educated and don't have good human resources. I tell him: as long as we speak 'you-and-us' nothing positive will become of us.' Ibraim explains the problematic behavior of some Roma people; "When you keep shouting on a dog 'hush up... hush up!| the dog won't be good, let alone a human being. But we know what culture is, we are intelligent people."

Ibraim worked for three years on the supplementary teaching of Roma children. The activity ended after the donor withdrew. He prioritises early education and day-care for Roma children, community centres for dialogue education and training, and arts & culture activities; "These can build family capacities and resilience to understand, practice and protect rights."



MRG Mediator Firdeska (with glasses, to the right of the woman in yellow) in Roma rights' discussions in Berovo. See below. Photo: Unnamed, MRG Macedonia.

Text Box: Firdeska Zekirova, MRG Mediator, is a sociologist with 15 years' experience working with underprivileged groups. She covers 8 settlements in the remote, politically-marginalised Municipality of Berovo with about 1000 people. She likes her job and stresses the importance of client rapport, so that they are open with their aims and requests.

Firdeska is also involved as both a local authority representative and a civil society activist in the Romacted EU/Council of Europe Program¹ which strives to promote good local governance and empower the Roma population.

She says both programmes are still very much needed. Clients need to know the concepts of discrimination, and their human rights that are guaranteed by law. "People are opening up and speak about their problems. Before they never had a chance to talk to someone who can listen and help them. The great benefit is they are now able to directly communicate with institutions."

Urgent attention can now be paid to legal cases, with the appointment of the new MRG Legal Officer who can provide quick, high-quality service to clients. She noticed that clients discuss much more among themselves than they reveal to Mediators, let alone institutions. Her strategy is to help form teams of clients in the settlements around their interests, for example by inviting an expert to organize an interactive women's group on reproductive health or domestic violence: "We live on the periphery of the State and it is common that husbands just hit their wives without consequences. Many women doesn't even know that this is prohibited by law!"

Firdeska proposes greater Mediator involvement and presence in dialogue with clients. The necessary progression is from the current focus on basic rights, to their "higher needs" and corresponding rights to participation in public life, culture, language, higher education self-actualization, freedom of speech etc. A shift from working only as intermediaries with leaders and local authorities to direct involvement should lead to more substantive and sustainable changes in society. She proposes programme expansion to Crnik and Pehchevo, each with 30 very-segregated Turkish and Roma households.

Conclusions and Recommendations from North Macedonia:

For Macedonia, it is recommended that:

- MRG seek to progressively put greater reliance on local resources and local experts
- The programme find ways to help communities progress to establishing social centres, at which practical training and service – including through interactive methods and group dialogue - could be held.
- Future budgets provided stipends to Mediators/Paralegals.
- MRG takes care in its choice of training venues, favouring utility above comfort, and emphasizing the practical addressing of needs in its engagement with communities.

Itinerary: The following MRG staff/interns were interviewed from distance from May 2019 and mostly between 21 and 27 September 2019: chronologically: Claire Thomas, Deputy Director; Silvia Quattrini, MENA Programmes Coordinator; Emma Proux, intern; Shikha Dilawri, South Asia Programme Coordinator; Parul Kavia, intern; Cecile Clerc, Director of Development and Partnership; Agnes Kabajuni, Head of Africa; Neil Clarke, Director of MRG Europe; Joshua Castellino, CEO; Jenifer Castello, Head of Law.

Appendix Six on Social Media:

The results of an internet searches were as follows:

Facebook:

The evaluation chose three Facebook accounts which had been used to promote MRG's work in the past; it can be assumed that this connection would boost MRG figures in these accounts.

A Facebook search for 'minority rights' found Links 1. 'Minority Rights Group and Sufi Ideology - Daily Times (not MRGI) 2.'Minority Rights Group, Native Americans' (MRGI from the 'State of...' world map) 3.Winston Churchill on Muslims and Minority Rights. For 'people' ' MRG' was first and MRGI was second. From an alternative Facebook site, MRG/MRGI occupied 5 of the top 20 sites.

A Facebook search for 'Minority Rights Group Capacity Building for Human Rights Defenders' brings up MRG websites, but 'Capacity Building for Human Rights Defenders' and 'Capacity Building for Minority Rights Defenders' feature a host of organizations (Giselle, Amnesty, Voyohedeetc) but not MRGI.

An MRGI share of a Guardian piece on 'Immigration Panic' with the warning 'A long piece but worth reading' had attracted 39,000 views.

YouTube:

A YouTube search for 'Minority Rights Group capacity building of human rights defenders' does not have MRGI among the top 100 hits (many are the National Endowment for Democracy, set up under the Reagan administration and often seen as a 'soft power' agency of US international power interests)

A YouTube search for 'Minority Rights Group gif' does not lead to an MRG site, but to a rather slow if worthy and accurate Aliversity site at [YouTube.com/watch?v=AZmXYJdOpuU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZmXYJdOpuU) which is 12 minutes long and has been viewed around 18,500 times. The second site is MRGI, which is a film clip entitled 'Up the Hills: Down the Valley' which has been online for one year, has only 529 views and lasts 17 minutes. The subsequent MRGI pages has 288 views, followed by a Majority Rule : Minority Rights video at 612 views The following 12 results all have between 1100 to 36,000 views. 'Minority Rights Group cartoon has its first 3 minute video with 20,300 views. ' brings MRGI as the third choice, a site with 1,039 subscribers and an impressive 155 videos with between 44 and 8,200 views. Webinars, interviews, uploads, conferences/forums tended to have very low viewing figures, with documentaries higher.

A YouTube search for 'Capacity Building of Minority Rights Defenders' does not feature MRG in its top 100 results.

A search for Minority Rights Group Images brought MRGI as the top two sites (but with few images, and again, low viewing figures). Historic 'State of the world's minorities and indigenous peoples' brought MRGI figures in the low thousands.

Instagram:

MRG's site has around 100 posts (almost exclusively heart symbols) and 450 followers.

Forest Peoples Programme, set up as a Dutch NGO only in 1997 and in the UK in 2000, working with only 60 Partners worldwide at a total income of under 4M GBP¹⁵⁸ (compared to MRG's c.2.9M which is unchanged from 2010¹⁵⁹).has a (subjectively) less compelling set of 41 photographs (mostly of a British individual's fundraising walk). Yet these have similar (slightly higher average) heart symbols to the MRG site.

Google:

A Google search for MRGI brings a link to Wikipedia and the following sentence 'MRGI is an international human rights organisation founded with the objective of working to secure rights for ethnic, national, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples around the world. Their headquarters are in London, with offices in Budapest and Kampala.'

MRG websites:

The '50 website' is clean and clear, but the first click button is to 'our history'. The second is to 'Activity Map' and an ungrammatical, clunky sentence¹⁶⁰. The map itself is interesting, and nicely divided into relevant themes, but is not, as claimed, 'interactive'. The events calendar, on 1 September, was still advertising dates in May and July.

The Peoples Under Threat Map is excellent. The website's publication of a 13-page Briefing for 'Peoples Under Threat' and a 1.5 page (c.1000 word) Press Release are, a huge improvement, on the grounds of access and responding to demand, from the past focus on a several-hundred page report. The visit countries of this report ranked (out of 115¹⁶¹) as follows: Sri Lanka 41/ ; Thailand 45; Tunisia 84; Macedonia 88. Hopefully this report can add some relevant information for Tunisia and Macedonia which are new additions.

¹⁵⁸ forestpeoples.org/sites/default/files/documents/FPP%20Financial%20Report%202018%20FINAL.pdf

¹⁵⁹ minorityrights.org/about-us/strategy-and-annual-reports/ Report and Financial Statement 2018 and 2010

¹⁶⁰ Typos and grammatical mistakes are common throughout the website; some which can easily be addressed are (i) the mistaken deleting of the letters 'fi' from words in minorityrights.org/united-states-hurricane-katrina/

¹⁶¹ And these 115 are the majority of the 195 member/observer states of the UN

Some 'hot topics' bring a considerable range and depth of (excellent) research, such as 'Asylum Seekers' Other organisations' explicit treatment of 'Majority Rule, Minority Rule; have high viewing figures of multiple thousands. Regarding popular issues, some are certainly covered. Women Migrant workers issues are covered in MRG's website¹⁶², the recent focus on social media in exacerbating violence is engaging,

Searches for 'LGBT' bring 10 results, for 'PLWD' bring 0, for 'PWD' bring 1, 'boat people' bring 26, but only 1 for the much-publicised 'hot topic' of North Africa to Europe, and 0 for the Australia equivalent

Further detail on MRG social media investment

Evidence was also provided by the Digital Communications Officer in Budapest. It showed that the recent Key Trends investment of 300 GBP for Facebook advertising boosted viewing figures to 59K (25K 'post engagement', mostly short views but enough to give a possibility of name-recognition and future support and engagement). The pattern is even clearer with general MRG Facebook 'reach'. Quarter 1 of 2019 received a 'reach' of 95K, Shares of 200 and an Audience Rate of 0.2%; after investment, the equivalent figures were 650K (666%), 512 (253%) and 9% (4010% rise in Audience Growth Rate.) The general viewing figures for MRG reports are very much lower - over a similar time, a recent evaluation report received 60 Views. Documents on niche and 'hot topics', such as a 2011 report on the Batwa which also used in its text (in order to correct it) the more commonly-known term 'Pygmies' is still viewed ten times as often (around 30 views per month) .

The well-written Key Trends¹⁶³ report launch showed what can be achieved. Within the £533 investment mentioned in the Executive Summary, on Facebook, a £300 investment helped produce a 'reach' of 59,000 (henceforth K for 1000) people (25K engagements, 14K Likes, 0.5K active engagements¹⁶⁴). Without investment, on Twitter the equivalent figures were 8K and 120 engagements..

Appendix Seven. Bibliography (All project documents and external evaluations are referred to in footnotes; this section is for publications not already mentioned in the footnotes):

MRG:

MRG 2014 Workplan

MRG Sida 2018 Workplan

¹⁶²eg minorityvoices.org/news.php/en/1390

¹⁶³on 'Climate Change and Minorities', 160 pages, we transformed into Instagram, and Facebook pages...

¹⁶⁴ Clicks, photo clicks, comments

MRG Annual Progress Reports 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017 (including results matrices)

Programme Matrix 2013-2016 and 2017-2020

MRG Global / outside visit countries- Extensive search of MRG and MRGI websites for work in Egypt, Pakistan, Mauritania, and on Ik, Batwa, Roma, Ogiek, and Haratine Peoples

MRG Draft Final Evaluation 'Protecting and promoting the human rights for discriminated minorities in Egypt' m Noha Husein

EDD Final Evaluation Report

Capacity Building for Minority and Indigenous Activists in East Africa, Final Evaluation Report 2018

Iraq: Vulnerable Citizens; MRG Final Evaluation Report & Annex

MRG Turkey Evaluation 2018

https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Final_Report_GAP_Evaluation-2013.pdf Global Advocacy Programme 2013, David Hampson

World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples

State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples,
Minority Voices Newsroom

Definitions of Minorities/Human Rights:

The Universal Declaration of Human Right; . UN Doc. E/CN 4/S.R., 73, pp.5.Cited in Jay A. Sigler op.cit.pp. 67.12 Florence Benoit-Rohmer.

The Minority Question in Europe. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. 1996. pp. 12. 13

Natan Lerner. Group Rights and Discrimination in International Law. Dordrecht/Boston/London:
<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n84037182/>

Macedonia

Roma, Health, Education: https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/MRG_Brief_Mac_ENG_Nov18.pdf

Sri Lanka:

The Sri Lanka Campaign on Lakshan Dias: <https://www.srilankacampaign.org/intimidation-lakshan-dias/>

Thailand:

<https://deepsouthwatch.org/th/eng> for Thailand Deep South incidents

2018 Evaluation: 'Civil Society Organisations: Enhancing CSOs' Contribution to Governance and Development Processes in Thailand' IBA Development Project:

Tunisia:

Silvia Quattrini's 'Identity and Citizenship in Tunisia: The Situation of Minorities after the 2011 Revolution' <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1117031/download>
(ends)