

ERELA

Final Evaluation Report



(Image Credit: Skully/Alamy Live News. The annual International Roma Day community procession through Govanhill, to celebrate Romani culture and raise awareness of issues facing Romani people)

Report of an Evaluation Team comprising:
David Hampson, Zoran Ostojić, Ava Batay-an, Emma Proux, Alexandra Pilling for:

Minority Rights Group Europe

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CPD	Commission for Protection against Discrimination
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EC	European Commission
ERELA	Equality for Roma through Enhanced Legal Assistance
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
EU	European Union
ILC	International Legal Centre
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
KII	Key Informant Interview
KIs	Key Informants
MRGE	Minority Rights Group Europe
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
OECD/DAC	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSF	Open Society Foundations
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRESS	Promoting Roma Equality in Slovenia and Slovakia
REILA	Roma Equality through Increased Legal Access
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

I. Executive Summary

Executive Summary highlights are:

- ERELA positively complemented similar MRGE projects with the Roma in Europe, notably in Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- On 11 positive statements ('had Direct Impact' etc), the evaluation's quantitative ratings from participants exceeded 80%. All the results are [here](#) in the annex of the report.
- **Results are very similar to REILA findings** (which are found in this document to allow for easy comparison, page 12) with lower turnout.
- **Strengths included:** good context and gap analysis; evidence-based and 'evaluative learning' approaches integrated into project design and applied from the very beginning; strong baseline reports and comparative studies; value added by an empowerment approach to participants to tackle the root cause of discrimination.
- **Improvement can be made on:** greater publicity in some communities building on ERELA success with media and social networking in others; promotion of anti-discrimination values in the public sphere (Roma and non-Roma), including to students, by partners.
- **One stand-out finding** is that project partners could usefully liaise more closely with each other, between Bulgaria and Croatia, and with other similar project partners in Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. This applies both to all-party learning, and also to legal to legal learning and Roma-led CSO to Roma-led CSO learning.
- The evaluation finds that **the project mostly met planned outputs and OECD/DAC requirements of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact against its objectives.**

The project 'Equality for Roma through Enhanced Legal Access' (ERELA) officially began in February 2021 and was completed in January 2023. Some delays and diminished participation were attributed to Covid 19, but activities were almost all completed due to late acceleration. Evaluators worked part-time on the research between December 2022 and March 2023.

The ERELA project was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme. Its aim (and the aim of its sister programmes REILA in Hungary and Serbia and PRESS in Slovakia and Slovenia) was to promote and protect the rights of Roma victims of human rights violations and discrimination.

More specifically ERELA aimed to:

- promote and protect the rights of Roma victims of human rights violations and discrimination by raising society's and stakeholders' awareness
- enhance implementation of non-discrimination legislation
- empower Roma to seek legal remedies, in Bulgaria and Croatia. The project aimed to create a virtuous circle whereby increased Roma involvement in access to justice mechanisms, led to

more and better cases being filed, to the benefit of Roma communities and trust in legal remedies and lawyers¹

This final evaluation used the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of project relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact against the objectives and supporting outputs. It used other projects as baselines and focused on identifying lessons learned and good practice.

It used qualitative methods on primary data sources (interviews, focus groups), and quantitative methods in questionnaires and secondary data sources (monitoring and evaluation data, and the Project's progress reports).

Questionnaires comprised 11 positive statements, all of which were highly rated/endorsed as follows: "Rights of Beneficiaries"² at 86%; 'Met Beneficiary needs and priorities' at 89%; 'Sustainable' 83%; MRGE as: 'open to feedback/criticism' at 91%; 'expert' at 93%; 'seeking equality' at 89%; 'accepting contrary views' at 91%; 'working on capacity gaps' at 90%; supporting women' at 90%; 'tackling participation barriers' at 91%. These extremely high results are comparable with the Evaluation Teams research for comparative work worldwide. For example, participants in the ERELA questionnaire confirmed with 93% agreement that MRG is 'Expert'. By comparison, in the evaluation team's recent [FoRB](#)³ study, this was at 88.8% and in the team's [global evaluation of MRG's work worldwide](#)⁴ with a comparatively high sample size, it was at 86.83% for trainees and 87.46% for partners. Similarly, this evaluation's 91% rating of MRG being 'open to criticism' compares with 93.6%, 84.25% and 91.25% respectively. That MRG "meets the needs of its Beneficiaries*" was at 89% in ERELA, compared with 73.8%, 75.58% and 82.45% respectively. Questionnaire respondents unanimously saw MRGE's role as 'strengthening coordination and cooperation' which evaluators regarded as positive identification of a key MRG role.

An important caveat to the above quantitative data is the very low return of questionnaires from implementers and Primary Actors (Beneficiaries). As late as 13 February, after three requests and follow-up messages in a month, only 10 questionnaires had been completed, and the illness of the staff member requested to follow up prevented a last push for responses and only one extra questionnaire was received, a total of 11. This is by far the lowest return the Team has experienced in its work on 7 MRG projects. They are enough to give a flavour⁵, but are far from scientifically sound samples. This difficulty in collecting data could be due to several factors: a reported feeling of fatigue from participants; a small number of 32 contacts suggested; low prioritisation of evaluation by partners and Primary Actors at a busy time; low engagement, transparency and/or accountability to the evaluation

¹ <https://minorityrights.org/what-we-do/erela/>

² The term used in this report also includes lawyers, and encompasses 'Primary Actors' -those for whom the project is developed and implemented - which suggests people within communities.

³ 'Freedom of Religious Belief in South Asia'. July 2022. Hampson, Batay-an and Proux.

⁴ MRG-SIDA Capacity Building Programme and MRG's Global Programme 2012-18. February 2020. Hampson, Batay-an and Ostojic.

⁵ The evaluation budget was 3,937 E, and took 3+ months, part time, for 5 evaluators who will receive around 15 E per hour. The budget was adequate or repeated although not infinite pushes for results. Along with the level of project grants (elsewhere), the budget may usefully be a topic for pre-project discussion between donors and MRG.

process. In a small sample of 6 people completing the 'Beneficiary' questionnaire⁶, appreciation for the partners was high; more surprisingly 3 of the 6 respondents answered that too many resources had been used on Mediators (with 2 saying it was 'about right' and 1 saying 'too little'),

In the qualitative evaluation of impact, a theory-based approach was used to investigate the causal linkage that relates to inputs, activities, and outputs to impacts. Several theoretical models and concepts - such as *outcome mapping*, *social cognitive theory*, and *several learning theories* - were used to underpin progress markers for change in knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviour and policies among the stakeholders.

The evaluators' general conclusion was that the Project activities built on and complemented similar projects and programmes implemented in the Region in the past few decades. The Project created added value through an empowerment approach towards Beneficiaries, who improved their capacities to participate and contribute in defending their rights. They no longer depend exclusively on the good will, discretion and voluntarism of the state officials and local authorities. Moreover, empowering cooperation among the partners in the Project was transferred to the communities and primary Beneficiaries. This influenced their perception, beliefs, motivation, skills and competencies so as to take greater control of their own lives and to also contribute to inclusive local development. Efforts to overcome a reported 'fatigue' amongst communities about meetings, evaluation questionnaires and other tasks necessary to create ongoing learning and improvement may judiciously use appropriate prizes, but not jeopardise this hard won independence.

The evaluation identifies discrimination as a root cause of the plight of Roma people in Croatia and Bulgaria, a neglected truth in both countries. It regards empowerment, particularly the important legal work of Mediators in community, and visibility/awareness to be the optimal methods to overcoming that discrimination.

II. Introduction

A. Evaluation purpose and target audience

The evaluation will be used to inform ongoing learning within MRGE, partners, and allies on the best ways to achieve shared objectives. It may also inform MRGE's methodological choices and intervention choices at the program level when designing new programmes and deciding on areas of focus and ways of working. The results may also be used by partners and allies when considering programming priorities and intervention modalities in the future.

⁶ Although one of these appears to have been a partner completing the wrong questionnaire. Two were lawyers who as trainees are indeed Beneficiaries, although not how everyone would picture a 'Beneficiary'

The evaluation also has a summative purpose, and intended users and potential users include EC and other donors (future & existing).

B. Evaluation objective and scope

According to ToR the objectives of the final evaluation are:

Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of the project in relation to the objectives and supporting outputs set out in 'Roma Equality through increased Access to Justice' and to provide MRGE with an opportunity for 'structured evaluative learning, with the aim of learning from the programme design and implementation processes.

Based on the findings of the evaluation, develop a set of suggestions and key recommendations for future and continued MRGE and its partners' activities.

To report to the EU and other funders on the usage of their resources in the project. The evaluators have worked within the timeframes outlined below and attempted to satisfy the requirements and evaluation guidelines issued by the European Union.

A key aim of the project is that 'The project aims to create a virtuous circle... increased Roma involvement in access to justice mechanisms, leads to more and better cases being filed [and] leads to benefits to Roma communities...increases trust in legal remedies and lawyers and encourages yet more cases to come forward.'

More can be found about the project and MRG at <https://minorityrights.org/what-we-do/erela/>

C. Evaluation questions and tasks

The ToR specifies the following key evaluation questions:

Outcome level

Where completed as planned, did the activities contribute to the planned results? Where this was so, refer to evidence. Where not so, what factors intervened, and explain how they impacted. Suggest ways that MRGE tried to overcome any problems and how successful this was (or not). Document any changes in the external environment that may have helped or hindered the project. If there were any unplanned results (positive or negative) explain what these were and how they came about. The evaluation should pay attention to and comment on the mainstreaming of gender and other forms of intersectional discrimination and cross-cutting issues in the project.

Impact level

Make an assessment as to whether the results achieved are likely, over the longer term to achieve or contribute to the achievement of the specific objective of the project. If it is unlikely that all or part of the purpose has been achieved, why is this and is this something that could have been foreseen or overcome?

D. Approach and Methodology

The evaluation's Theory of Change aims to provide a logical basis for critique.

Quantitative methods were used in the first phase of evaluation. When questionnaires trickled in, they were used to establish trends and tendencies, which - along with DAC criteria and hypotheses from the earlier REILA research - were then scrutinised for underlying meanings through qualitative KIIs and FGDs. Questionnaires (from the survey tool TrueForm) were sent to 32 participants suggested by Partners and repeated email reminders and phone calls were used to encourage responses.

Questionnaire returns have been very low. With self-selection and only 11 results - 59% of the questionnaire returns for the recent REILA evaluation, and only 17% of the Team's current NORAD evaluation - it is difficult to use them for hypotheses and recommendations. There were several reasons given for low returns, including a lack of internet access and a low number of emails made available from the Primary Actors. Natasa Kovacevic (Executive Director of the Information Legal Centre) had pointed to previous 'struggles' to get participation, and of the general 'fatigue' of participants in supporting project activities considered as extra. Despite three requests in a one month period (17th of January, 5th of February and 12th of February), questionnaire returns remained low and some requests for dissemination to Primary Actors (Beneficiaries) remained unanswered. Internet, anonymity and fatigue may fully explain the low response to the questionnaires. Alternative factors could be a low prioritisation from Primary Actors and partners at a busy project time, or a transparency deficit⁷. As in the Executive Summary, lawyers who receive courses are indeed 'Beneficiaries', but not how some would envision the term. At this time, Amalipe could not give us access to community level 'Primary Actors', and illness prevented ILC from providing the requested push for questionnaire answers.

Qualitative work was conducted face to face in the launch event of the lessons learned report held in Budapest in January 2023, by video call, and during a field visit to Croatia mostly by Zoran Ostojic in the relevant languages, and some by other team members in English. A total of 28 people were interviewed. From Croatia 12 people were interviewed from which 3 were Primary Actors/Beneficiaries. From Bulgaria 16 people were interviewed, out of which 8 were Primary Actors who participated in a Zoom FGD.

⁷ a gap in accountability when a participant has mistrust of a process, or is unaware of fundamentals such as who is managing or funding it, and so fails to engage

Questions of long-term impact and sustainability represented a challenge for the evaluation in a funding environment which remains short-term and project-based. The greatest assurance on sustainability is that MRGE has worked in central Europe with Roma groups for decades and plans to continue its endeavours wherever it can access funding.

E. Evaluation Team

Evaluation Team

David Hampson was Team Leader, Researcher, Report-Writer and Editor. His [LinkedIn](#) shows has independent consultancy for MRG, intermittently for over 26 years in 12 roles, including evaluations on global [strategy](#), on global [capacity](#), on [gender](#) discrimination amongst the Batwa ('Pygmies') etc. He served at senior/consultant levels for DFID, UNFAO, IFRC, Oxfam, SAVE, Christian Aid, VSO etc. on humanitarian development in 60+ countries.

Zoran Ostojic was Lead Researcher, Lead Analyst and Lead Writer. His [LinkedIn](#) shows his previous MRG work as Associate Researcher for North Macedonia. As Project Manager and Psychosocial Zoran is a specialist working on anti-violence at the 'Crisis Centre for Man; Serbia' and has extensive qualitative research experience, including with EU INTERREG III C CADSES[1] and IFRC's 'Red Cross Guidelines on Working with Vulnerable Roma.'

Ava Batay-an ([LinkedIn](#)) was Layout Editor and Advisor. She is a rights' professional; an Indigenous Person whose early career responded to grassroots disaster and environmental rights concerns. She has since worked intermittently with MRG on global strategy, capacity and [East Africa](#); and at senior/consultant levels with CARE, CRS, DFID and VSO. She currently leads WHO's community engagement on COVID-19 Response in the Philippines.

Emma Proux ([LinkedIn](#)) led the quantitative research. She is a Master's student in international relations at Sciences Po Bordeaux, France and a researcher on international migration and development with Laval University, Quebec. She has worked on MRG's Global and Freedom of Religious Belief evaluations, on research projects and data reviews for the Welsh Refugee Council (WRC) and the YWCA as an intern.

Alexandra Pilling ([LinkedIn](#)) was Photo Editor. She currently studies at Durham University and has previously carried out research into human rights violations leading to wrongful convictions in high profile criminal trials.

F. Evaluated Intervention

The ERELA project is funded by the European Union's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, Programme and Financial management. Implementation of the project lasted from February 2021 to January 2023.

The final evaluation of the project took place between December 10, 2022 and March 1, 2023.

MRGE is a leader of the consortium implementing the project including two reputable local CSOs: Tsentar za mezhduetnicheski dialog i tolerantnost Amalipe (Amalipe) in Bulgaria and Informativno pravni centar (ILC), in Croatia. Both have over a decade of work on protection of the human and minority rights in their countries, and both present widely in their countries servicing a network of thousands of Beneficiaries.

In both countries the Roma have been discriminated against historically. Despite improvements in legal protection, there are still systematic patterns of discrimination preventing the Roma population from the full realisation of their right to employment, education, health care, and housing.

In contrast to the high level of continuing discrimination, there are only low numbers of complaints of discrimination affecting Roma persons and only small and recent improvements in awareness of issues. The main reasons behind the lack of reporting and direct access to legal remedies are a lack of trust in the judiciary and public institutions and a widespread belief that reporting discrimination will only worsen the situation and/or create open confrontation with the perpetrator/s. Likewise, there is an overwhelming lack of awareness and understanding of non-discrimination legislation and inclusion policies among professionals and public officials, leading to poor case identification and a lack of protection of the rights of Roma victims of human rights violations and discrimination.

The project also has transnational value, as anti-Roma discrimination is a Union-wide challenge. The practical findings of this project (e.g. messaging that resonates with target audiences) will have value at a cross-border level, within the EU and the neighbouring countries. The project has supported cross-border cooperation particularly the mutual exchange of learning, experience, and networking of CSOs, activists, and legal practitioners (baseline research, lessons learned report and launch event, advocacy at the European and international level).

The aim of the ERELA project is to promote and protect the rights of Roma victims of human rights violations and discrimination by raising society and stakeholders' awareness, enhancing the implementation of non-discrimination legislation, and empowering Roma to seek legal remedies and be actively involved in access to justice mechanisms, in Croatia and Bulgaria.

In line with the described objectives, the expected results of this project are: (1) Enhanced knowledge regarding legal remedies to discrimination and access to justice for the Roma; (2) Strengthened capacity

and willingness of legal practitioners to provide legal aid advice and representation for Roma and challenge discrimination incidents and patterns; (3) Strengthened capacity of Roma-led NGOs to provide Roma community with information about anti-discrimination law and available legal remedies; (4) Increased access to justice of the Roma community in discrimination cases and human rights violations.

The results were achieved through the following activities:

- Conducting research on discrimination against the Roma. Subjects included their attitudes to and experience of access to justice and legal practitioners' knowledge about anti-discrimination legislation. This will feed into a baseline report to be used by partners to raise awareness about discrimination against the Roma
- Training legal practitioners on anti-discrimination law and minority rights to strengthen their capacities and enable them to provide legal aid for Roma victims of discrimination and to assist them with litigation in discrimination cases
- Training CSO staff working closely with the Roma community on how to: identify discrimination cases, refer Roma victims of discrimination, conduct advocacy activities and involve Roma community members in decision-making procedures.
- Training Roma Mediators and activists to strengthen their capacities on how to provide advice, support, and encouragement to Roma victims of discrimination who may be considering accessing a legal remedy.
- Providing free legal aid for Roma victims of discrimination
- Offering legal assistance to report discrimination cases to the equality body to promote better protection and access to justice of Roma victims of discrimination
- Supporting Partners and Roma activists to carry out advocacy actions to fight against discrimination at the local, national and international level
- Publishing lessons learned report to summarise the outcomes of the project and to disseminate the experience at the national and EU level

The intervention logic of the Project is presented in the ToC model in Annex V.

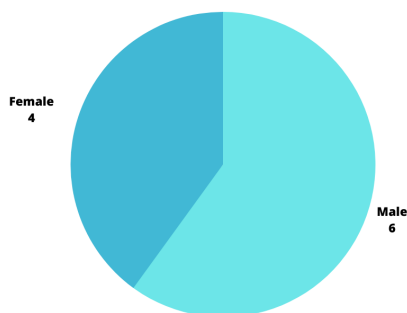
III. Findings and Evaluative Conclusions

The objectives of the final evaluation were to assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of the project in relation to ERELA's objectives and supporting outputs, and to provide MRGE with an opportunity for 'structured evaluative learning'. The evaluation was focused on identifying lessons learned and good practice transferable to similar projects MRGE presently implement in Slovakia and Slovenia, and to future project designs.

Quantitative findings

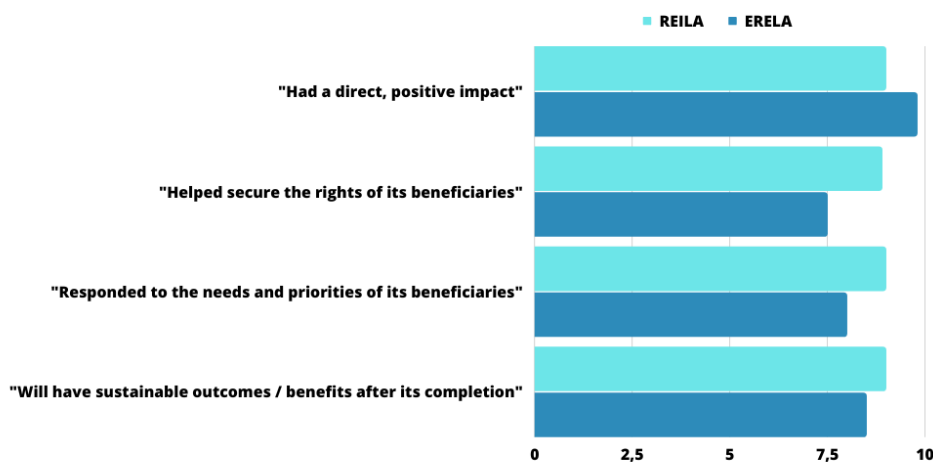
As stated and explained in the methodology section, the result findings are very low and disappointing due to several factors. Nonetheless, the 10 respondents out of 32 gave very positive feedback, all results are at Annex VI [here](#). Similarly to REILA, the questionnaires were distributed at a very busy period for both the Bulgarian and Croatian partners.

The gender of the participants was almost equal with 4 females and 6 males.



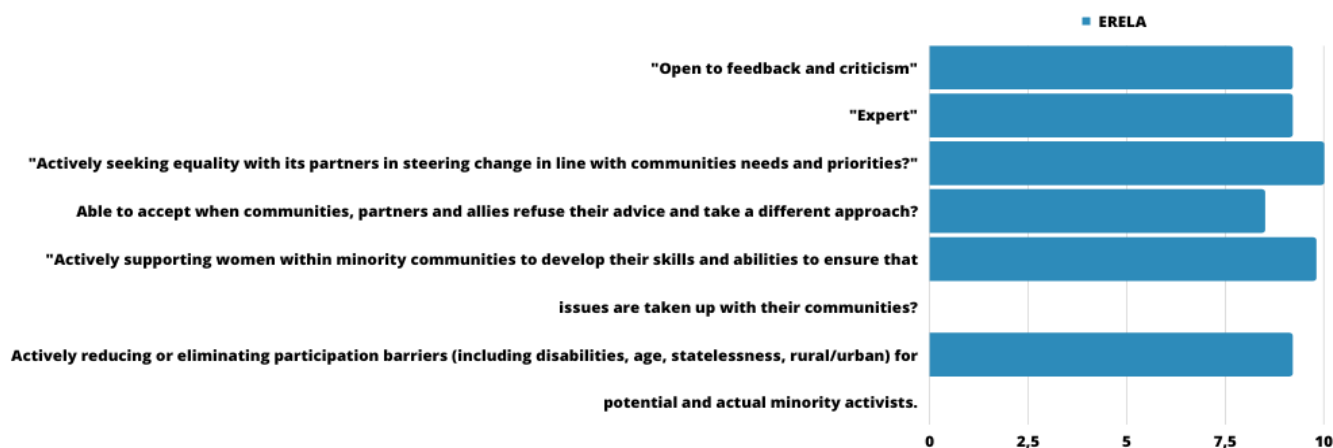
In a low and self-selected sample, questionnaire findings may be considered satisfactory. The following graph shows a comparison between results for the same questions in ERELA and REILA to partners and allies. Overall, over four questions, ERELA scores very slightly less than REILA, and only had a sample size of 58% of REILA (17% for the NORAD evaluation, a project the evaluation team is also currently working on).

Overall, in my opinion, project interventions:



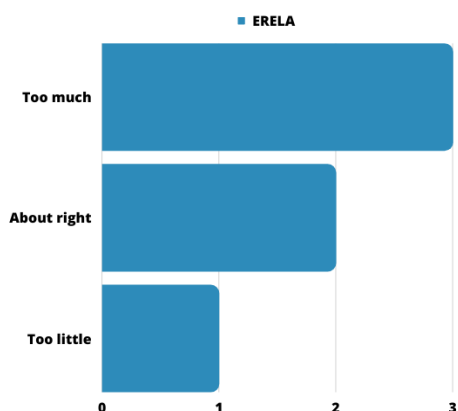
The following graph shows satisfactory results from questions of the questionnaires from the ERELA partners survey (6 answers). Drawing sound conclusions from such a small sample is difficult.

I regard implementing partner (ILC in Croatia or Amalipe in Bulgaria)



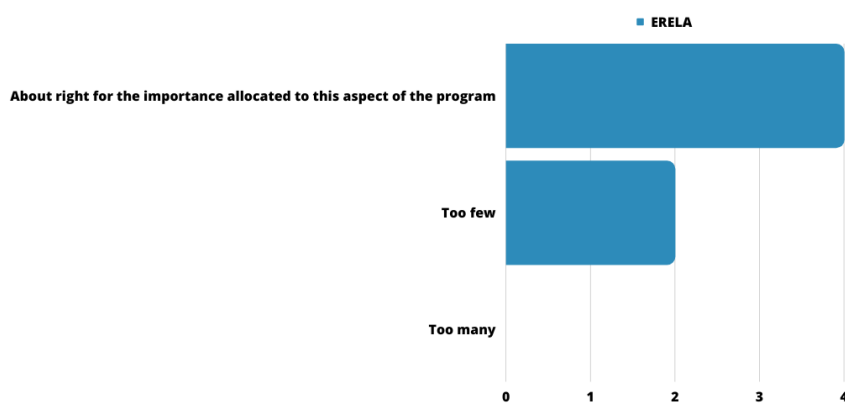
From the perspective of Primary Actors (4 results) in the following two graphs, survey results demonstrate a more complex point of view:

In my opinion, within the ERELA Project, the resources (time, training, budget) invested in the work of mediators are:



Here, the results (3 “too much”, 2 “about right” and 1 “too little”) show to some extent a heterogeneous opinion of the project and its investment with the work of Mediators. It may be regarded as surprising that half of Primary Actors (in a very small sample) regarded the resource investment as ‘too much’

In my opinion, within the ERELA Project, the number of cases of discrimination reported to the Government Body for the Protection of Equality is:



In this graph, the results are stronger for a positive view of a number of cases of discrimination reported to the national equality body. The two answers “too few” still show less enthusiasm in this aspect of the project, but a welcome desire to bring more cases to justice.

From the text based questions, here are a few extracts that emphasise a positive view of the project and the important role of

education.

The overall continuation of the project is desired: “More programs and other activities in order for the Roma community to **free itself from the shackles of discrimination and stereotypes** and start talking publicly about their problems, because I believe that this would reduce discrimination.”

“It would be good if you could involve us again in a partnership with the same or a similar theme. The project contributed to the improvement of our knowledge and skills in the field of discrimination, **improved cooperation with all important stakeholders** (eg. ombudsmen, institutions, police and councils of the Roma national minority)”

“ERELA showed a great need for these and similar activities. During the duration of the project, **significant changes were very visible** because the project is very concrete and meaningful. My message to MRGE is definitely to continue writing and implementing projects like this and to include partners like IPC that **operate in smaller local areas, and with great achievements**. I hereby express my satisfaction with all MRGE staff with whom I was in communication, and special praise goes to Andrea Spítálszky, who was very professional, but approachable and open to all questions and doubts.”

The essential role of education is pointed out:

“Discrimination must be talked about more, it must **be presented at all levels among young generations**. In primary schools, high school students and also at colleges. To involve the general, that is, the wider community in the overall work.”

Qualitative Findings

Relevance of the intervention

The OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation criteria enable measurement of Project relevance, performance - how far the activities match the target group’s needs - as well as its adherence to the policies of the recipient country and donor organisations.

Evaluation of relevance also comprises review of technical adequacy of the Project, whether it offers the solutions to the problems of the target group and whether it adheres to performance standards in terms of intervention logic and project management, and extent to which the Project is technically adequate to the causes and solution to the problems.⁸

Baseline study

The Project encompassed baseline studies and a comparative report, all containing research findings on the state of discrimination and access to justice for the Roma population in Croatia and Bulgaria. The

⁸ Looking Back, Moving Forward Sida Evaluation Manual, Stefan Molund and Göran Schill, 2004. p.33

baseline report and comparative study⁹ were very useful in planning the further steps in the implementation, and were highly praised by KIs and allies in the evaluation process.

The baseline study provided analysis of the legal context in terms of anti-discrimination legislation and its implementation. They displayed the previous experience of the Beneficiaries with the legal system, characterised by distrust, disappointment, anger, fear and shame whenever they tried to ask for what should be guaranteed to them by the state.

It was correctly presumed - and later confirmed by the baseline study - that deeply-rooted discrimination is the main barrier to Roma people's unhindered access to justice in both countries. This causes a lack of systematic application of anti-discrimination legislation and measures to make mainstream education, employment and social policies more inclusive.

Identification of the needs gap

Over the past decades, the mainstream approach to the Roma situation in Europe was to try and improve their socio-economic position. However, this Project proposed a different route to the same goal, through empowerment of primary Beneficiaries. Empowering of the Beneficiaries enables them to stand for themselves and protect their rights, alone or in cooperation with their representatives and trustees, and no longer depend on the good will, discretion and voluntarism of state officials and local authorities.

Lack of access to justice and awareness of legal remedies concerning anti-discrimination legislation among Roma population, local authorities, government officials, even among legal professional is one of the main bottlenecks and gaps identified within the system which prevent more significant development including both minority population but as well as hindering development of the overall society. The overall development losses and costs due to exclusion are well elaborated in a Research paper by the World Bank¹⁰

Adherence to the priorities and policies of the recipient countries and EU

Findings of thematic and content analysis, later confirmed through KIIs and FGDs, confirmed a coherence of the Project objectives to the policies and the priorities of the stakeholders.

⁹ Atanas Atanasovov, A., Kovačević, N., Ravlić Vukasović, Ž. & Spitalšzky, A. (2021) Discrimination against Roma in Croatia and Bulgaria: A comparative report, Minority Rights Group Europe (MRGE), Budapest

¹⁰ Robayo-Abril, M., Millán, N. (2019) Breaking the Cycle of Roma Exclusion In the Western Balkans, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, Washington

Furthermore, the initiative will serve to contribute to consistent and coherent implementation of Union law, it will contribute to the implementation of the 2020-2030 EU Roma Strategic Framework, and it will strengthen future similar policies.

Amalipe, in particular, was found to contribute to project relevance by its work with and on the issues of women. This included public advocacy for Roma women's rights, meetings with communities and decision makers on domestic violence, early marriage, prevention of drop-out from school. One example in October 2022 was a National Meeting with women representatives in Sofia on education and avoidance of early marriage, which earned the attendance of the Vice President of Bulgaria and significant media coverage.

Complementarity with similar programs/projects

The Project focused on access to justice, advocacy, capacity building of Roma communities and authorities, and expanding the role and skills of Roma Mediators. It complements MRGE's REILA and PRESS programs, and those of other organisations.

KIs comments on relevance:

'Most people [didn't] know what discrimination is... now they understand... Many people started working for their rights, they know how to raise a complaint, ask for help from organisations...' (Atanas Atanasov of Amalipe)

A Mediator in Croatia stated that certain advances, successful programs and new initiatives can be seen in Croatia. He believes that the extent of discrimination in his county and the problems of Roma discrimination have been concealed from the EU. He welcomes ERELA as different and necessary because it provides a more realistic insight.

Mediators provided regular reports within the project. Six of them, covering 159 (approximately gender-equal) discussions in the two countries showed that Roma people face discrimination from non-Roma people in many walks of life. These include health including childbirth facilities; police, employment; entry to swimming pools, nightclubs, football; an assumption in a shop that a father had kidnapped his child because he had a different skin colour etc. Two examples are shown here.

Bulgaria: 'She took her feverish niece to the doctor. The weather was rainy and cold but the doctor told her to wait outside where there was nowhere to hide from the rain. The waiting room had plenty of room. She felt the doctor discriminated against them because they were Roma people.'

Bulgaria: 'She and her boyfriend visited a café in the centre of Shumen six weeks ago. They asked to be seated at an empty table. The waitress began to behave rudely with them. She banged the tableware on the table, and kicked her chair. The couple asked about her attitude. The waitress said that they were "like animals". They felt aggrieved as the treatment was because they were Roma people.'

Amalipe Mediator Irena Mihaylova stated that the need for similar projects is great. She stated that Beneficiaries have learned a lot. Legal aid was important in order for the Beneficiaries to understand that there is someone to help them.

Conclusions on relevance

The project is clearly of high relevance. The reality of deep, long-standing, structural discrimination against the Roma in Central Europe appears to the evaluators to be self-evident. The Project was based on data compiled through assessment of needs of the Beneficiaries and context analysis. The Project encompassed a baseline study on the state of discrimination and access to justice. The baseline report, including a comparative study, was praised by KIs and allies in the evaluation process as highly useful in the planning of further steps in implementation.

The Project's activities are coherent to key national strategies in Bulgaria and Croatia and will continue to contribute to consistent and coherent implementation of Union law, including the implementation of the '2020-2030 EU Roma Strategic Framework'.

The Project activities complement similar projects and programmes implemented in the Region, even if communication between the projects is not deemed to be optimal. The added value of all these projects is an empowerment approach towards primary Beneficiaries who are able to participate and contribute to defending their rights, and no longer depend on the good will, discretion and voluntarism of the state officials and local authorities.

Effectiveness of the intervention

Effectiveness refers to the extent to which the Project's objectives were achieved as a result of implemented activities. The evaluation of the Project's outputs was based on data from the desk study and review of the project documents, interim and progress reports, interim evaluation and monitoring reports, etc. The evaluation of the outcomes was based on findings through KIIs and FGDs.

Most of the planned outputs, such as conferences and meetings held, reports published, provision of legal aid to the Beneficiaries, legal assistance before the national equality bodies and number of advocacy meetings were met. In Bulgaria there were one fewer (five out of six) cases brought to the national equality body than planned.

Coronavirus-induced reduction in training participants created extra work but did not have a significant effect on the outcomes of the Project.

Project's planned outcomes

The evaluation of achieved outcomes uses a baseline against final results. It strives to answer the question of whether the activities implemented led to the Project's objectives or not, and whether the intervention resulted in positive and direct effects on the situation of the primary Beneficiaries.

The overall objective of the project was defined in the project proposal and later in the Grant Agreement that partners signed with the European Commission. It promotes and protects the rights of Roma victims of human rights violations and discrimination¹¹ by achieving the objectives of raising society and stakeholders' awareness, enhancing implementation of non-discrimination legislation and empowering Roma to seek legal remedies in Croatia and Bulgaria.

Several clusters of activities including research, advocacy, training, networking and exchange of the experiences, legal aid, providing assistance /brokering before national equality bodies and others, were designated and planned to influence awareness and deeper understanding of the facets and scope of this problem.

Objective 1: Raising society and stakeholders' awareness

Findings of the initial needs assessments, analysis of the third-party reports, later confirmed by baseline research data for Croatia and Bulgaria pointed out that there is an overwhelming lack of awareness and understanding on non-discrimination legislation and inclusion policies among professionals and public officials, leading to poor case identification and lack of protection of the rights of Roma victims of human

¹¹ Grant Agreement that partners signed with the European Commission

rights violations and discrimination. The first cluster of activity to tackle this issue was baseline research:

A. Research on discrimination against the Roma and their access to justice

The Partners conducted both desk and empirical research through FGDs with different groups: Roma community members, Roma women, Roma activists, legal practitioners and CSO staff. The results of the research were formulation of a baseline study and a comparative study presenting findings in a concise way. The study was widely used in the following phases and fed into the content of the training for lawyers, CSO staff and Roma activists. Partners also used the findings for their advocacy activity both at the local/national and international level to raise awareness on discrimination against the Roma.

B. Advocacy to encourage implementation and/or adoption of anti-discrimination legislation and policies

Partners engaged in advocacy efforts on a local, national and EU level which included meetings with decision-makers, dissemination of accurate research data and proven practice.

C. Lessons learned report and exchange of experience between partner CSOs.

The partners prepared a publication¹² on lessons learned compiling the good practice examples to be disseminated further in the advocacy purposes and improvement of the design of the similar projects in the future.

Objective 2: enhancing implementation of non-discrimination legislation

The Partners organised the following clusters of the activities to achieve the above objectives:

D. Training legal professionals on anti-discrimination law/legal remedies ;

E. Training Roma-led CSOs on anti-discrimination law/legal remedies;

F. Training Roma Mediators and activists on anti-discrimination/legal remedies;

Baseline report exposed the barriers to the exercise and protection of the rights of Roma and anti-discrimination policies. They were related to the low level of knowledge and experience of lawyers and other experts in public administration about human rights, and their lack of motivation to implement strategic measures and regulations to improve the position of Roma.

The concept of the training methodology in the Project is determined as action-oriented and

¹² Atanas Atanasovov, A., Kovačević, N., Ostopan, A. & Spitalšzky, A. (2023) Combatting discrimination through enhanced access to justice in Croatia and Bulgaria, Minority Rights Group Europe (MRGE), Budapest

participatory with partners designing the training materials according to the needs of the different target groups (legal practitioners, CSOs, Roma Mediators and activists). It is learner-centred (i.e. geared to meet actual gaps in the participants' knowledge and motivation, and flexible to different learner needs); dialogue oriented (encouraging participants to ask questions, especially concerning the driving forces behind structural discrimination, and facilitating dialogue and sharing between participants). Participation and application of skills-learning throughout the course was key, so that it was not theoretical but acted as a bridge to immediate practical action by the trainees in the weeks following the training.¹³

For the purpose of this evaluation, some learning theories were used to analyse the value and merit of the training activity in the Project. One was the experiential learning cycle developed by David Kolb (1984).¹⁴ This builds on the notion that people learn from experiences and build new knowledge based on practice. People can use analysis, experimentation and experience to decide what new knowledge is relevant and how it can be applied. Skills and knowledge can then be integrated into existing work and action plans, and thus become the new working practice. Another theory of triple-loop learning, developed by Argyris and Schön (1974), complements Kolb's theory, by engaging in 3 levels of learning about successful results and how these can be achieved. In this model, single-loop learning is about reflecting on the rules and procedures so as to improve actions with small adjustments: *Are we doing things right?* Double-loop learning would be the following question: *Are we doing the right things? Do we need to change our choices in what we do and how we do this?* Triple-loop learning questions would be: *How do we decide what is right? Do we need to change the principles, theories, or visions that underpin our decisions for change?*

As comparison, traditional education and teaching approaches are basically subject-centred, keep learners in the position of passive recipients and are based merely on memorising subject-matter without linking the knowledge to experience or reflection or discussion of any sort.

The teaching methodology used in the Project falls into the category of a modern teaching approach. It is learner-centred, allows reflection and co-learning through dialogue and discussion on topics connected to life experiences. It allows learners to understand issues in a deeper sense, and to derive their own conclusions and to experiment with the various options for further practical application of acquired knowledge and a new cycle of learning. The benefit of such learning in comparison with the traditional education is of turning learners to the environment, people and lived experiences instead of subjects and theories. This improves not only their knowledge but also other competences and skills, attitudes (values, beliefs, basic assumptions or mental schemes, etc.) and overall potential for activism and participation in new experiences.

¹³ Grant Agreement with the European Commission

¹⁴ Gordijn F., Ernstman N., Helder J., Brouwer H. (2018), Reflection Methods Practical Guide for Trainers and Facilitators, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research

One KI, a participant in education for professionals, elaborated: 'It's good to have an education about the hidden ways to tag people and put them in harm's way. It is important to be able to recognize when someone is helpless. The education provided space for 'out loud' thinking, Through examples, we had the opportunity to broadly express our own point of view, and there was also room for elucidating participants' own prejudices.' [Veselinka Kastratović, lawyer from Croatia]

Veselinka also explained that some education participants realised that when they look at a problem from a 'human point of view' instead of a power point of view, prejudices collapse.

Objective 3: empowering Roma to seek legal remedies

To achieve the above objective the partners organised the following clusters of activities:

G. Provide legal aid advice to community via outreach;

H. Providing/brokering legal assistance before the national equality body;

Anja Ostopanj, ILC Legal Adviser presented the achievements by the ILC and partners. They hired 6 Mediators, and worked on 13 Roma settlements. ILC made 140 field visits and talked to 163 Clients (84 female, 79 male). Legal aid was provided in 20 cases, and 6 cases were reported to the Equality body (Ombudswoman)

Nataša Kovačević, ILC coordinator, pointed out that ILC is a free legal aid provider registered by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Croatia. It is also a regional contact point of the Ombudswoman, and the ERELA project contributed to the strengthening of this link.

Amalipe Mediator Valery Angelov said that 7 Mediators worked with over 400 people (approximately gender-equal). Legal aid was provided in 10 instances and 5 cases were reported to the equality body in Bulgaria - Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD).

MRG's Andrea Spitalszky commented that Amalipe's field and legal work started 5 months later than planned. MRG experienced initial difficulties of communication, which were resolved later in the project. An extension for Amalipe and acceleration brought them close to the target (5 out of 6) of cases reported to the equality body. Although the Roma population is much bigger in Bulgaria than in Croatia, and Amalipe had more Mediators, in Croatia there were more cases reported to the Ombudsman than in Bulgaria. According to Amalipe, there is a low awareness about discrimination and the functioning of the equality body among the Roma and there is little will to report cases. Atanas Atanasov commented, 'That is new for us, not entirely new because in the past we sent complaints as an organisation with some success. But it is new for us to work with politicians and other authorities'. It appears clear to the evaluators that more use could have been made of Roma-led Idetartozunk¹⁵ in Hungary who have a Legal Advisor on their Board assisting Clients with the reporting of their cases to the equality body.

¹⁵ Idetartozunk was a partner in the REILA project.

Discrimination was also a new field for ILC as they previously provided free legal aid for vulnerable groups on statelessness, domestic violence etc.) but despite this fact, their legal work was relatively successful, with the target met of six cases delivered to the national equality body.

KIs comments on effectiveness included:

‘The effectiveness of the project is best seen in direct work with Beneficiaries who were provided with legal assistance in the ILC office, over the phone video in the best possible way.’ [Anja Ostopanj of ILC].

[We conducted...] Effective writing of the manual on stereotypes and biases that follow the Roma issues, in order to update stakeholders and new practices. We had three really successful training sessions, in person, gathering all the legal practitioners across eastern Croatia (The final one for lawyers was repeated due to Covid absences). [Jagoda Novak, Trainer ILC]

Conclusions on effectiveness

The Project was effective as it contributed to the knowledge, perceptions and beliefs of most Beneficiaries connected to the Project. Some participated fully in the Project, and directly feel positive outcomes/outputs in line with their own ‘felt needs’.

Some aspects of the project design and implementation could be improved, Several KIs were of the opinion that the Project needed more publicity, should use more social networks and should also reach out to the non-Roma population:

ILC Mediator David Oršuš said that much of the non-Roma population is unfamiliar with both the project or issues of discrimination, which should be integrated into regular civic education and more represented in the media.

Sustainability of the intervention

Sustainability represents an extent of activity/results continuity beyond the programme funding period. In other words, sustainability means the continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed, and the probability of continued long-term benefits.

In the Project document several factors and strategies were outlined that should assure



long-term sustainability of the results of the Project: The project activities were locally owned as the national partners played the most important roles and were recognised as the main bearers of the activities in their countries. National partners assured participation of other local activists and CSOs forming the national network, assuring regular contact with the Beneficiaries throughout the countries. The focus was on enhancing cooperation and communication so as to coordinate the activities more smoothly and to assure regular information and knowledge exchange, and to galvanise empowerment and capacity building efforts. Finally, empowering cooperation and advocacy among the partners was transferred to the communities and primary Beneficiaries, and had an effect on their perception, beliefs, motivation, skills and competencies so as to take greater control of their own lives and contribute to inclusive local development.¹⁶ Sustainability is notoriously problematic to prove, and unpredictable. Until donors are willing to pay for, and CSOs / NGOs willing to conduct, longitudinal studies, it will remain so.

KI comments on sustainability included:

“The reports we wrote can be spread it over our network with Mediators, people can use it... something not good is that ERELA is finishing in January, but people are identifying cases and... it will continue whether we have project or not, they ask us to help a complaint or send to the Ombudsman... we and the Mediators will continue it. It is sustainable because they [Roma communities] know and trust the Mediators... some Mediators will continue to be paid, and some work as educational Mediators who are paid by schools... most are from Roma community {Atanas Atanasov of Amalipe}

Anja Ostopanjan from ILC commented: The ILC is an organisation that operates in its local environment, and thus we can respond to the challenges of Roma access to justice by providing free legal aid. The ILC staff has been additionally trained and our capacities have been strengthened, and we are still involved in solving the problems of the Roma community as authorised providers of free legal aid. The ILC's Mediators have also increased their knowledge and connected with ILC and will continue to refer parties to the ILC... to whom the Roma continue to turn with their problems. The manuals that were created as part of the project, as well as the two reports, will serve everyone who needs them. ILC's advocacy will hopefully bring about change in the local environment.

Jagoda Novak of ILC commented "To ensure sustainability, the most important is the education for Roma Mediators and the knowledge will remain for them. They are not lawyers, they did not know about discrimination. It is an essential goal in order for them to remain active in their communities. Through the workshops, the community meetings, the general Roma population became more aware of discrimination. The objective is to first RECOGNISE and then to REPORT.

Jagoda raised the idea of including judges, even though this might initially be difficult. “One day those trainings should include judges or create training especially for judges in a European society”.

As the manual was dedicated to people that protect the Roma population, it should be published and more widely distributed for its promotion and longevity. It was published on the NGOs website and facebook but it could go beyond that to improve the sustainability of the project.

¹⁶ OECD/Noya A. Clarence E., “Community capacity building: fostering economic and social resilience. Project outline and proposed methodology”, 26-27 November 2009, working document, CFE/LEED, OECD, www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/10/44681969.pdf?contentId=44681970

Natasa Kovacevic, Executive Director of ILC said “We can't implement sustainability if we don't have similar projects.” The point is well taken, and seems to further strengthen the importance of both longer projects funded by donors and of networking between the MRG projects which do exist in Central Europe. Natasa provided a caveat on sustainability around the aspects of willingness and ability of informants to participate and contribute their time to this evaluation. ‘I don't think that besides our trainer Jagoda Novak, anybody else would be able or willing to participate in interviews in English... FGDs are not easy to organise for the simple reason of people not willing to participate in them. We struggled a lot when organising [them, and they] were mainly held online via zoom. Lawyers and other participants are busy with their daily work and are not willing to participate in any extra activities, and our Roma population is already tired and unmotivated to participate in different events such as FGDs or workshops. ILC reached its target of organising 6 focus groups during the first year of the implementation, and reported that one reason for fatigue might be that the Croatian Government Office for Human Rights conduct similar meetings.

Evaluators probed how ERELA could prevent replication and reduce this ‘fatigue’. Anja Ostopanj, also of ILC said ‘People are saturated to be a part of different and similar workshops, focus groups, education. Their feeling is that they don't know what they are getting, and they have to give their time and effort. I believe we should... reward the participants of various events... it would be easier to reach the participants and their quality involvement.’

This is an understandable response from implementors, and future projects should indeed consider appropriate ‘rewards’ or ‘prizes’ for involvement which further project goals (eg. as motivation for quality graphics in a social media campaign, a prize of data with minimum usage conditions to spread that campaign). This should be done with the usual caveat on ‘free stuff’; it can easily be counter-productive and corrosive; if a target group does not see sufficient intrinsic value to contribute time to a programme, it raises questions as to its sustainability, as well as to who is benefiting from the programme itself.

Conclusions on sustainability

In summary, the project activities were locally owned as the national partners played the most important roles. The main project methodology involves capacity building which includes training of the legal professionals, activists and Mediators. The training manuals are available online and will be available to partners and the public after the Projects ends for future education and for further development of the program. Advocacy efforts are helping change some policies and even legal frameworks are going to resonate for years to come. Research materials, reports, lessons learned and good practice will remain available for future advocacy efforts. There has occurred some transfer to communities and primary Beneficiaries influencing their perception, beliefs and motivation, skills and competencies so as to take greater control of their own lives and also contributes to inclusive local development. However, the fatigue of staff and Primary Actors for core programme and evaluation activities, give cause for concern; a key component of successful community development is ownership and the resultant time commitment. Rewards and prizes can be an appropriate motivator if handled correctly, but need very

close attention because when mis-handled they can further damage sustainability and cause a reverse in project objectives towards dependency.

One recommendation to the donor, and peer donors is for longer commitment and a move away from project-based support. Although projects often spawn follow-up and related projects, time lags create disruption to impact. In this project, as in REILA, this was an issue as Natasa of ILC commented “we feel it is a shame it has ended, now that all the activities are in place”.

Impact of the intervention

The Impact of the intervention is the totality of positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

Evaluation of impact is more *user-oriented* in contrast to *goal-oriented* evaluations focusing more on effectiveness.¹⁷

Data for the evaluation of impact was collected using KIIs, FDGs also with the members of the target group. As the conceptual frameworks for analysis of the data, evaluators used the concept of *outcome mapping* and *social cognitive theory*. The outcome mapping is a concept developed by International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada. The outcome mapping proposes a set of progress indicators that may indicate a high probability that the results of the intervention will have a long-term impact. In evaluation we used the basic approach from the outcome mapping as rather than assessing the products of an intervention (e.g. policy change), it focuses mainly on changes in behaviours of the people and organisations affected by the intervention. However the system of progress indicators in this evaluation was based on Social Cognitive Theory¹⁸ key components of (self-efficacy, behavioural capability, expectations, expectancies, self-control, observational learning and reinforcements) to assess the stages of the sequence of change from the initial Beneficiaries’ position (passive aid recipients) to their empowered assumption of responsibility for their own betterment and contribution towards inclusive social development.

The relevance of Social Cognitive Theory to Impact:

In Social Cognitive Theory, human agency operates through phenomenal and functional consciousness. This includes the temporal extension of agency through intentionality and forethought, self-regulation by self-reactive influence, and self-reflectiveness about one’s capabilities, quality of functioning, and the meaning and purpose of one’s life pursuits. Personal agency operates within a broad network of social

¹⁷ Looking Back, Moving Forward Sida Evaluation Manual,’ Stefan Molund and Göran Schill, 2004. p.33

¹⁸ Used widely in development projects/programs, see: Rogers, Patricia (2014). Theory of Change: Methodological Briefs - Impact Evaluation No. 2, *Methodological Briefs*, no. 2,

structural influences. In these transactions, people are producers as well as products of social systems. Social Cognitive Theory distinguishes between three modes of agency: direct personal agency; proxy agency (which relies on others to act on one's behalf to secure desired outcomes); and collective agency (exercised through socially coordinated and interdependent effort).¹⁹ The theory is presented in Figure 3:

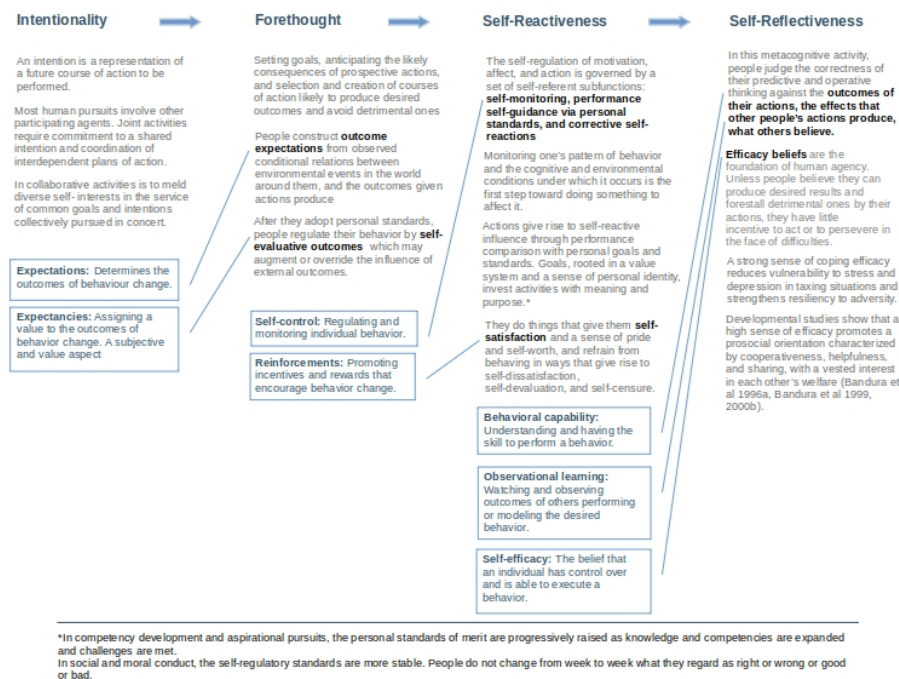


Figure 3: Core features of human agency²⁰

According to SCT, to be an agent is to intentionally make things happen by one's actions.

'To make their way successfully through a complex world full of challenges and hazards, people have to make good judgments about their capabilities. They must anticipate the probable effects of different events and courses of action, size up socio-structural opportunities and constraints and regulate their behaviour accordingly. These belief systems are a working model of the world that enables people to achieve desired outcomes and avoid untoward ones.'²¹

Besides MRGE, partners ILC and Amalipe as well have been working previously in the Region and have a well established network of Beneficiaries, allies and supporters, which is a reason why the Project was well accepted and raised a strong interest among the Beneficiaries, that contributed to their **intentionality** to take part and their commitment to joining with the others to coordinate efforts towards the common objectives.

The main operative method in the Project is outreach. Competent Mediators and lawyers approach Beneficiaries in their natural environment, working on their motivation, helping resolve doubts and misconceptions and helping clarify **expected outcomes and expectancies**. Expected outcomes are linked

¹⁹ Bandura A. (2001) Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective Annu. Rev. Psychol. 2001. 52:1–26

²⁰ Adapted from: Bandura A. (2001) Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective Annu. Rev. Psychol. 2001. 52:1–26

²¹ Ibid

with the experience of the Beneficiaries, and expectancies relate to their subjective **attitudes and values**.

Outreach and empowerment helped Beneficiaries to consolidate their self-control in the sense of regulating their own behaviour and motivation and ability to identify various incentives to reinforce changed behaviour. The **reinforcements** might be personal/internal like a sense of self-worth or external as favourable changes in the environment, as the consequences of the changed behaviour. Importance of feeling of self-satisfaction, self-worth and dignity as important factors in human agency

Finally, the first results of the joint actions appeared to confirm the behavioural capacity of the Beneficiaries and their newly acquired knowledge and skills to perform a behaviour. Effects of co-learning were augmented with **observational learning**, through watching and observing outcomes of others performing or modelling the desired behaviour. The final effect is development of the self-efficacy belief, the belief that an individual has control over and is able to execute a behaviour, which is a foundation for future agency, or readiness to resume responsibility for own actions, goals and overall betterment.

Developmental studies show that a high sense of efficacy promotes a prosocial orientation characterised by cooperativeness, helpfulness, and sharing, with a vested interest in each other's welfare.^{22 23 24}

KI comments on impact included:

The Project opened the opportunity for the Beneficiaries to access free legal aid. KIs explained how the Beneficiaries have learnt how to pursue joint interest, and how to establish cooperation on that ground:

'We work in 300 schools ... and in this project Mediators explain to 20-30 people in meetings... [previously] how they can make a complaint? We have reached more than 300 people in the field multiply that by their family members.' (Atanas Atanasov of Amalipe)

Anja Ostopanij ILC commented that the reality was "Far away from national grassroots advocacy; we are starting with raising awareness... then we can inform more from the community, more years..."

Atanas of Amalipe agreed about another key super goal: 'Ownership of the project of the Roma population? I cannot say this because they don't yet understand the meaning of the project, we try to explain but they will only get the aspect on discrimination.'

Andrea Spitalszky of MRGE commented 'The project formed a good team that helped to include Roma in access to justice. Complaints were submitted to the ombudsman's office, which led to benefits for the

²² Bandura A, Barbaranelli C, Caprara GV, Pastorelli C. 1996a. Multifaceted impact of self-efficacy beliefs on academic functioning. *Child Dev.* 67:1206–22

²³ Bandura A, Barbaranelli C, Caprara GV, Pastorelli C, Regalia C. 2000b. Sociocognitive Self-Regulatory Mechanisms Governing Transgressive Behavior. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* In press

²⁴ Bandura A, Pastorelli C, Barbaranelli C, Caprara GV. 1999. Self-efficacy pathways to childhood depression. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* 76:258–69

Roma community. Trust has been gained in legal remedies, but also in lawyers, which will encourage them to report discrimination in the future. The training provided for three target groups (lawyers, CSOs, Roma Mediators and activists) strengthened the capacities and will to provide legal assistance to Roma in cases of discrimination, contributing to more effective implementation of the current non-discrimination legislation. Relationships established between ILC staff, Mediators and Roma leaders involved in cases mean that free legal aid will continue to be available in future cases of discrimination. The capacity of NGOs to provide information to the Roma community on anti-discrimination has been strengthened. Roma Mediators were also strengthened to identify cases of discrimination and inform victims about available legal remedies. They will continue to promote legal remedies to new victims of discrimination. All project activities contributed to increasing the knowledge of the general public about good practices for increasing the Roma community's access to justice'.

Jagoda Novak mentioned that the core activity of free legal aid is the most impactful in recognising discrimination. ERELA's use of legal aid was both positive and particularly appreciated, as the EU usually relies on Government projects to incorporate discrimination. Settlement visits, story collection and trust-building with communities similarly created positive impact.

Teodora Krumova/Amelipe added, 'The main benefit of the project was that the people learned whom to address and how to cope with the discrimination.'

Several Amalipe Mediators expect the effects of the Project to grow over time: So far, people have learned what discrimination is, which institutions to contact, and how to write complaints. They have begun to talk openly about problems and to show more self-confidence in that sense.

David Oršuš, ILC Mediator, described that active people in the community were happy when they learned that they had some rights and could exercise them. They are aware that they had to become the bravest, as "guinea pigs," but they are satisfied that they were in a position to act in solidarity for the benefit of their compatriots.

KIs confirmed that the key factor was the relationship built between the Mediators and the Beneficiaries:

Stelan Stefanov, a Primary Actor ('Beneficiary') and respondent from Bulgaria, stated that Mediators have a socialising role, especially in small and isolated settlements. SB, a Primary Actor from Croatia stated that he often encounters understanding and acceptance from the IPC staff, which is rare to experience even from his closest relatives and friends. Božica, a Primary Actor from Croatia points out that the warmth, empathy and solidarity are highly valued among the members of her community, implying that these traits are expected from the Mediators and other professional staff as well.

An education Mediator in Bulgaria, Angel Angelov, stated that the relationship starts with the Mediator's first knock on the Client's door. The process is built on empowerment, encouragement of multiple users in applying the acquired knowledge and demonstration of solidarity and support to other people in need. Encouragement is important because many people are initially constricted and need to shed the veil that keeps them encapsulated.

Mediator Milan Mitrović from Croatia believes that the key approach in working with the community is the engagement of experienced human rights activists, who are role models and mentors especially to young people, who over time become the new 'wheels of change and support in the community'

Conclusions on impact

A majority of KIs were asked about the long-term impact of the Project. They described changes of the experience among the Beneficiaries, who very well accepted the opportunity to have someone to turn to, to help them solve existential problems. The Beneficiaries accepted a new opportunity and interest spread quickly. Not all decided to file a complaint, but they had a new awareness that there is a way and somebody to help them; this had a beneficial effect. Some KIs identified successes in legal procedures and changes in the environment that became more enabling and sees it as a guarantee of the long term-impact. The evaluation showed that shared success stories had a strong deterrence influence.

Using SCT in analysis, the findings indicate changes along the key components of self efficacy, behavioural capability, expectations, expectancies, self-control, observational learning and reinforcements, on which the indicators in this evaluation were based. Evaluation recorded changes in all modes of agency:

- direct **personal agency**, as seen through self-confidence, awareness, knowledge and skills of the Beneficiaries.
- The Beneficiaries showed readiness to meld their self-interest and to pursue common goals supported by competent lawyers and Mediators using **proxy agency** as seen through community members acting jointly or in coordinated effort with their local representatives and trustful CSO. They also relied on **collective agency** exercised through socially coordinated and interdependent efforts, including relying on both local and national networks, led by leading national CSOs who were well-connected with state agencies and could raise issues on a higher level.

Efficiency of the intervention

OECD/DAC Efficiency criteria provide a measure for how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess technical efficiency and give a brief analysis of allocative efficiency. Optimal allocative efficiency is not achieved unless the intervention produces the highest possible level of utility or value to society. It is assessed through comparison of realized allocation of funds and alternatives.



Irena Mihaylova, an educational mediator, at the Children's Roma Festival 'Open Heart', Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, 2018. Credit: Raycho Vasilev Chaprazov. (This was the cover photo of baseline report <https://minorityrights.org/publications/roma-croatia-bulgaria/>.)

Added value was provided by the Beneficiaries' move towards being independent actors and away from dependency on the good will, discretion and voluntarism of state officials and local authorities, or being passive recipients of aid.

Project expenditure:

The evaluation noted that partners fulfilled their financial obligations towards Project implementation signifying that the programme budget was sufficiently met. Allocation of the programme budget was in accordance with the stipulated milestones and deliverables to be achieved which is a good approach to budget allocation.

Based on the evaluation findings the estimation is that the Project influenced profoundly the perception, attitudes, knowledge and skills of between 500-1000 of Beneficiaries which is the primary reach of the Project. The secondary reach is estimated to be about 25000, taking into account a number of covered settlements populated mostly by Roma people, many with average population between 2-5000 inhabitants.

Secondary reach might be higher if counted in effects of legal cases on a general population.

KI comments included:

'We had one network with 500 education Mediators. We gave them one session about mediation. The salary is normal, not high or low '[Atanas Atanasov, Amalipe]

'The ERELA project put our focus on discrimination against Roma. All our results obtained from this project affect the improvement of legal assistance to the Roma, who are one of the most excluded groups. All costs related to project activities were spent with the intention of using as few funds as possible. In addition, cases were reported to the ombudswoman, and this procedure was free of charge, unlike court proceedings'. [Anja Ostopanjan ILC]

Cost minimisation measures:

In the Project several cost minimisation measures were applied:

- MRGE has previously been involved in the implementation of similar Roma PROJECTS in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ukraine and Macedonia (EIDHR/2012/308-506; ENI/2016/376-039; IPA/2015/382006). Partners have decades of experience working with discrimination and other human rights violations affecting Roma. All the previous assures skills and experiences that shorten the 'learning curve' thus reducing the financial losses on trials and errors.

- The partners established continuous monitoring, to ensure targeting efficiency.
- MRGE and partner staff, trainers etc. used economic hotels and budget transport .
- The partners used relatively inexpensive facilities, such as civil society shared spaces, for training, conferences, etc.
- Discrimination cases were reported to the equality body free of charge, unlike court procedures.
- Partners used knowledge in all target countries to ensure that costs incurred e.g. translation and printing represent value for money, and that ‘wastage’ in spending was kept to an absolute minimum.

Conclusions on efficiency:

The project performed in an exemplary fashion, limiting expenditure of time and money to the necessary and impactful.

IV. Lessons Learned

Testing of inductive hypotheses from REILA evaluation within ERELA

It was agreed with MRGE to use REILA recommendations as a baseline. Nuances, similarities and differences are highlighted here, and a simpler version provided in the final [Recommendations](#). Recommendations by this Team comprised that REILA, and future variations of MRGE work with Roma populations including ERELA, be:

1. *replicated and extended as funds allow*. This is recommended across Central Europe, including in Bulgaria and Croatia. It is as relevant within ERELA as in REILA. The donor interest in innovative approaches is deemed wholly legitimate. Once partners implement, they realise improvements. Innovation, as well as quality programming, is enhanced by consistent, reliable, longer-term funding in a programmatic rather than a project approach.
2. *built on explicit recognition of anti-Roma prejudice which needs to be challenged and remedied*. This was found to be true also in Bulgaria and Croatia. KIs informed us from their own experience that there was always prejudice. Illegal discriminatory practices were highlighted by KIs in access to employment and education.. A key issue in the two countries is segregation.

ERELA Mediators Reports and text boxes under Relevance give clear evidence for such prejudice. In Bulgaria,

- In 95% of cases (19 out of 20), Mediators felt there had been cases of discrimination.

- However, Roma interviewees were not aware in 26 % (5 out of 19) of cases that they had suffered discrimination, or what it really meant eg 'He was not very aware of the discriminatory cases; but he felt the negative treatment'.
- In most cases, people suffering had been unsure what to do about it, and the legal time for complaint had passed,
- In 16% of cases, the 'victim' explicitly decided not to defend their rights out of fear.
- In 11% of cases, a respondent felt that the discriminatory environment had eased off.

In Croatia,

- Less detail was provided in the Mediator Reports.
- A similar contextual range (work, police, health, school, leisure) was cited concerning experience of discrimination
- No ignorance of discrimination or fear of reprisals was cited.

Atanas Atanasov of Amalipe was succinct: "Yes, the cause is discrimination' ...

3. *further oriented to its relatively successful legal aid, and legal awareness.* The legal areas, both free support from legal organisations and community work by Mediators - were also evaluated to be the most important areas in Bulgaria and Croatia, as well as in Hungary and Serbia. MRGE attempts to combine a Human Rights / Legal organisation which has experience of free legal advice with a Roma-led organisation which has stronger community connections and networks. The partner Amalipe has an enormous network and workload in Bulgaria, and performed strongly in organising the launch event and Mediator organisation, but appeared to be weaker at bringing legal cases to the national equality body than its counterpart in REILA. Across all four countries, the role of Mediators was found to be key.
4. *extended, with more intensive, information exchange and cooperation between Roma communities, the local Roma government, social welfare centers, and local authorities. Government entities with both the power to provide support and the willingness to do so should be identified as allies and viable partners. Trust between these partners and Roma communities should be a primary goal. All parties should raise awareness of the Roma's plight.* The importance of networking between partners is highlighted in ERELA and applies also to linking with the government. In ERELA, respondents spoke more about the necessity to educate and 'enlighten' the general public.
5. *directly working with Beneficiaries as early as possible, including on context analysis and needs gap identification (this may strengthen later use of participatory methods and stronger consolidation of the Project's positive results).* Delays were experienced, particularly in Bulgaria, but not as much as in Serbia and Hungary, which attempted to operate in an earlier, more restricted stage of the pandemic. In ERELA, most of the FGDs could be conducted face to face, although ILC reported some reluctance to do so.
6. *extended in the numbers of Mediators (currently 3) for an extended project area.* This seemed to be less of an issue for ERELA than REILA; In Bulgaria they worked with 7 rather than 3; in Croatia they started with 3, one left, and they hired 3 more. 5 Mediators were felt to be enough by ILC, although some Mediators felt that 2-3 Mediators per county should be hired; one pointed out that there are 12 Roma settlements in Međimurje County alone.

7. *focused on further Roma participation and ownership of the project.* The partners in ERELA regarded Roma ownership as distant; the current situation is that communities have understood that there is an issue of discrimination. Bulgarian and Croatian communities in the MRGE programmes are more rural-based (than in Hungary and Serbia); where they have contact with ERELA they may feel a closer link which creates possibilities still to be developed.
8. *continuing to use blended learning and methodology– based on successful practice - increasing live (in person) training, especially for Roma communities and CSOs whilst retaining online elements for lawyers.* At a later stage of the pandemic, Amalipe stated that they had tried online FGDs but they had proved impractical, so they switched to face-to-face which were difficult to organise but more feasible. ILC used online meetings particularly with lawyers, which they also struggled to convene.
9. *using communication with communities as its starting point for advocacy.* It was considered essential in ERELA also, as ILC trainer Jagoda Novak said, to ‘continue focusing on visiting the settlements (big and small) to ensure trust with the communities and working with experienced legal workers that have done many visits’.
10. *mapping social media practices and preferences of Roma communities...[and] shift... to more popular media which can engage with both communities and other stakeholders. One example may be for engaging Roma in the social media graphics and messages for campaigns, with prizes for images used.* It was considered that Facebook, Instagram and Tiktok were the most frequently used in communities (although Twitter is an important spreader of such information), David Oršuš, an ILC Mediator in Croatia is a 3rd year student at the Faculty of Medical Technicians in Zagreb. He used Facebook successfully to reach as many victims of discrimination as possible, drawing mostly younger Roma and non-Roma into the fight against discrimination. Most of the registered cases were in the fields of education, employment, and access to services. Amalipe also created one game where people answer one of four multiple choice, on Roma communities, Roma artists, things interesting for Roma... it was considered good access to the young, with thousands of participants. Prizes are considered relevant and worthy of consideration, but there are dangers in subverting a project aiming for independence of communities by providing financial benefits for essential and core project requirements such as planning meetings or evaluation.

Strong points of the Project

The following activities and aspects of the Project’s design proved as exceptionally valuable and transferable to other project/program settings.

Particular strengths of the project were: good context analysis; gap analysis of the protection of Roma human and minority rights; an evidence-based approach applied from the very beginning; and an ‘evaluative learning approach’ knotted into the Project’s design. The Project encompassed baseline studies for each country, and one comparative report, all containing research findings on the state of discrimination and access to justice for the Roma population in Croatia and Bulgaria.

The Project activities complement similar projects and programmes implemented in the Region and its

added value is an empowerment approach towards primary Beneficiaries who are able to participate and contribute to defending their rights, and no longer depend on the good will, discretion and voluntarism of the state officials and local authorities.

The concept of the training methodology in the Project is determined as action-oriented and participatory with partners designing the training materials according to the needs of the different target groups (legal practitioners, CSOs, Roma Mediators and activists). It is learner-centred (i.e. geared to meet actual gaps in the participants' knowledge and motivation, and flexible to different learner needs); dialogue oriented (encouraging participants to ask questions, especially concerning the driving forces behind structural discrimination, and facilitating dialogue and sharing between participants).

The project activities were locally owned as the national partners played the most important roles and were recognised as the main bearers of the activities in their countries. National partners assured participation of other local activists and CSOs forming the national network, assuring regular contact with the Beneficiaries throughout the countries.

Empowering cooperation among the partners in the Project was transferred to the communities and primary Beneficiaries influencing their perception, beliefs and motivation, skills and competencies so as to take greater control of their own lives and to also contribute to inclusive local development.

The emphasis on outreach greatly contributed to knowledge skills, perception and motivation of the Beneficiaries. It supported the Beneficiaries along the long and complex road from the position of passive recipient of aid to active agent of their own wellbeing.

All other aspects of design were considered to be strong. In particular, it is a real strength - to be further tapped - to have the same project operating across different countries with Roma populations. The connection between a legal and a Roma-led organisation is an interesting and innovative approach which could bear further fruit. The provision of free legal advice was regarded as particularly successful. And the emphasis away from dependency is strong, key and to be defended at all costs.

Weak points of the Project

Improvement can be made on: greater publicity in some communities building on ERELA success with media and social networking in others; promotion of anti-discrimination values in the public among service providers, students (Roma and non-Roma). As KIs put it:

The biggest problem is that non-Roma are not familiar with the issue, so it would be important to include similar education in the regular educational process, for example as part of regular civic

education. Furthermore, he states that the project should have been more represented in the media. [David Oršuš, ILC Mediator]

‘It would be good to work in parallel with municipalities, centers for social work, schools in terms of conducting training and teaching regarding the relationship of the majority people to minorities’. [quote of one Amalipe Mediators, whose thoughts were echoed by several others.]

Another area which could be challenged in the design is inadequate opportunities for networking and learning between what are essentially three projects (ERELA, PRESS and REILA) doing the same thing in the six countries of Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. ILC’s Anja Ostopanjan had -to her credit - followed the REILA project through posts on social networks, so it is not to her detriment that such research did not familiarise her sufficiently to remember REILA’s name. She wrote ‘I know that the activities are the same as in the ERELA project, but no more. During our work on ERELA, we did not cooperate with Praxis or another organization. We cooperated with MRGE and Amalipe’. This is despite the fact that Praxis and ILC are playing the same legal role in their prospective countries. It was similarly clear that Amalipe did not have strong links to Idetartozunk in Hungary, who play the same programme role as a Roma-led CSO.

Jagoda Novak, an ILC Trainer added that the Roma population density and mentality are extremely diversified, making it more difficult to coordinate. ‘Emphasis should be on reaching stakeholders and decision makers in both countries. It is.. more important to cooperate with local partners than partners on a European level.

The honesty of ILC in giving their opinion on this matter should be commended. There is indeed a time cost to liaison, and also the practical issues of connecting organisations at different stages of programme delivery and within different contexts. It is nonetheless inconceivable that MRG organisations playing the same role with the same target group in countries of close geographical proximity have nothing to learn from each other. It is understood that legal practitioners may work in this way, but it is not at all the norm in rights and development work. To the evaluators, the project design should require cross learning in a systematic way, and Roma-led organisations (such as Idetartozunk in Hungary and Amalipe in Bulgaria) should share their good practice with each other, and legal organisations (such as Praxis and ILC) should share between themselves, and there should be at least one structured opportunity for lesson learning across all organisations and MRG. Failure to do this limits learning and good practice, and leads to replication and unnecessarily fragmented programmes. The launch event of the lessons learned report held in January 2023 - at which REILA partners were thankfully present - may be a start for such cross-learning, and a structured approach to learning might provide unexpected benefits and positive consequences.

V. Recommendations

It is recommended that within ERELA specifically

1. A target date should be set by MRG and partners for future training to include judges
2. The manual for protection of the Roma population should be more widely published and distributed to improve the sustainability of the project.
3. Visibility of anti-discrimination project messages should become a priority. Attempts should be made to inject message content into regular civic education and on social media, to bring the issue of discrimination to the general population, and affect societal norms and values. As a micro-example, discrimination manuals may usefully be published on institutional websites (congressmen/congresswomen, ministries, national foundations, civil society)
4. To further build quality programming, coherence and mutual trust, project design should require and monitor networking and shared learning between partners of MRGE's identical programmes in central Europe; Roma-led organisation to Roma-led organisation; legal organisation to legal organisation; and all parties to each other. Project design should also require cross learning in a systematic way, with at least one annual structured opportunity for lesson learning across all organisations and MRGE. This will build on the positive interactions of the January 2023 meeting - at which all were thankfully present - in Budapest.
5. To ensure sustainability, further applied education should be provided for Roma Mediators. These are typically motivated individuals, but they are not lawyers and did not previously know about discrimination. It is essential that they remain active in their communities, and further education in rights is a win-win which provides motivation without eroding sustainability. Terms and conditions should be periodically reviewed, to ensure that the best possible candidates can be recruited to this key position
6. Given the low questionnaire returns for ERELA specifically, this methodology should be carefully considered for ERELA and its sister projects; if evaluation budgets allow, a longer period of qualitative fieldwork might be advisable.

The following recommendations were developed for REILA (Hungary and Serbia) and found to have been relevant to ERELA, with some changes in emphasis as described here, and more fully in [Hypotheses](#). They are recommended for future variations of MRGE work with the Roma, which is recommended to be:

7. replicated and extended as funds allow.
8. built on explicit recognition of anti-Roma prejudice which needs to be challenged and remedied.
9. further oriented to its relatively successful legal aid, and legal awareness, including the crucial role of Mediators.

10. extended, with more intensive, information exchange and cooperation between Roma communities, the local Roma government, social welfare centers, and local authorities. In ERELA particularly, it was considered essential that all parties should raise the general public's awareness of the Roma's plight in schools and social media, which will also further ease access to what are considered more amenable Governments (than in REILA) despite the instability of six elections in two years in Bulgaria.
11. directly working with Beneficiaries as early as possible, including on context analysis and needs gap identification (this may strengthen later use of participatory methods and stronger consolidation of the Projects positive results). Delays had been experienced in ERELA due to the Covid-19 pandemic, although not as severe as in REILA
12. adequately resourced
13. focused on further Roma participation and ownership of the project, although this was regarded as a long-term project in ERELA, where communities are deemed to only be at the first stage, of understanding discrimination.
14. continuing to use blended learning and methodology, increasing live (in person) training, especially for Roma communities and CSOs. Face-to-face FGDs had been a more important part of the ERELA experience, perhaps because of the later, less restrictive stage of Covid. This was particularly true in Bulgaria, although both partners struggled to convene meetings with 'fatigued' communities, who have experienced similar meetings from Government agencies.
15. using communication with communities as its starting point for advocacy.
16. mapping social media practices and preferences of Roma communities [and]... shift to more popular media which can engage with both communities and other stakeholders. One example may be for engaging Roma in the social media graphics and messages for campaigns, with prizes for images used. As elaborated in the Findings section, care should be taken not to systematically pay for Beneficiary participation deemed fundamental to reaching project objectives; such practice might - at its worst case - result in reversing the fundamental objective of Roma community independence. P.33 paragraph 8 in the section 'Hypotheses' show success stories of ILC (through Facebook) and Amalipe (through a game targeted at Youth

ANNEX II ERELA Evaluation Matrix

KEY QUESTIONS	PERFORMANCE STANDARDS/ INDICATORS	INSTRUMENTS/ METHODS	DATA ANALYSIS METHODS
<p>Evaluation objective I: Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of the project in relation to the objectives and supporting outputs set out in 'Equality for Roma through Enhanced Legal Access (ERELA)' Programme Document and furthermore, provide MRGE with an opportunity for 'structured evaluative learning,' with the aim of learning from the program design and implementation processes.</p>			
OECD/DAC Criteria: RELEVANCE			
Did the Project respond to the needs and priorities of its Beneficiaries?	Qualified respondents rating on a seven-point scale	Key informants interviews (KIIs), Focus group discussions (FGDs), Questionnaire	
Adherence to the policies of the recipient country and donor organizations.	Policies declared in official documents	Secondary sources review	Comparative analysis
Technical adequacy to the causes and solution to the problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengths and weaknesses of the project design Gaps and areas of unmet needs 	Secondary sources review	Thematic and content analysis
OECD/DAC Criteria: EFFECTIVENESS			
What were the Project's results compared to planned outputs and outcomes?	Variation between the planned and actual outputs and outcomes	Secondary sources review	Comparative analysis
The extent to which an intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its major relevant objectives efficiently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualified respondents rating on a seven-point scale Statements on success/failure of the qualified respondents Evidence on official policy and legislation enhancements 	KIIs, FGDs, Questionnaire	
To what extent MRGE's strategy, such as on partnerships or collaboration affected the efficiency of the interventions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengths and weaknesses of the project design Gaps and areas of unmet needs 	Secondary sources review	Thematic and content analysis
OECD/DAC Criteria: SUSTAINABILITY			
How effective has the Project been in establishing ownership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengths and weaknesses of the project design Gaps and areas of unmet needs 	Secondary sources review	Thematic and content analysis
To what extent MRGE's strategy, such as partnerships or collaboration contributed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualified respondents rating on a seven-point scale Statements on success/failure of the qualified respondents 	KIIs, FGDs, Questionnaire	

to capacity building and empowerment?			
Has the MRGE actively sought equality with its partners, allies, and influencers in steering change in line with communities' needs and priorities?	Qualified respondents rating on a seven-point scale	KIIs, FGDs, Questionnaire	
OECD/DAC Criteria: IMPACT			
What were positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the Project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statements on success/failure of the qualified respondents Progress indicators based on Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) key components of self-efficacy, behavioral capability, expectations, expectancies, self-control, observational learning and reinforcements 	KIIs, FGDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theory of Change(ToC)/ conceptual framework Theory and research-based models: outcome mapping; SCT; Learning based on reflection/experience
The Project had a direct, positive impact?	Qualified respondents rating on a seven-point scale	Questionnaire	
Evaluation objective II: Based on the evaluation's findings, develop a set of suggestions and key recommendations for future and continued MRGE and its partners' activities.			
What were the key learnings from the Project?	Statements on success/failure of the qualified respondents	KIIs, FGDs, Questionnaire	
The Project's activities and aspects proved exceptionally valuable and transferable to other projects/program settings.		Derived from evaluation findings	
What were the significant factors, including coordination, capacity, communication, partnership, and others, which influenced the achievement, partial achievement, or non-achievement of the Project objectives?		Derived from evaluation findings	
Evaluation objective III: To report to the EU and other funders on the usage of their resources in the project.			
OECD/DAC Criteria: EFFICIENCY			
Measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of cost-minimization strategies Project reach and spending ratio per Beneficiary 	Secondary sources review	

expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soundness of the overall financial management and accountability system 		
Was the Project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?	Variation among similar projects/programs	Secondary sources review	Comparative analysis
Were activities cost-efficient?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified respondents rating on a seven-point scale • Statements on success/failure of the qualified respondents 	KIIs, FGDs, Questionnaire	

ANNEX III Questionnaire

Questions for Partners and Allies:

NB: There is no need for deep thinking and long answers. This questionnaire is designed to take only 11 minutes of your time to answer and send.

1. IDENTITY / CONTACTS:

1.A Name:

1.B Were you/your organization part of Project 'Roma Equality through Increased Legal Access'? YES / NO

If yes, was your organization a partner of MRGE or how else were you involved?

1.C In which country / countries were you a Partner / Ally /Other in this Project (please specify)

1.D Are you: (tick-box) Male / Female / Prefer not to say

If you don't identify as Male or Female, please specify

1.E Please specify, if you identify as a member of Minority.....

1.F Nationality

1.G E-mail address:

1.H Telephone (with country code written as eg +36 or +381)

2. Which part of the Project worked best? Please specify.....

3. Overall, in my opinion, project interventions:

3.A "Had a direct, positive impact"

Absolutely (97%-100%); Strongly (80%-96%); Mostly (60-79%); Average (40-59%); Partly (20-39%); Weakly (4%-19%); Absolutely Not (0-3%):

3.B "*Helped secure the rights of its Beneficiaries*"

3. C "*Responded to the needs and priorities of its Beneficiaries*"

3.D "Will have sustainable outcomes / benefits"

4. I regard MRGE as:

4.A "Open to feedback and criticism"

Absolutely (97%-100%); Strongly (80%-96%); Mostly (60-79%); Average (40-59%); Partly (20-39%); Weakly (4%-19%); Absolutely Not (0-3%):

4.B "Expert"

4.C "Actively seeking equality with its partners in steering change in line with communities needs and priorities?"

4.D Able to accept when communities, partners and allies refuse MRGE's advice and take a different approach?

4.E Actively working with partners and allies to assess gaps in their capacity to influence change?

4.F Actively supporting women within minority communities to develop their skills and abilities to ensure that issues are taken up with their communities and by MRGE?

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

If your previous answer is not 'Absolutely', how can MRGE actively reduce or eliminate participation barriers?

5. Is it MRGE's role to strengthen coordination and cooperation? YES/NO

If so, how can MRGE encourage partners and allies at local and regional level to work together? (please specify)

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

7. Were activities cost-efficient / on time / implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?(please specify)

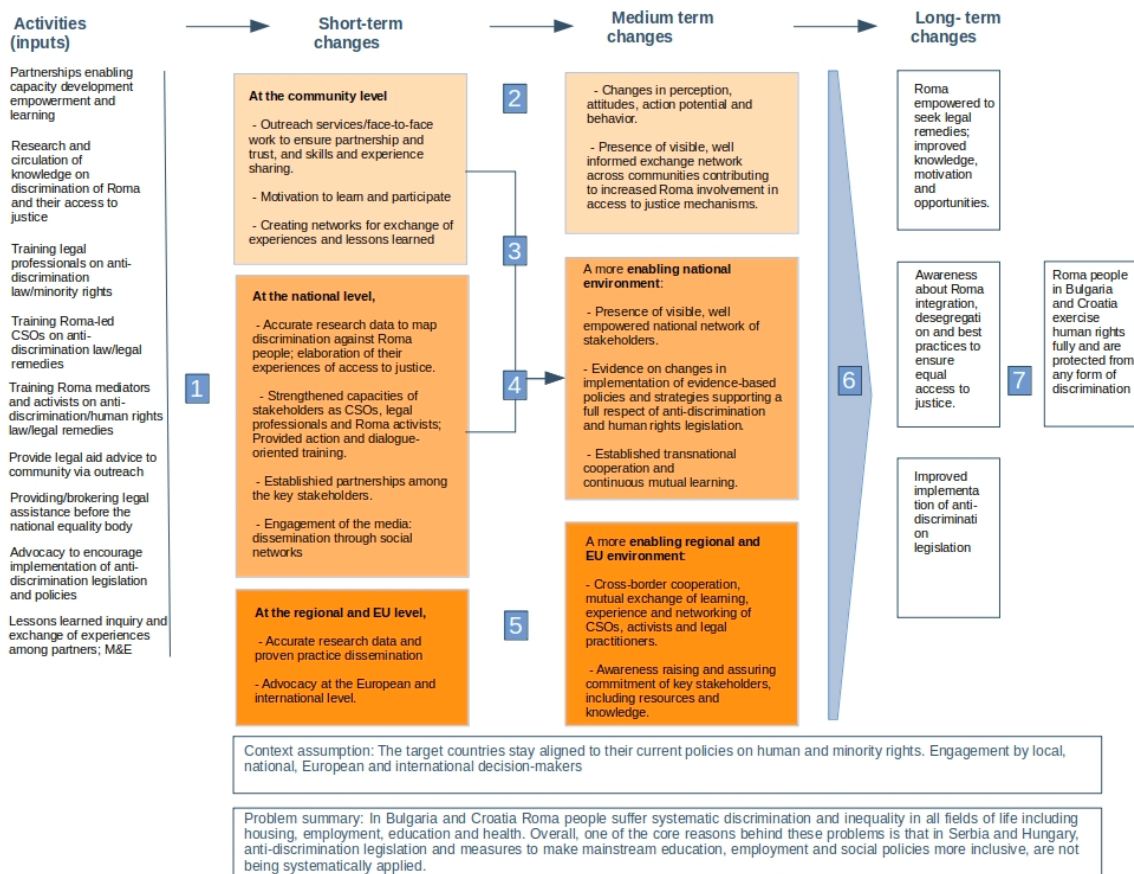
8. What are the Key Learnings from this Project of its implementation? Please specify... ..

9. Which one thing should MRGE start or improve? Why?

10. This is the most important question. What message do you have for MRGE about the 'Roma Equality through Increased Legal Access Project'? (Please write as much as you like):

Thanks for your time and guidance!

ANNEX IV Theory of change



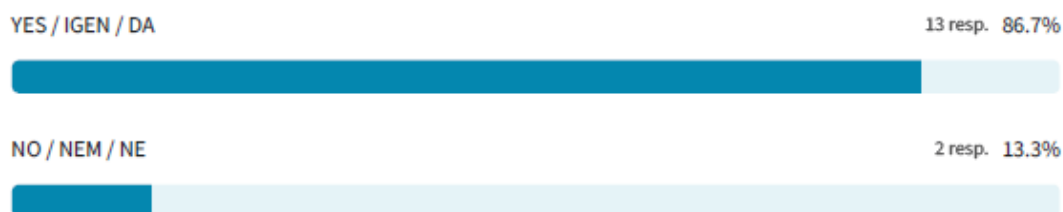
ANNEX V Quantitative results of REILA and ERELA

(for later comparison in case more questionnaires arrive for ERELA)

1. Quantitative Ratings of REILA

Were you/your organisation part of Project 'Roma Equality through Increased Legal Access
 Ön/szervezete részt vett az „Roma Equality through Increased Legal Access” projektben?
 Da li ste Vi/Vaša organizacija bili deo projekta, Roma Equality through Increased Legal Access“

15 out of 17 answered

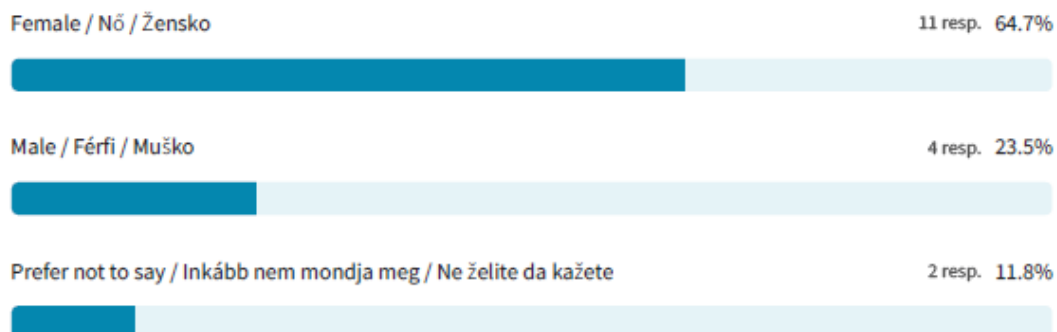


Are you:

Ön:

Da li ste

17 out of 17 answered

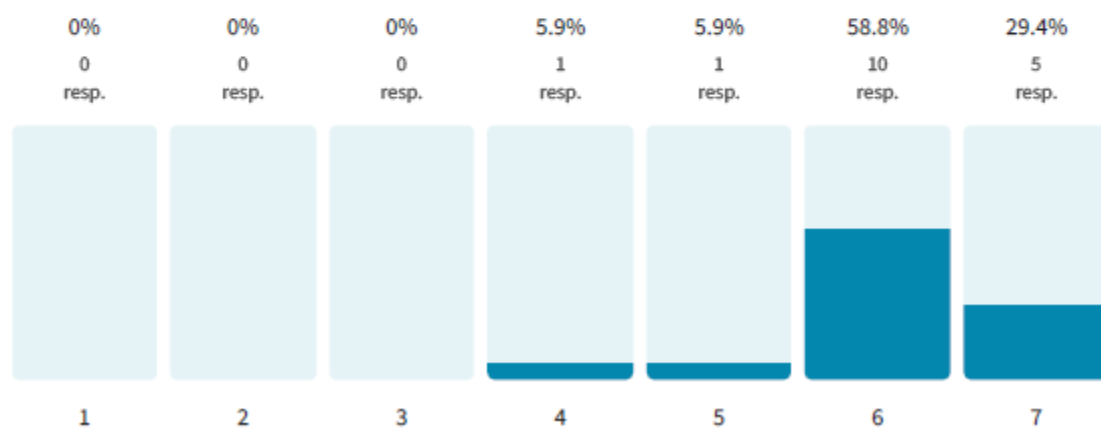


Overall, in my opinion, project interventions:
Összességében véleményem szerint az MRGE tevékenységei/nek:
Sve u svemu, po mom mišljenju, Projekat je:

"Had a direct, positive impact"
"Közvetlen, pozitív hatása volt"
"Imao direktan, pozitivan uticaj/efekat"

17 out of 17 answered

6.1 Average rating



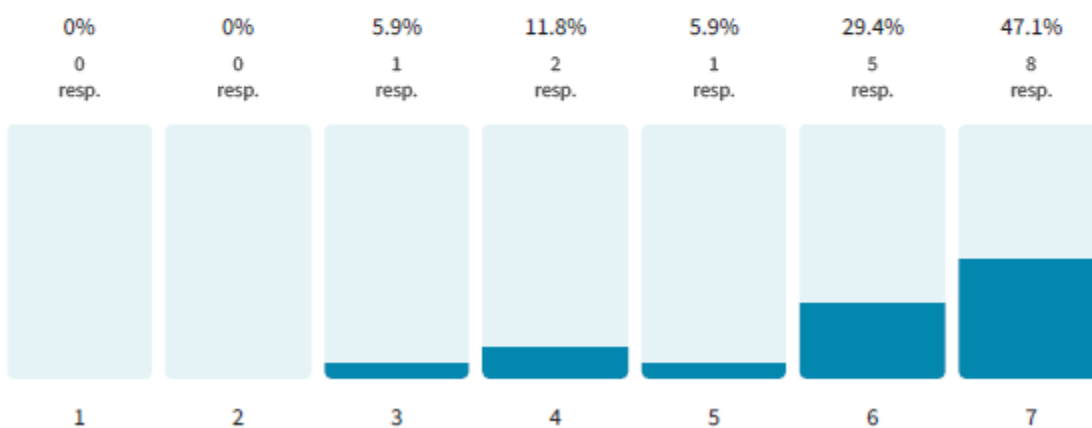
"Helped secure the rights of its beneficiaries"

"Segített romák jogainak biztosításában"

"Pomogao da se obezbede prava korisnika"

17 out of 17 answered

6.0 Average rating



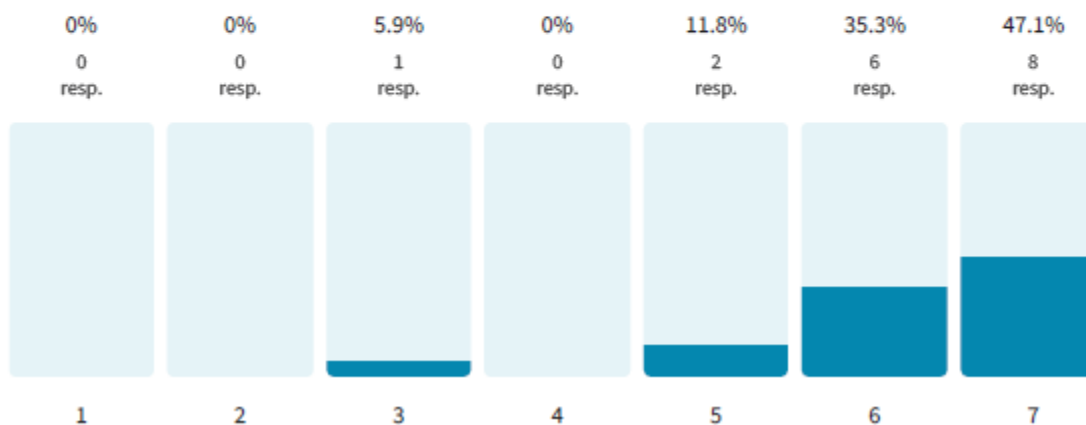
"Responded to the needs and priorities of its beneficiaries"

"Reagált a romák igényeire és prioritásaira"

"Usklađen sa potrebama i prioritetima korisnika"

17 out of 17 answered

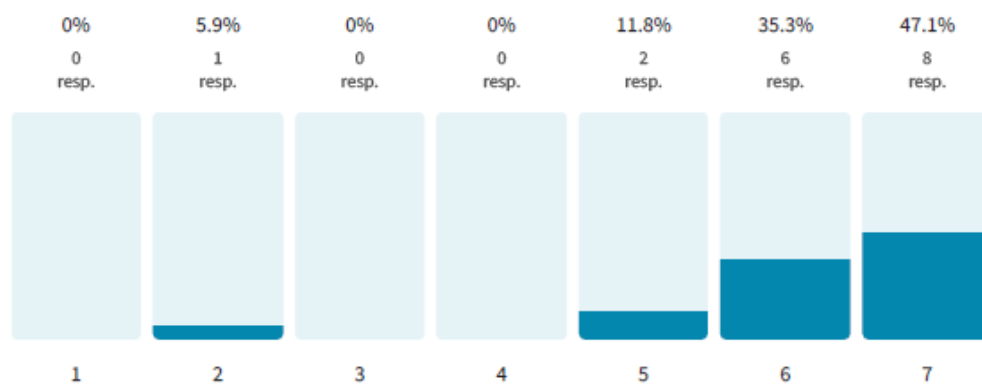
6.2 Average rating



"Will have sustainable outcomes / benefits"
 "Fenntartható eredményei/hasznai lesznek"
 "Projekat će imati održive rezultate / koristi za korisnike"

17 out of 17 answered

6.1 Average rating



I regard MRGE as:

Véleményem szerint az MRGE:

Moje mišljenje o MRGE-u je sledeće:

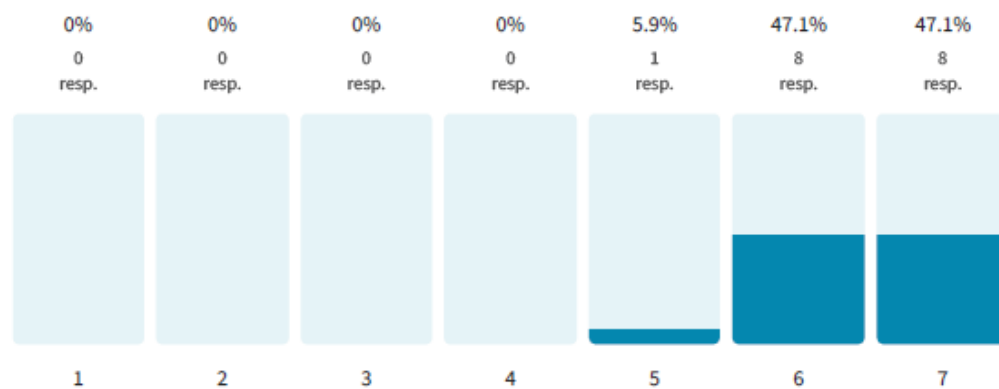
"Open to feedback and criticism"

"Nyitott a visszajelzésekre és a kritikára"

"Otvoreni su za povratnu informaciju i kritiku"

17 out of 17 answered

6.4 Average rating



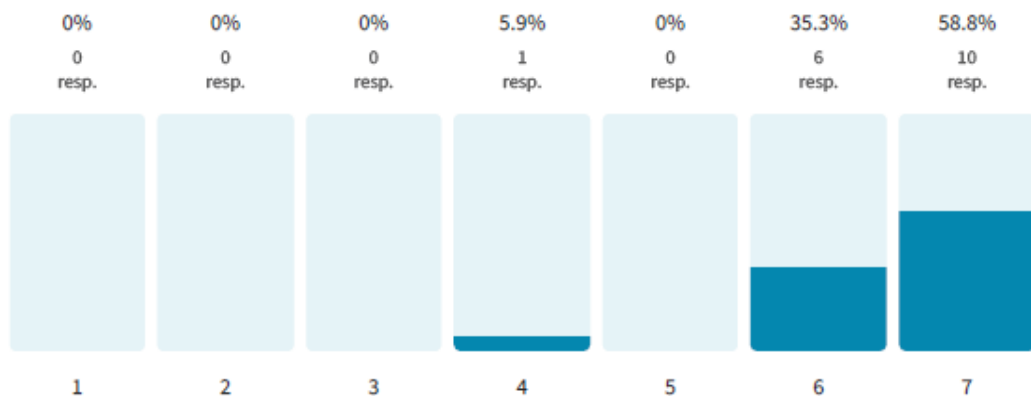
"Expert"

"Szakértő"

"Eksperiti"

17 out of 17 answered

6.5 Average rating



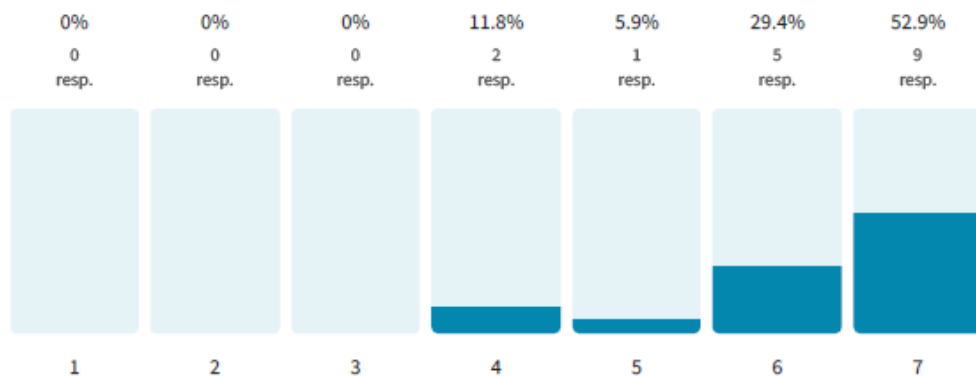
"Actively seeking equality with its partners in steering change in line with communities needs and priorities?"

"A közösségek szükségleteivel és prioritásaival összhangban aktívan törekszik az egyenlőségre partnereivel a változás irányításában"

"Aktivno grade ravnopravne odnose sa svojim partnerima u upravljanju promenama u skladu sa potrebama i prioritetima zajednice?"

17 out of 17 answered

6.2 Average rating

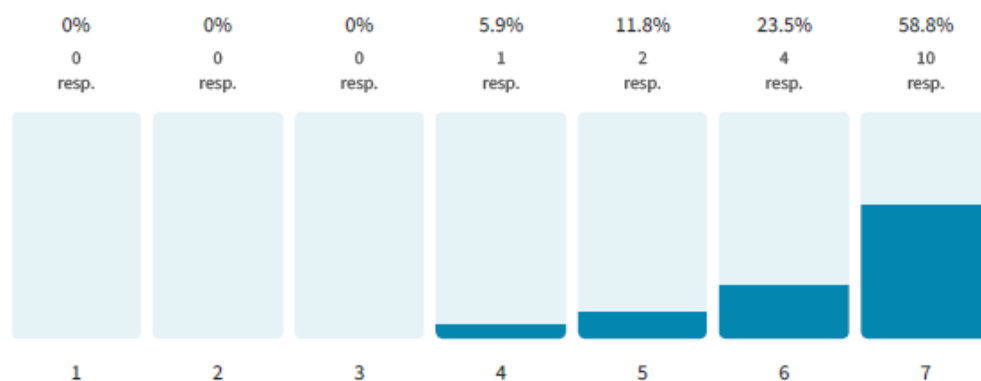


"Able to accept when communities, partners and allies refuse MRGE's advice and take a different approach?"
 "Képes elfogadni, ha a közösségek, partnerek és szövetségesek nem fogadják meg az MRGE tanácsait, és más megközelítést alkalmaznak?"

"Mogu da prihvate kada zajednica, partneri ili saradnici odbiju njihov savet i predlože drugačiji pristup"

17 out of 17 answered

6.4 Average rating



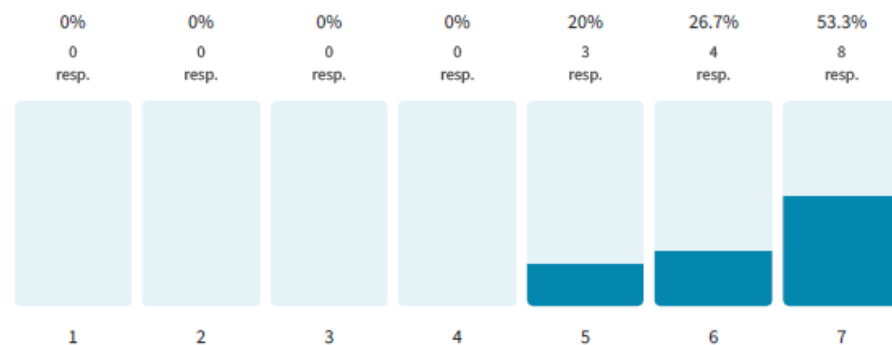
"Actively working with partners and allies to assess gaps in their capacity to influence change?"

"Aktíván együttműködik a partnerekkel és szövetségesekkel, hogy felmérje a változást befolyásoló képességeik hiányosságait?"

"Aktívno rade sa partnerima i saradnicima na proceni nedostataka u njihovom kapacitetu da utiču na promene?"

15 out of 17 answered

6.3 Average rating



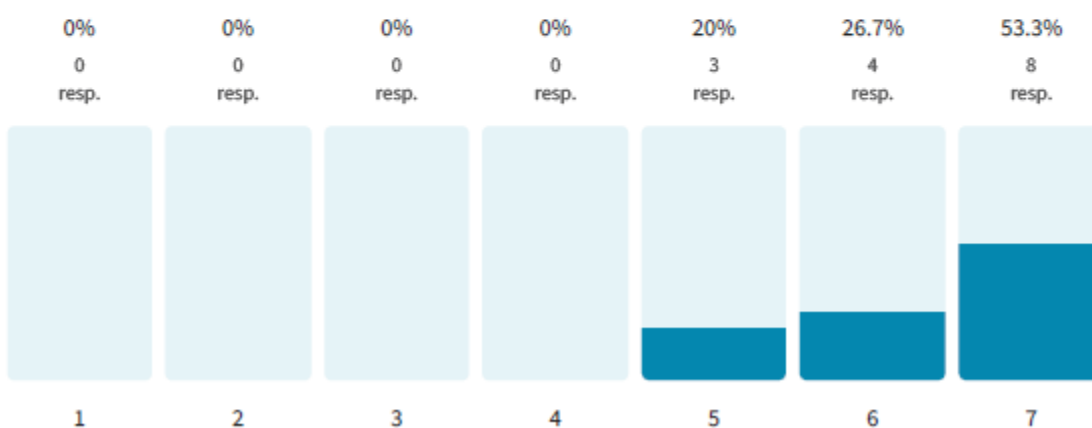
"Actively supporting women within minority communities to develop their skills and abilities to ensure that issues are taken up with their communities and by MRGE?"

"Aktívan támogatja a nőket a kisebbségi közösségekben, hogy fejlesszék készségeiket és képességeiket, annak érdekében, hogy biztosítsák, hogy a problémákkal a közösségeik és az MRGE is foglalkozzon."

"Aktívan támogatja a nőket a kisebbségi közösségekben, hogy fejlesszék készségeiket és képességeiket, hogy elérjék, hogy a problémákkal a közösségeik és az MRGE is foglalkozzon."

15 out of 17 answered

6.3 Average rating



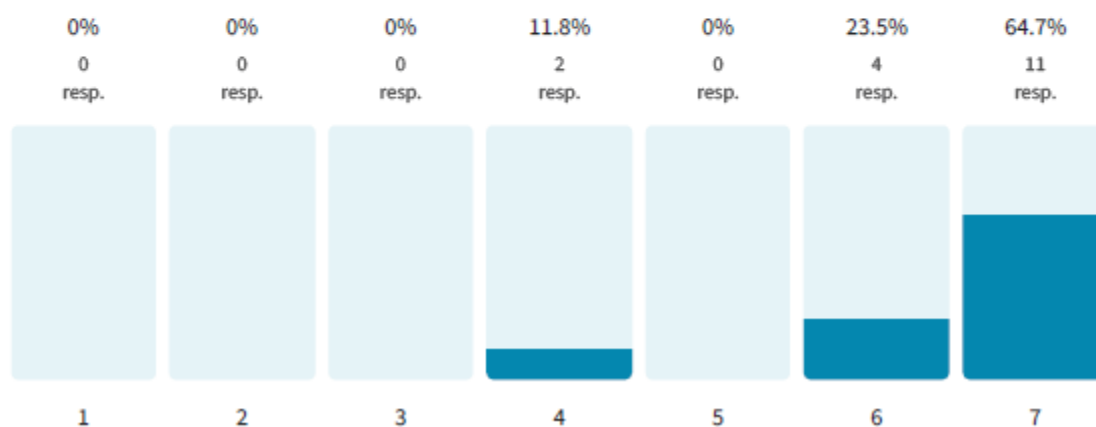
"Actively reducing or eliminating participation barriers (including disabilities, age, statelessness, rural/urban) for potential and actual minority activists."

"Aktívan csökkenti vagy megszünteti a részvételi akadályokat (pl. fogyatékoság, életkor, hontalanság, vidéki/városi lét) a potenciális és tényleges kisebbségi aktivisták számára."

Aktivno rade na smanjenju ili eliminisanju barijera, kao što su invaliditet, starost, apatridiju, ruralno/urbanostanovništvo, kod ostvarenih ili potencijalnih manjinskih aktivista."

17 out of 17 answered

6.4 Average rating



Is it MRGE's role to strengthen co-ordination and co-operation?

Az MRG feladata a koordináció és az együttműködés erősítése?

Da li je uloga MRGE-a da jača koordinaciju i saradnju?

15 out of 17 answered

YES / IGEN / DA 15 resp. 100%

NO / NEM / NE 0 resp. 0%

2. Quantitative Ratings of ERELA

(will remain in the Final Report, and those for REILA above will be edited out]

2.1. Primary Actors

Overall, in my opinion, project interventions:

Sve u svemu, po mom mišljenju, Projekat je:

Като цяло според мен проектът е:

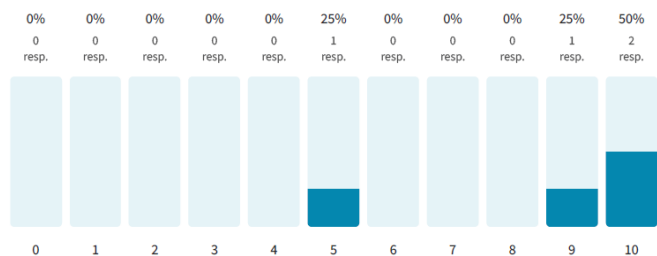
"Had a direct, positive impact"

"Imao direktan, pozitivan uticaj/efekat"

„Има пряко, положително влияние/ефект“

4 out of 4 answered

8.5 Average rating



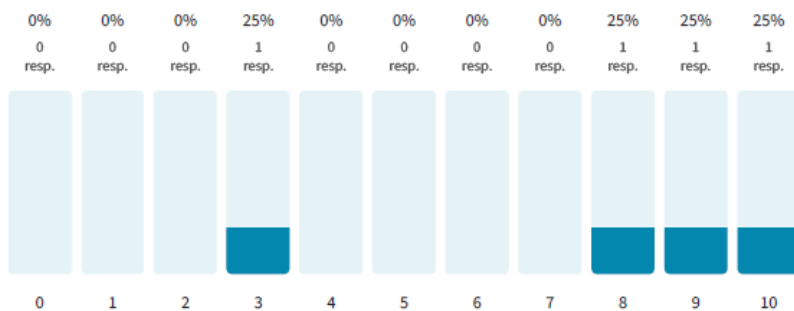
"Helped secure the rights of its beneficiaries"

"Pomogao da se obezbede prava korisnika"

„Помогна за гарантиране на потребителските права“

4 out of 4 answered

7.5 Average rating



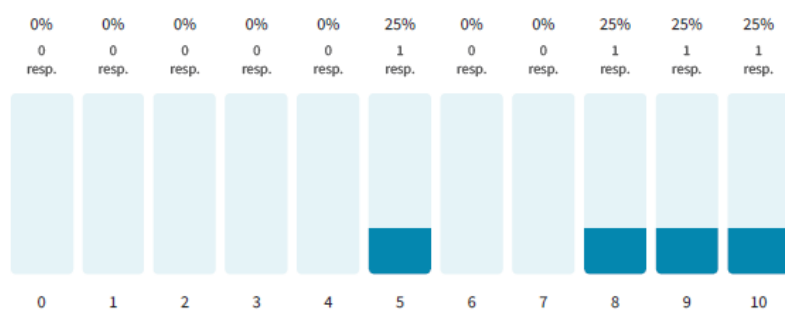
"Responded to the needs and priorities of its beneficiaries"

"Uskladen sa potrebama i prioritetima korisnika"

„Хармонизирано с нуждите и приоритетите на потребителя“

4 out of 4 answered

8.0 Average rating



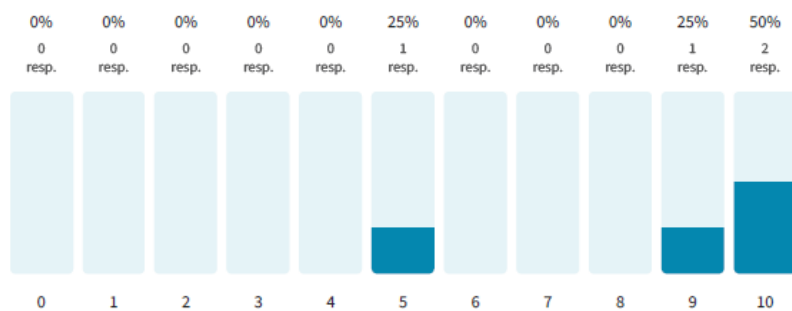
"Will have sustainable outcomes / benefits after its completion"

"Projekt će imati održive rezultate / koristi za korisnike nakon završetka"

„Ще има устойчиви резултати/ползи след завършването му“

4 out of 4 answered

8.5 Average rating

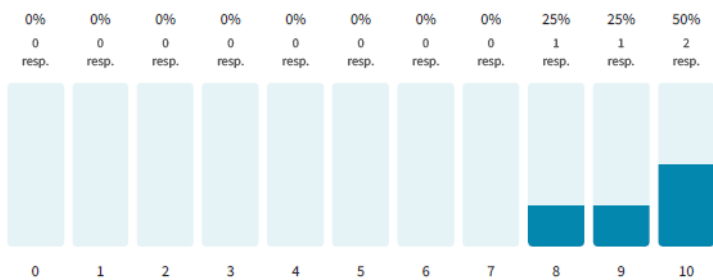


I regard implementing partner (ILC in Croatia or Amalipe in Bulgaria)
 Smatram da je implementacijski partner (ILC u Hrvatskoj ili Amalipe u Bugarskoj):
 Смятам, че партньорът за изпълнение е (ILC в Хърватия или Амалипе в България):

"Open to feedback and criticism"
 "Otvoreni su za povratnu informaciju i kritiku"
 "Те са отворени за обратна връзка и критика"

4 out of 4 answered

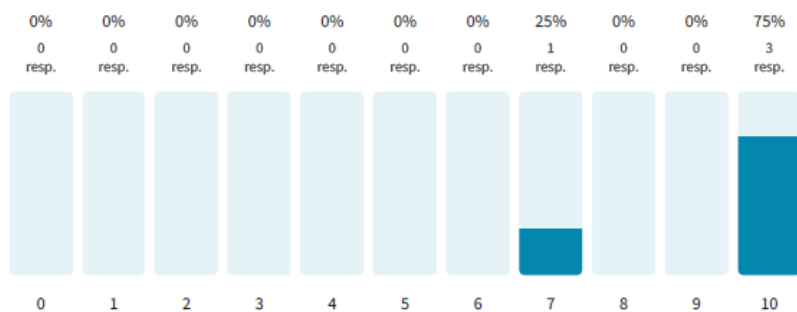
9.2 Average rating



"Expert"
"Eksperti"
"Експерти"

4 out of 4 answered

9.2 Average rating



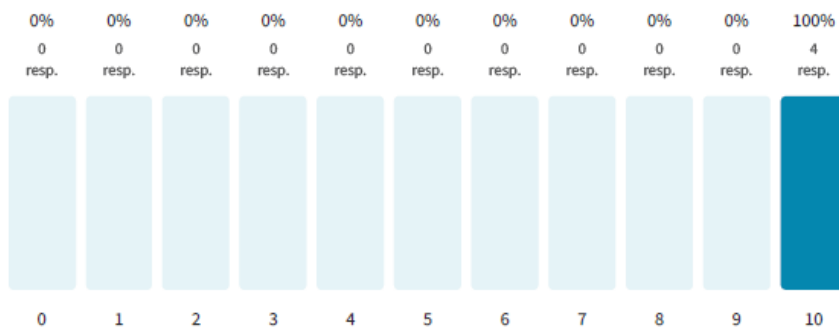
"Actively seeking equality with its partners in steering change in line with communities needs and priorities?"

"Aktivno grade ravnopravne odnose sa svojim partnerima u upravljanju promjenama u skladu s potrebama i prioritetima zajednice?"

„Активно ли изграждат равноправни взаимоотношения с партньорите си в управлението на промените в съответствие с нуждите и приоритетите на общността?“

4 out of 4 answered

10.0 Average rating



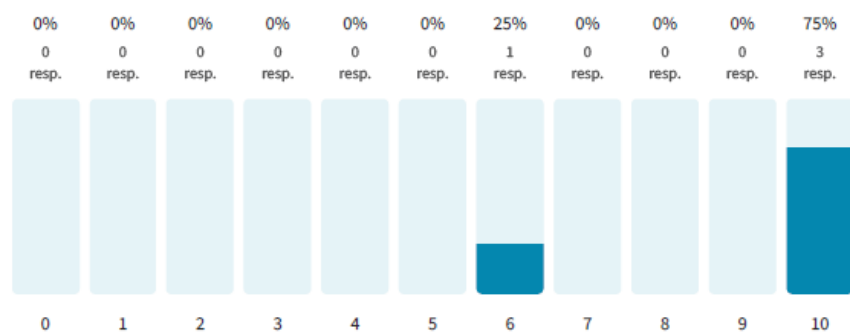
Able to accept when communities, partners and allies refuse their advice and take a different approach?

Mogu prihvatiti kada zajednica, partneri ili suradnici odbiju njihov savjet i predlože drugačiji pristup?

Могат ли да приемят, когато общността, партньорите или сътрудниците отхвърлят техния съвет и предложат различен подход?

4 out of 4 answered

9.0 Average rating



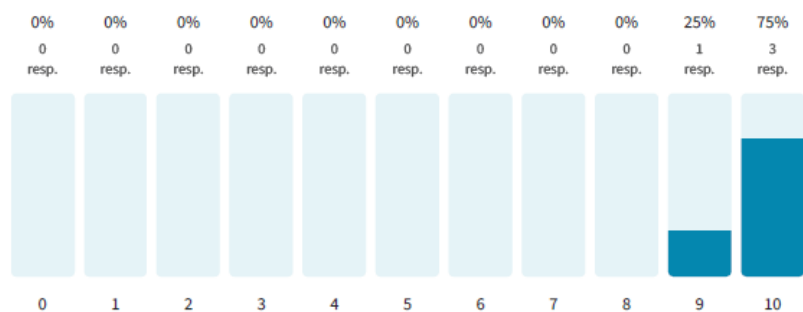
"Actively supporting women within minority communities to develop their skills and abilities to ensure that issues are taken up with their communities?"

Aktivno podržavaju žene u manjinskim zajednicama da razvijaju vještine i sposobnosti sudjelovanja u rješavanju problema u njihovim sredinama?

Подкрепят ли активно жените в малцинствените общности да развият умения и способности за участие в решаването на проблеми в своите общности?

4 out of 4 answered

9.8 Average rating



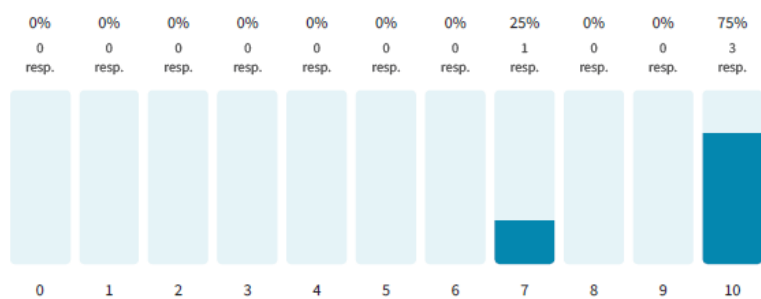
Actively reducing or eliminating participation barriers (including disabilities, age, statelessness, rural/urban) for potential and actual minority activists.

Aktivno rade na smanjenju ili eliminiranju barijera, kao što su invaliditet, starost, apatridija, ruralno/urbano stanovništvo, kod ostvarenih ili potencijalnih manjinskih aktivista.

Работи активно за намаляване или премахване на бариери, които могат да са: инвалидност, възраст, липса на гражданство, селско/градско население, за успешни или потенциални малцинствени активисти.

4 out of 4 answered

9.2 Average rating



2.2. Partners and allies

Overall, in my opinion, project interventions:
 Sve u svemu, po mom mišljenju, Projekat je:
 Като цяло според мен проектът е:

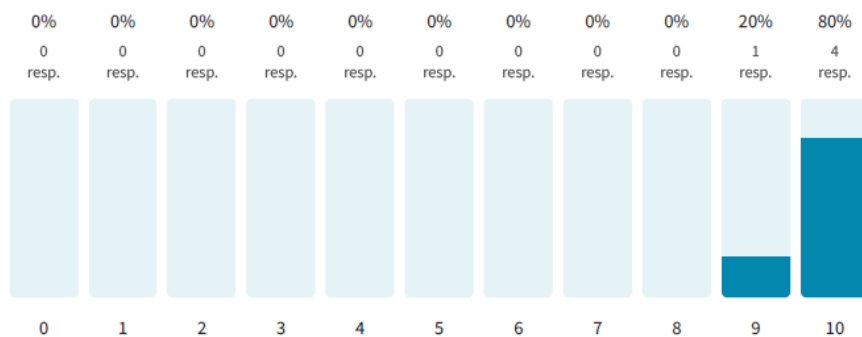
"Had a direct, positive impact"

"Imao direktan, pozitivan uticaj/efekat"

„Има пряко, положително влияние/ефект“

5 out of 6 answered

9.8 Average rating



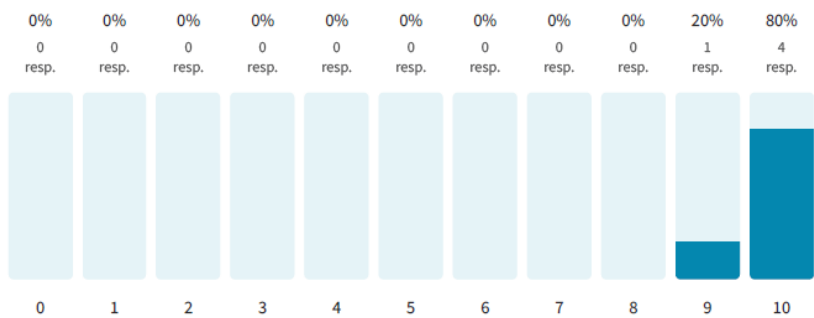
"Helped secure the rights of its beneficiaries"

"Pomogao omogućiti prava korisnika"

„Помогна за защита на потребителските права“

5 out of 6 answered

9.8 Average rating



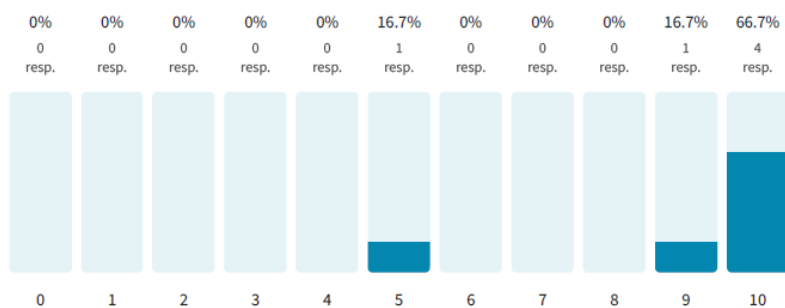
"Responded to the needs and priorities of its beneficiaries"

"Usklađen sa potrebama i prioritetima korisnika"

„В съответствие с нуждите и приоритетите на потребителя“

6 out of 6 answered

9.0 Average rating



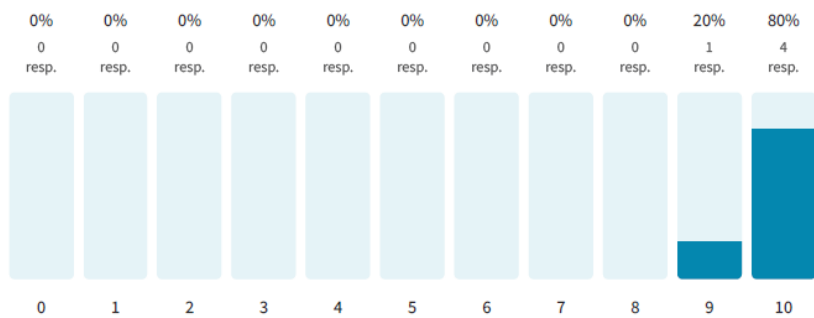
"Will have sustainable outcomes / benefits"

"Projekat će imati održive rezultate / koristi za korisnike"

„Проектът ще има устойчиви резултати/ползи за потребителите“

5 out of 6 answered

9.8 Average rating



I regard MRGE as:

Moje mišljenje o MRGE-u je sljedeće:

Моето мнение за MRGE е следното:

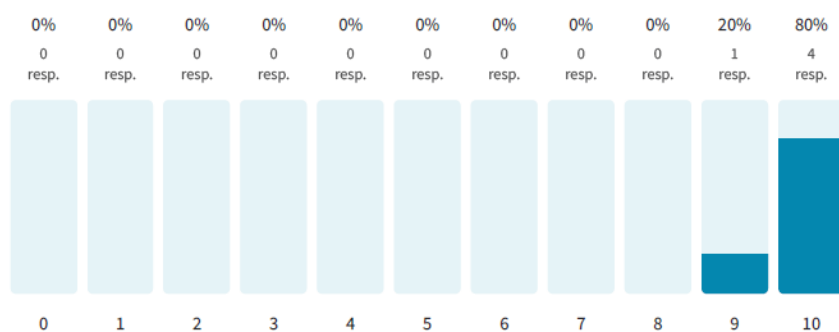
"Open to feedback and criticism"

"Otvoreni su za povratnu informaciju i kritiku"

"Те са отворени за обратна връзка и критика"

5 out of 6 answered

9.8 Average rating



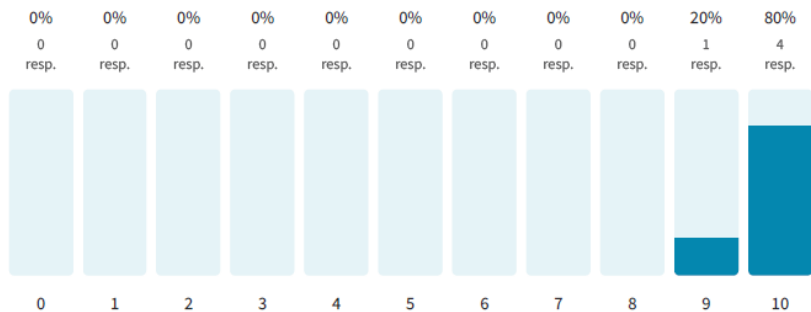
"Expert"

"Експерти"

"Експерти"

5 out of 6 answered

9.8 Average rating



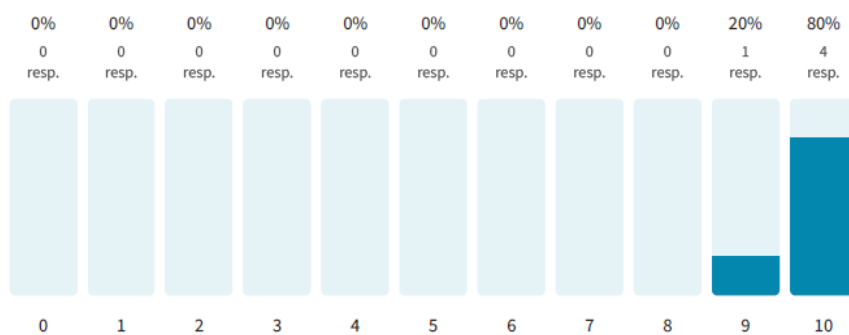
"Actively seeking equality with its partners in steering change in line with communities needs and priorities?"

"Aktivno grade ravnopravne odnose sa svojim partnerima u upravljanju promjenama u skladu s potrebama i prioritetima zajednice?"

„Активно ли изграждат равноправни взаимоотношения с партньорите си в управлението на промените в съответствие с нуждите и приоритетите на общността?“

5 out of 6 answered

9.8 Average rating



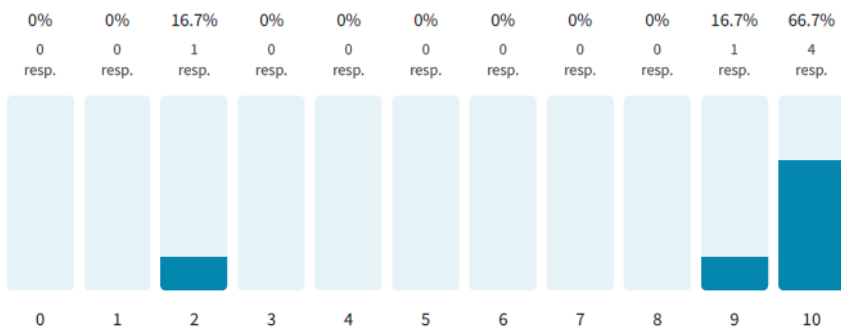
"Able to accept when communities, partners and allies refuse MRGE's advice and take a different approach?"

"Mogu prihvatiti kada zajednica, partneri ili suradnici odbiju njihov savjet i predlože drugačiji pristup?"

"Могат ли да приемат, когато общността, партньорите или сътрудниците отхвърлят техния съвет и предлагат различен подход?"

6 out of 6 answered

8.5 Average rating



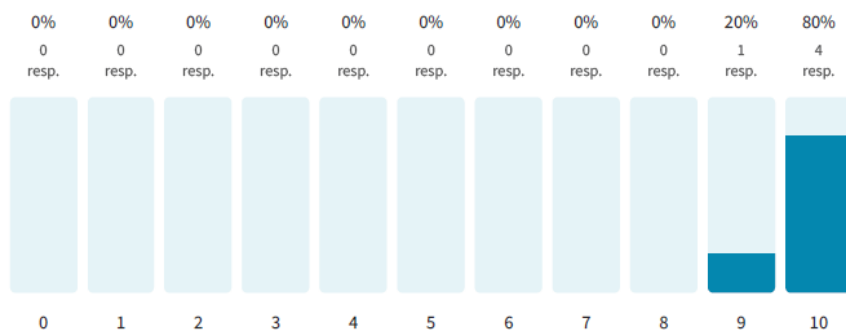
"Actively working with partners and allies to assess gaps in their capacity to influence change?"

"Aktivno rade s partnerima i suradnicima na procjeni nedostataka u njihovom kapacitetu utjecanja na promjene?"

"Работят ли активно с партньори и сътрудници, за да оценят пропуските в способността си да влияят на промяната?"

5 out of 6 answered

9.8 Average rating



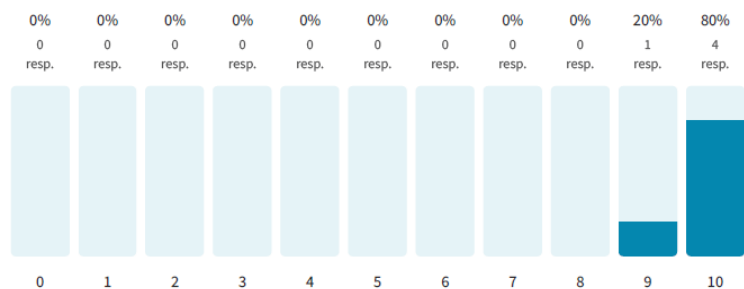
"Actively supporting women within minority communities to develop their skills and abilities to ensure that issues are taken up with their communities and by MRGE?"

"Aktivno podržavaju žene u manjinskim zajednicama da razvijaju vještine i sposobnosti sudjelovanja u rješavanju problema u njihovim sredinama?"

"Подкрепят ли активно жените в малцинствените общности да развият умения и способности за участие в решаването на проблеми в своите общности?"

5 out of 6 answered

9.8 Average rating



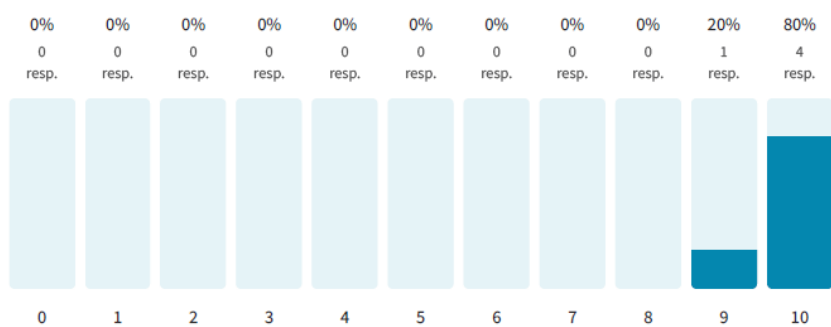
"Actively reducing or eliminating participation barriers (including disabilities, age, statelessness, rural/urban) for potential and actual minority activists."

"Aktivno rade na smanjenju ili eliminiranju barijera, kao što su invaliditet, starost, apatridija, ruralno/urbano stanovništvo, kod ostvarenih ili potencijalnih manjinskih aktivista."

"Работи активно за намаляване или премахване на бариери, които могат да са: инвалидност, възраст, липса на гражданство, селско/градско население, за успешни или потенциални малцинствени активисти."

5 out of 6 answered

9.8 Average rating



Is it MRGE's role to strengthen co-ordination and co-operation?

Da li je uloga MRGE-a da jača koordinaciju i suradnju?

Ролята на MRGE за укрепване на координацията и сътрудничеството ли е?

6 out of 6 answered

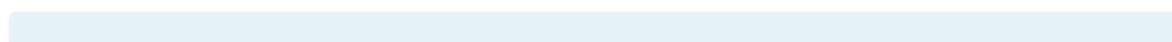
YES / ДА / DA

6 resp. 100%



NO / НЕ / NE

0 resp. 0%



In my opinion, within the ERELA Project, the resources (time, training, budget) invested in the work of mediators are:

Po mom mišljenju, u okviru ERELA Projekta, resursi (vrijeme, obuka, budžet) uloženi u rad medijatora su:

По мое мнение, в рамките на ERELA Projekta, ресурсите (време, обука, бюджет) вложени в работата на медиатора са:

6 out of 6 answered

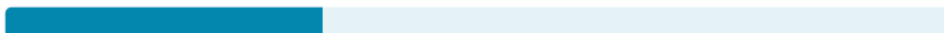
too much / preveliki / големи

3 resp. 50%



about right / odgovarajući / подходящи

2 resp. 33.3%



too little / premali / твърде малко

1 resp. 16.7%



In my opinion, within the ERELA Project, the number of cases of discrimination reported to the Government Body for the Protection of Equality is: (i) too few (ii) about right for the importance allocated to this aspect of the program (iii) too many

Po mom mišljenju, u okviru Projekta ERELA, broj slučajeva diskriminacije prijavljenih Vladinom tijelu za zaštitu ravnopravnosti je: (i) premali (ii) odgovarajući značaju ovog aspekta u projektu (iii) preveliki

По мое мнение, в рамките на ERELA Projekta, броят на случаите на дискриминация, регистрирани в Vladinom telu за защита на равноправността е: (i) **preмали** (ii) съответното значение на този аспект в проекта (iii) **preveliki**

6 out of 6 answered



In my opinion, within the ERELA Project, the number of cases of discrimination reported to the Government Body for the Protection of Equality is: (i) too few (ii) about right for the importance allocated to this aspect of the program (iii) too many

Po mom mišljenju, u okviru Projekta ERELA, broj slučajeva diskriminacije prijavljenih Vladinom tijelu za zaštitu ravnopravnosti je: (i) premali (ii) odgovarajući značaju ovog aspekta u projektu (iii) preveliki

По мое мнение, в рамките на ERELA Projekta, броят на случаите на дискриминация, регистрирани в Vladinom telu за защита на равноправността е: (i) **preмали** (ii) съответното значение на този аспект в проекта (iii) **preveliki**

6 out of 6 answered

