



EAST EUROPE FOUNDATION CONSOLIDATED REPORT FOR 2017-2020

CHISINAU - 2021

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ACRONYMS

ACA	Anti-Corruption Alliance
CAS	Consumer Assistance Service
CEC	Central Electoral Commission
CPD	Centre Partnership for Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
DPC	District Participation Council
DPO	Disabled Peoples' Organisation
EEF	East Europe Foundation
IPC	Independent Press Council
LPA	Local Public Administration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SE	Social Enterprise
YB	Youth Bank
District	Administrative territorial unit, in Romanian "raion"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following narrative report reflects the progress under the EEF Strategic Plan “Engaging Citizens, Empowering Communities” (hereinafter the Program) from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2020. The program is funded by Sweden and several other donors, including European Union, Swiss Development Cooperation Agency, and Oak Foundation. The report shows the results achieved during project implementation according to the results framework and approved work plans.

Rooted in the principles of human rights and gender equality, the EEF Strategic Plan aims (**impact level**) to improve policy making and fulfilment of human rights of women and men in Moldova. The program entails two **impact outcomes**: **(i)** men and women enjoy civil and political rights and opportunities to exercise democratic influence; **(ii)** empowered people in targeted communities enjoy socio-economic rights and sustainable development opportunities. Each impact outcome three outcome and corresponding bridging outcome.

At impact level, EEF noted slight improvements regarding popular perception of (i) the general direction taken of national authorities and (ii) observance of human rights by public authorities. While the trend is positive, progress remains modest. Knowledgeable about this fact, EEF increasingly sought to maximise the impact of foundation’s Strategy for 2017-2020. Thus, by 2020 EEF progressively leveraged funds from various donors. For example, in 2020 EEF raised over 5 million USD. The cumulative funds raised during the implementation of the EEF Strategy exceeded 13 million USD.

It is worth acknowledging that positive trends at the impact level may not be attributed only to the implementation EEF Strategic plan. Objective factors that might have influenced public perception include, but are not limited to, the outcome of the 2020 Presidential Elections, unexpected parliamentary majority established in June 2019 between socialists and ACUM Bloc, initiated reforms in the area of justice, diminished influence of the Democratic Party over the justice sector.

During the reporting period EEF registered progress under both impact outcomes. **Men and women increasingly enjoyed opportunities to exercise democratic influence (impact outcome one)**. Specific examples are provided below:

Around 180 CSOs representing the vulnerable actively advocated for greater decisional transparency. They analysed over 150 public policies and monitored implementation of 10 public policies from the perspective of inclusion of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. During the four years of project implementation they managed to influence 38 public policies, that is around 25% of policies influenced to date.

EEF contributed to the establishment and joint advocacy of the Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination that that brings together 14 most active human rights CSOs.

CSOs that are part of the Press Council promoted pluralism and freedom of expression, and firmly demanded observance of ethical standards by Media institutions. Over 240 trained community journalists started to post articles about the issues faced in their communities. The European Interactive Centre from Comrat actively engaged people in critical debates about the development of the country and promoted the educational opportunities available in the European Union.

Over 30 CSOs, united under the umbrella of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections, demanded fairer and more inclusive Presidential (2020), Parliamentary (2019) and Local (2019) elections, reacting to abuses or misconduct of electoral authorities, electoral contestants, law-enforcement bodies.

Around 300 representatives of under-represented groups were empowered to stand as candidates in the local elections; 97 of them (44 women, 42 Roma, 11 empowered youth from Gagauzia) ran for office; 38 beneficiaries succeeded (12 Roma, 24 women, 2 youth from Gagauzia).

People in targeted communities are more empowered and steadily enjoy socio-economic rights and sustainable development opportunities (Impact Outcome two). Examples of achieved results are outlined below:

Over 23000 men and women were in 86 communities were mobilised and increasingly scrutinised the work of public authorities, demanding greater transparency and accountability along with fairer allocation of available public resources for basic social rights.

At district level, around 55 CSOs members of three district participation council steadily advanced transparency and responsiveness of local authorities towards community needs. In 2020 they engaged in policy dialogue with local authorities, analysed 156 draft decisions and managed to influence 32 decisions. Since their establishment, these CSOs analysed over 600 draft decisions issued by district authorities and engaged in assertive dialogue with local decision-makers to ensure that as many recommendations are accepted. Accordingly, around 120 decisions of district authorities were influenced from the perspective of equality and inclusion.

Five Consumer Assistance Centres (in Balti, Cahul, Chisinau, Rîbnița and Tiraspol) assisted over 5000 people consumers to defend their consumer rights with around 82% of complaints successfully addressed.

Empowered youth in 11 targeted communities increasingly contributed to local development through implementation of youth development initiatives that contributed to the mobilization of over 100000 young girls and boys. In 2020 youth banks supported 138 youth development initiatives that contributed to the mobilization of around 35000 boys and girls.

EEF supported 10 Youth entrepreneurship funds contributed to the creation of 70 youth led businesses and 84 new jobs.

17 social enterprises, five Local Partnerships for Inclusive Market Places, 13 consortia among CSOs from two banks, 11 social service grants contributed to the creation of 131 new jobs and improved access to social services for 3746 vulnerable women and men;

10 CSOs implemented innovative support services for marginalised persons (persons with diabetes, children with down syndrome, children with disabilities, children with Autism), resulting in improved services for around 1000 vulnerable persons, including children.

Over 2000 victims of domestic were empowered to stand up against domestic violence through legal aid other support services; 60 victims were employed, 95 children received various support services, 120 protection orders were issued.

EEF made significant strides to fight gender norms and stereotypes: raising awareness about the fatherhood concept and engaging over 15000 fathers in child care activities.

EEF made significant strides to support advocacy, community mobilisation and service delivery efforts of national and grass-roots CSOs. In 2020 EEF managed 108 grants to

Moldovan NGOs, using the joint contribution of Sweden, European Union, Swiss Development Cooperation Agency, and Oak Foundation. Cumulatively, during the last 4 years EEF awarded 191 grants to grassroots CSOS. Apart from the grants, EEF provided technical assistance to relevant partner NGOs and facilitated cooperation and dialogue between civil society and the government. During the project implementation, EEF worked and coordinated closely with the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), line ministries, Local Public Authorities, and international organizations, such as EU Delegation to Moldova, OSCE Mission to Moldova, UNDP Moldova, UN Women, Council of Europe office in Moldova, UNICEF, EBRD, and others.

Challenges:

After three consecutive changes of Governments (Filip, Sandu, Chicu), Moldova experienced the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic started as a health crisis but has quickly shown a socio-economic dimension. The state of emergency, strict containment measures, economic lockdown and travel restrictions affected most vulnerable groups of the society.

In this context, EEF made significant strides to adjust to the pandemic and swiftly respond to emerging needs. Adaptation measures included (a) postponing some offline mobilisation activities and focusing instead on policy oversight, (b) switching some activities to the online mode where possible, (c) better targeting public policies, (d) engaging with decision-makers to identify both immediate solutions and policy options that will prevent adverse impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups in the future.

Efforts to promote civil and political rights and greater participation opportunities for women and men entailed a number of challenges. Despite progress achieved under both impact outcomes, it is worth mentioning the challenging environment for CSO operation experienced during the last years. To mitigate this situation, EEF actively participated in mapping attacks on NGOs and actively reacted, along with other actors, to abuses or deviations from democratic norms.

After the parliamentary elections the policy design and implementation process was less dynamic. Under these circumstances, EEF focused its efforts on empowering CSOs and their constituents to influence local public policies.

The media environment continued to be dominated by outlets connected to political parties. With few exceptions, nationally broadcasting television stations are owned by people affiliated with political parties. Against this background, EEF made sustained efforts to promote observance of media ethics and encourage community journalism.

Presidential elections held in 2020 were assessed by the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections as “partially fair and partially free”. Major shortcomings flagged by the Coalition included: impossibility of some voters to exercise their right to vote, election campaign marked by negative speech, fakes and hate speech; high number of electoral incidents on election day, cases of obstructing observation and intimidation of observers; misuse of administrative resources in election campaign; unresolved election litigations and complaints; election campaign financing remains less transparent; unbalanced media coverage of election campaign, without informing the public of voting procedures; smear campaign against non-governmental organisations; discrimination against people with disabilities; the election campaign was carried out ignoring the COVID-19 prevention measures.

During the three general election processes organised during 2019-2020 EEF played a major role in facilitating coordinated responses of civil society to emerged electoral issues and empowering under-represented groups to actively participate in elections as candidates, observers and voters. The members of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections continuously flagged the accessibility barriers faced by persons with disabilities. Draft legal amendments to the Electoral Code were developed and advocated with decision-makers.

Local authorities continued to neglect transparency requirements. Despite this challenge, there are signs of improvement. For the first time in the last five years, due to EEF interventions,

targeted district authorities conducted public consultations on budgets, started to livestream the district council debates and showed stronger commitment to follow transparency requirements. After the local elections held in October 2019, newly elected councillors in these districts re-iterated commitments to maintain and improve collaboration with district participation councils that increasingly shaped public policies in 2020.

Despite the achieved progress with over 17 social enterprises established and supported by 2020, the social entrepreneurship field is still at its inception period in Moldova. Although social entrepreneurship is officially recognized by national legislation, there are no incentives for this new types of enterprises. There are still gaps in managing a social entrepreneurship, if referring to the left bank of Nistru River, where cooperation at various state levels is sensitive.

Steering implications for 2021-2025:

The COVID-19 pandemic will most likely continue during the next years. The perpetuation of the pandemic will have at least two implications for partner CSOs at national and local level. First, partner CSOs will have to use various means, including but not limited to digital tools, in order to keep active the members of infrastructure active. Second, in their dialogue with decision makers partner CSOs will have to stress the negative effects of the pandemic on the most vulnerable groups and further advocate for better preparedness to crisis, especially in such areas as healthcare, social security, education, employment.

The upcoming year 2021 will be marked by further political stalemate, difficulties in investing a new Government and early parliamentary elections. In any scenario, EEF and its partners will have to pro-actively engage with the focal points in the line ministries, with the new Government and political parties represented in the Parliament to keep inclusion high in the political agenda;

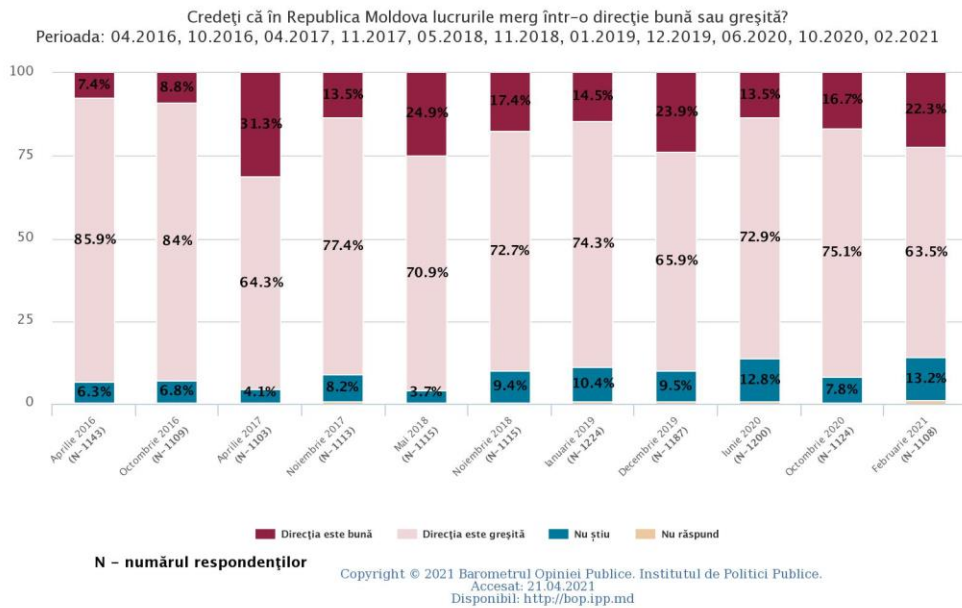
At district level, due to continued effort of the DPCs, there are signs of greater transparency in the decision-making process. The DPCs will have to make further efforts to swiftly collect evidence needed for advancing policy dialogue and implementation of advocacy priorities; EEF and CPD will need to provide them support in the collection of evidence at national and local level.

As the infrastructure for policy influencing and oversight, community mobilisation, youth empowerment, social and economic development is developing, EEF will have to provide individual support to grass-roots' activists and CSOs to ensure that created infrastructure is functional and sustainable after the next strategic cycle 2021-2025.

PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT: MEN AND WOMEN BENEFIT FROM RESPONSIVE POLICY MAKING AND FULFILMENT OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (3 years)
% of respondents who believe that policy-making is responsive to the needs and interests of the people	8.8%	Positive trend	23.9%	23.9%
% of respondents who believe that human rights are respected in Moldova	3%	Positive trend	5%	5%

By December 2020 the level of popular confidence in the work of national authorities increased. According to the Barometer of Public Opinion, released by the Public Policy Institute, the share of respondents who believed that authorities are taking right decisions increased from around 9% in 2016 to 22.3% in February 2021.



Improvements were also noted in terms of general perception of human rights observance in Moldova, yet progress is very modest. According to a public perceptions survey conducted by OHCHR in 2018, the share of people who consider that human rights are not violated at all in the Republic of Moldova is as low as 5%. An important majority – 68%, like in 2016, consider that human rights are systematically violated in the Republic of Moldova.¹

It is worth mentioning that these positive trends cannot be fully attributed to the implementation of EEF Strategic Plan 2017-2020. While selected impact indicators are trustful and accessible from open sources, they vary based on the changing political environment or methodology. Thus, positive increase in popular confidence about the development direction of the country may be inter-connected with a number of factors, including (a) the effective departure from politics of the PDM leader in June 2019 and subsequent charges on his alleged involvement in a banking scandal, (b) the outcome of the Presidential elections and the announced intention of the Moldova’s first female President to fight corruption, restore and improve diplomatic relations with the neighbouring countries and the EU.

The slight change in human rights perceptions may be linked to the more profound methodology used by the authors of the human rights survey and efforts to reach out to people who are often not aware of their rights.

PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT OUTCOME 1: MEN AND WOMEN ENJOY CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO EXERCISE DEMOCRATIC INFLUENCE

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
Civil liberties and political rights score for Moldova	3.0% (~48%)	Positive trend	61/100 (~61%)	61/100 (positive trend)

Despite some improvement of civil and political rights score for Moldova in 2020, the country is still rated by the latest Freedom House Report as “partly free”, with a cumulative score on political rights and civil liberties of 61/100. Democratic governance is hampered by a number of

¹ <https://www.md.undp.org/content/dam/moldova/docs/Human%20Rights%20Perceptions%20Study%202018%20ENG.pdf>

factors, such as pervasive corruption in the government sector, links between major political figures and powerful economic interests, as well as critical deficiencies in the justice sector and the rule of law.

Compared to previous year (2019), the civil liberties and political rights score slightly improved from 60/100 to 61/100. This positive development is due to the fact that private discussion is generally free and unfettered following the 2019 collapse of the PDM government.²

EEF played an important role in upholding civil and political rights and expanding participation opportunities for women and men. The most notable results are outlined below:

- ✓ Coalesced and empowered civil society actively organisations advocated for greater decisional transparency, design and implementation of more inclusive public policies;
- ✓ CSOs promoted pluralism and freedom of expression, and firmly demanded observance of ethical standards by Media institutions;
- ✓ United CSOs demanded fairer and more inclusive elections, reacting to abuses or misconduct of electoral authorities, electoral contestants, law-enforcement bodies;
- ✓ Fostered political inclusion through empowered representatives of under-represented groups who stood as candidates in the elections and many of them succeeded.

The detailed progress towards outcomes result is substantiated below.

Outcome 1.1. Organised men and women influence targeted public policies

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved by 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
CSO Advocacy Indicator	3.2	Positive trend	3.1	3.1 (positive trend)

The CSO Advocacy Indicator for Moldova slightly improved from 3.2 in 2016 to to 3.1 in 2020. However, during the last years CSOs were unable to achieve any major advocacy results as a result of the rapidly changing governments during the year. Rather than promoting their own initiatives, CSOs focused most of their attention on the government’s proposed programs.³

EEF played a significant role in achieving and maintaining these positive results. In 2020 EEF scaled up policy advocacy efforts, enabling around 180 NGOs representing most vulnerable groups to monitor adopted public policies, map and prioritise emerging public policies, engage with decision-makers in human rights aware policy to shape policy design from the perspective of inclusion and upscale policy implementation.



Despite this progress, it is worth mentioning the worsening environment for CSO operation experienced during the last years. Attacks against CSOs continued in 2020 at national and local level, especially during the Presidential Elections held in October 2020. These tendencies have also been signalled by EEF and other actors in position papers and Monitoring Reports on attacks on CSOs.⁴

² <https://freedomhouse.org/country/moldova/freedom-world/2021>

³ <https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/csosi-europe-eurasia-2019-report.pdf>

⁴ The mapping of attacks against CSOs in 2019 is available online at <https://crim.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-05-04-Timeline-attacks-CSOs-EN.pdf>; the report on attacks against CSOs in 2018 are online at https://crim.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-03-20-timeline-atacks-OSC_2018_final-ENG.pdf

Bridging Outcome 1.1.1. Targeted NGO platforms are more inclusive towards local NGOs and actively advocate for democratic reforms

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
# of prioritised public policies influenced by NGO Platforms (with more than 30% of CSOs recommendations accepted)	3	8	14	38 (target exceeded)
# of prioritised public policies influenced by NGO Platforms related to gender equality*	1	2	1	3 (target exceeded)

In 2020 four platforms representing vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, older people, Roma and youth) worked to influence design of 36 public policies. The monitoring of 10 selected public policies, finalised by these networks that bring together around 180 CSOs, contributed to assessing progress registered by duty bearers and identifying corrective measures for scaling up policy implementation. In 2020 CSO networks managed to shape 14 public policies from the perspective of inclusion and equal opportunities. In aggregate terms, during the last four years the supported CSO platforms influenced 38 public policies from the perspective of equality and non-discrimination. Examples of influenced public policies in 2020 are provided below:

*Pursuant to advocacy efforts conducted by the **Platform for People with Disabilities (AOPD)**, the Law on promotion of employment and unemployment insurance was amended. Current provisions of the same law 105/2018 were not sensitive to the degree and type of disability of potential employee and, for some people with disabilities, especially with severe disabilities, the costs for accommodating the workplace could be high for the employer. Only up to 50% of the workplace accommodation costs are compensated by the state. As a result of promoted recommendations and advocacy actions the bill provides for 50% compensations for workplace accommodation costs to employer in case of hiring people with medium-level disabilities and 75% in the case of hiring people with severe disabilities*

*During the pandemic period, **people with disabilities** could not access the services provided by the Council for Determination of Disabilities. As a result, the extension of disability status and relevant payments was practically blocked. AOPD addressed the Parliamentary Committee, Social Protection, Health and Family, MSMPS, the Council for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, and the National Council for the Determination of Disability and Work Capacity and recommended extension of disability status from office by the National Council for Determining Disability and Work Capacity during the state of emergency in health. These recommendations were accepted and approved by the decision-makers, in this way preventing similar situations affecting thousands of persons with disabilities.*

*During July-October 2020, the **youth platform** carried out an advocacy campaign for amending the Regulation on organization and operation of Youth Centres. Further to recommendations of the Platform members, amendments were accepted on ensuring the access of young people with disabilities to the Youth Centres, transparency in the use of public / private funds by the centre, as well as providing the venue for youth initiatives and organizations in the region, for free.*

***Youth sector** is one of the most affected by COVID-19 pandemic. Additional efforts were taken by the Youth Platform to mainstream the rights and needs of youth in national and local policies and budgets. During August-October 2020, with joint efforts and support of the platform, on 27 November 2020 the Law nr. 215/2016 on Youth was amended with the following provisions advocated by the platform: (a) exemption from rent payment for venues rented from institutions/ youth organizations financed from state budget; b) development of support programs for young people who are not*

employed, educated or trained (NEET young people); c) development of programs and mechanisms to support students interested in research and innovation.

The analytical notes developed earlier by **AOPD** signalled the lack of the position of Assisted Employment Specialist in the Classifier of Occupations in the Republic of Moldova. This rendered impossible the implementation of assisted employment in accordance with the law. During the reporting period AOPD signalled yet again this problem and engaged in constructive dialogue with national authorities. As a result, in October, this recommendation was approved and “Assisted Employment Specialist” was introduced in the Classifier of Occupations.

The “Roma Voice” platform promoted changes to employment legislation by enlarging the list of Classifier of occupations in the Republic of Moldova. Further to recommendation of Roma Voice platform, the classifier contains the new occupation - “Blacksmith”. The introduction of this profession in the classifier is a step forward towards better inclusion of Roma on the labour market.

Until recently there was no clarity about the state agency that should be responsible for Roma mediators. As a result of joint advocacy campaign and joint efforts of **Roma CSOs** and international partners, changes were promoted to Government Decision no. 593/2018 „On the organization and functioning of the Interethnic Relations Agency (IRA)”. The institution was finally assigned responsibility for monitoring and supervising community mediators and related issues.

Older people are an underrepresented and often overlooked beneficiary group in terms of long-term strategies and integration of aging into policy development, including public health. During the Pandemic the “Active Ageing” Platform analysed the draft Law on some support measures during the pandemic, urging the Committee on Exceptional Situations (CES) to consider the specific vulnerability of older people. According to the response of the Ministry of Finance from 29 April 2020, the CES considered the request and increased guaranteed minimum monthly income from 1107 MDL to 1300 MDL.

These CSOs also conducted advocacy and mobilisation work in selected localities. Their advocacy work resulted in better opportunities for vulnerable groups. Specific examples are provided below.

Accessibility of toilets in educational institutions is one of the main problems identified by AOPD members. Because of this situation children with disabilities cannot embrace their right to education in equal manner. In July 2020 the Government Decision on renovation / construction of sanitary blocks in primary, secondary and high school education institutions was approved considering two recommendations of the AOPD platform on insuring accessibility of those constructions. As result, 18 educational institutions (in North-7 institutions, Centre – 6 and South – 5) were selected to benefit from funding for renovation / construction of sanitary blocks.

Pursuant to advocacy efforts undertaken by **youth initiative group** from Floresti district, together with Department for Culture, Tourism, Youth and Sports in Floresti, young people implemented 2 projects on community development and one more to take place in 2021 on critical thinking. At the same time, in Fălești, the youth initiative group presented their project results to local administration. As result, the report provided for implementation of several activities where local authorities allocated 8,200 lei.

The Roma Voice platform was further mapping communities where no **Roma community mediator** is employed or even more mediators are required, depending of the number of Roma population in the locality. In this respect, as result of advocacy efforts taken by constituents of Roma platform on

facilitating employment of community mediators, in Chisinau, a Roma - member of CVR- was included into employment evaluation commission, and in November 2020, two community mediators were hired for Botanica and Ciocana sectors of the capital.

*The Roma Voice platform advocated for implementation of rights of **Roma people** on healthcare and decent living, particularly the **right to water and sanitation**. In Schinoasa village (Țibirica commune / Călărași district), further to Platform efforts to mainstream the rights of Roma people, in November 2020, the Calarasi district council had allocated 45 thousand lei to solve the problem of drinking water supply of the village. Locals of Schinoasa also contributed with their fundraising efforts.*

With funding leveraged from the EU within the project “Advocacy for Better Protection against Discrimination”, in 2020 EEF contributed to the establishment and joint advocacy of the Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination that brings together most active human rights CSOs. The strategic coalition started to conduct public actions, develop and submit joint positions papers, monitor the progress of national authorities towards commitments in the area of non-discrimination, raise awareness about the added value of diversity, social inclusion and non-discrimination. By the date of reporting, the Coalition consists of 14 CSO representing vulnerable groups, including women, minority, LGBTI, persons with disabilities, Roma and other non-state actors who support the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

EEF made significant strides to empower CSOs representing vulnerable groups and their constituents to claim their right to non-discrimination. The project team provided training for 25 grass-roots CSOs representing vulnerable groups, strengthening their capacity to document cases of discrimination and support victims to submit complaints. Further efforts have been made to assist participants to put in practice the applied knowledge and skills. A call for proposal has been launched that will enable at least nine CSOs to empower victims of discrimination to claim their rights and submit complaints.

The project also assisted the Moldovan Equality Council to monitor court trials, identify relevant cases and submit amicus curiae briefs. A methodology for monitoring court proceedings and identification of cases requiring amicus curiae briefs has been developed and appraised in a participatory manner. This approach will contribute to increased awareness regarding cases pending before national courts and to strengthening accountability and professionalism of judges. The document will be applied starting the second year of project implementation.

Bridging Outcome 1.1.2. Prioritised think tanks share and transfer expertise to NGO platforms and advocate for reforms

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
# of think tanks' research and analyses used by NGO Platforms to advocate for reforms	3	10	2	11 (target exceeded)
# of gender impact assessments conducted and used by NGO platforms	1	2	1	5 (target exceeded)

In 2020 EEF facilitated transfer of two comprehensive analytical policy documents produced by think tank organisations, to targeted NGO platforms. The evidence-based research and analyses produced by CPD were used by four platforms to advocate for reforms in the areas of (i) inclusive employment, (ii) equal pay for equal value of work. During the previous years, EEF facilitated transfer of evidence-based research and analyses produced by CPD, Promo-LEX, ADEPT were used by four platforms to advocate for reforms in various areas, including (iii) inclusive

participation; (iv) social protection; (v) placement requirements to gender quotas; (vi) election administration and political funding.

Due attention was paid to gender mainstreaming. The Strategic partnership with CPD contributed to gender impact assessments of legislation in the area of social protection.

Pursuant to advocacy efforts conducted by the EEF Partner, Centre Partnership for Development (CPD) and other actors, amendments to the Law on allowances for temporary incapacity for work and other social insurance benefits were developed and registered in the Parliament and consultative sessions of the Parliamentary Committees started on 30 June 2020. The bill provides for making the monthly benefits allowance indexed to the annual inflation rate. If adopted, the bill will contribute to non-discriminatory indexation of benefits for women.

*The second edition of the **Equality Gap Report** was released by EEF and CPD in September 2019. The document outlines the major inequalities faced by Roma, persons with disabilities, youth, older persons in a number of areas including living standards, health, labour, social protection, participation. The findings were extensively used by CSOs and their platforms to promote more inclusive public policies.⁵*

Bridging Outcome 1.1.3. National authorities advance transparency in decision-making and institutional dialogue with NGOs

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
% of CSOs amendments to the law on transparency in the decision-making process adopted by the Government	~30%	~60%	64.4%	64.4% (target exceeded)

With EEF support, NGOs and their networks produced over 50 policy analyses with at least 200 corresponding recommendations. Supported NGOs are continuously working with decision makers to promote approval of formulated recommendations.

EEF and partner NGOs examined observance of transparency requirements, articulating gaps and advocating for corresponding recommendations. In 2020 CSO platforms urged yet again the Parliament to observe transparency in the decision-making process during the adoption of the Law on national budget for 2021. Considering the importance of this public policy, the draft law was assessed by the platforms' representatives from the inclusion perspective and recommendations were formulated by all partners comprising social and health security of people with disabilities, support to elderly, especially under COVID-19 pandemic, insurance of equal rights and access to education, employment opportunities for Roma.⁶

The consultative platform www.particip.gov.md was improved in 2020. A study commissioned by EEF in 2019 revealed key legal implementation gaps of the law and the platform⁷ and developed corresponding policy recommendations were developed and submitted to the State Chancellery in October 2019. In 2020, with the support of development partners, the platform was significantly improved, with many of the formulated recommendations taken into account.

⁵ CPD and EEF (2019). Unequal Moldova: analysis of the most relevant inequalities in The Republic of Moldova, available online at <https://eef.md/index.php?page=news&id=984&rid=1484&l=en>

⁶ http://aopd.md/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Apel-comun-OSC_Legea-bugetului-2021.pdf

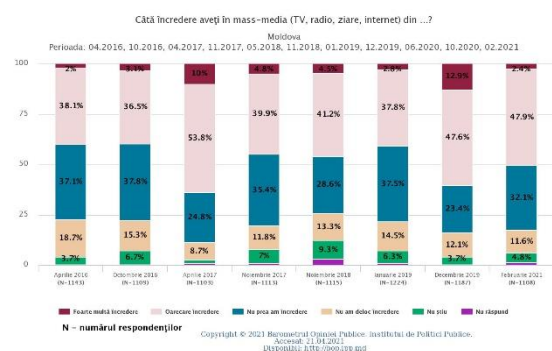
⁷ EEF (2019). Analytical Note on the Application of the Legal Framework in the area of Decisional Transparency and Functioning of the Platform www.particip.gov.md

By 2020 civil society increasingly influenced national public policies. According to the official report on Ensuring Transparency in the Decision-Making Process by the Central Public Authorities, published by the State Chancellery in May 2020, around 64.4% of recommendations, submitted by civil society and other interested parties, were accepted by decision-makers in 2020.⁸

Outcome 1.2. Men and women enjoy and promote freedom of expression and access to unbiased information

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
% of respondents who believe they have access to unbiased information	40.1%	Positive trend	50.3%	50.3% (on track)

The share of people who trust the media increased during the last three years. According to the Barometer of Public Opinion, the cumulative share of respondents who mentioned that have they have confidence in the Media “to a certain extent” and “to a great extent” increased from 40.1% in April 2016 to 50.3% in February 2021.



This increase in popular confidence may not be attributed only to EEF interventions. This positive trend could be the consequence of efforts initiated by the Government to increase transparency of media ownership and de-monopolise the media landscape in Moldova.

EEF made significant strides to promote observance of journalists’ code of ethics, promote critical thinking, pluralism, citizens’ journalism

and positive news. The progress to date is substantiated in the sections below.

Bridging Outcome 1.2.1. The Press Council is effectively reaching out to media consumers, encouraging them to report cases of media misconduct

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
% of complaints on media misconduct submitted by people pursuant to awareness campaigns	35%	60%	80%	80% (target exceeded)

With EEF support, the Press Council has effectively reached out to media consumers, encouraging them to report cases of media misconduct. EEF assisted the secretariat of the Press Council to ensure the exercise of its key responsibilities: examining complaints, working with media to promote the media ethical standards.

In 2020 the Press Council examined 31 complaints against media institutions from all over the country. During the last four years the Press Council examined around 150 cases. In all cases, the Press Council actively engaged the Audio-visual Council and other institutions including the Moldovan Equality Body and corrective measures were taken. Examples are substantiated below:

⁸ State Chancellery (2021). *Report on Ensuring Transparency in the Decision-Making Process by the Central Public Authorities*, p. 11, available online in Romanian at https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/raport_transparenta_2020_3_4_mai.pdf

In recent years, the Press Council has examined several complaints of a prison inmate, who complains of discrimination and stigmatization by the portal KP.MD. He complained that the wording used by the portal does not comply with the decisions of the Press Council. In 2020, the Press Council called for the involvement of the Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality - legal authority in the field of preventing and combatting discrimination. The Equality Body found that the Kp.md portal instigated discrimination against life detainees, requesting the portal apologies in writing to detainees for admitting expressions that incite to discrimination.

The Press Council examined a complaint against JURNAL.MD portal, for broadcasting a story with a video recording of scenes of violence between minors, as well as information and data about the alleged victim of violence. The Press Council found that the information in the medical file of the alleged minor victim, including name and diagnosis, is personal data and its publication violates the ethical provisions on the protection of persons in vulnerable situations, especially children involved in events with negative connotations, but also the legal provisions in the field of personal data protection and child protection in situations with a negative connotation. After sending to the editorial office the Decision of the Press Council, the editorial staff of the Jurnal.md portal withdrew the images in which the personal data of the alleged minor victim were presented.

Following a complaint lodged by consumers of media products, the Press Council made note of the publication by the JURNAL.MD portal of an article containing a video recording of scenes of violence between minors, as well as information and data about the alleged victim of violence. The Press Council found that the information in the medical file of the alleged minor victim, including name and diagnosis, is personal data and its publication violates the ethical provisions on the protection of persons in vulnerable situations, especially children involved in events with negative connotations, but also the legal provisions in the field of personal data protection and child protection in situations with a negative connotation. After sending to the editorial office the Decision of the Press Council, the editorial staff of the Jurnal.md portal withdrew the images in which the personal data of the alleged minor victim were presented.

The Press Council examined a complaint alleging incitement to hatred in a Facebook page post by AGORA.MD portal. The Secretariat of the Press Council notified the editorial staff of the portal. In the reply signed by the editor-in-chief, the Press Council was informed that the editorial board regretted the dissemination of hate speech through its portal and took action immediately, moderating the discriminatory and hateful comments.

A consumer of media products complained to the Press Council that in an article published by the TV8.MD portal, which refers to the abuses within the Catholic Church, an image was published representing the Orthodox Church, which harms the religious feelings of Christians Orthodox. As soon as the notification was sent to the media portal, the symbol picture from the news was changed, and in response he expressed his regret for this unintentional mistake.

Bridging Outcome 1.2.2. People [community journalists] freely express their views on key public policies and report abuses through the Community journalists' platform

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
# of people who used the community journalists' platforms to comment public policies or report abuses	0	10000	90000	90000 monthly viewers of stiri positive

# of people trained to use the community journalists' platforms to comment public policies or report abuses, disaggregated by sex	0	-	207 (52 men and 155 women)	207 (52 men and 155 women)
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In 2020 the web portal www.stiripozitive.eu has created, placed and promoted a total of 215 media topics, one third out which are success stories focused on community initiatives, citizen journalism. The platform registered an increase of the monthly average number of users visits from about 20,000 in 2018 to 96,000 by 2020. The platform also expanded the geography of site visitors to 144 countries.

EEF advanced its efforts to promote community journalism in Moldova. The platform for community journalists www.jurnalist.md, developed in 2019 by EEF, was further explored. Building on the linkages available in various projects, in 2020 EEF trained 207 persons (52 men and 155 women, prospective community journalists), to report various issues in their communities. As a result of the capacity building activities, 146 news have been published by the reporting date.

Bridging Outcome 1.2.3. European Interactive Centres engage citizens in critical debates on the development issues and options of the country

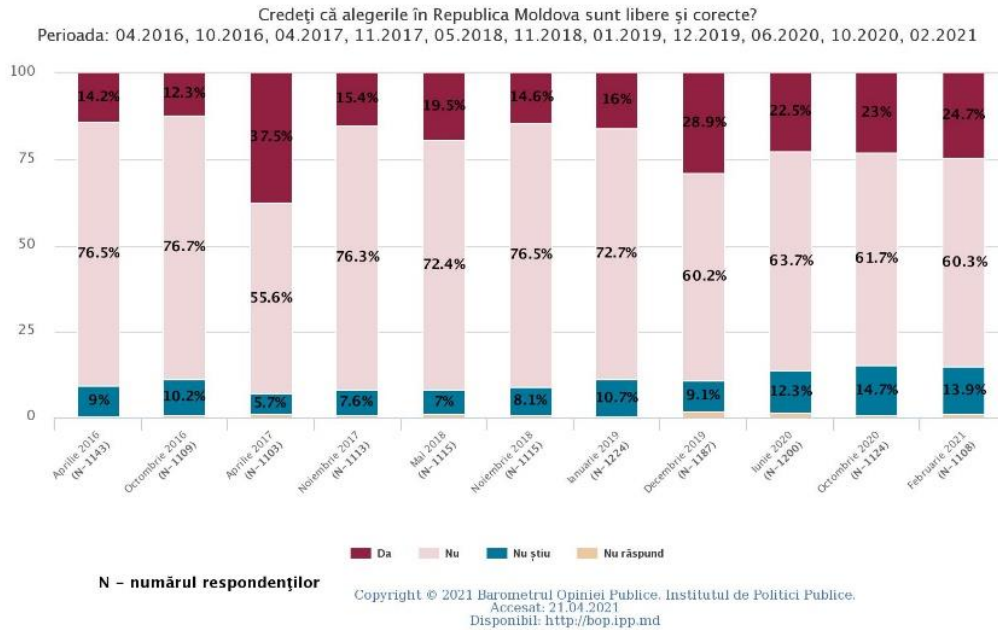
Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
# people engaged in critical debates	1000	5000	9000	~29000 (target exceeded)

In 2020 the European Interactive Centre from Comrat actively engaged inhabitants of Gagauzia in discussions about development issues and the European integration process of the country, reaching out to around 10,000 residents of Gagauzia. Information was disseminated in the format of debates, exhibitions, drawing contests. The European Interactive Center from Comrat continued to disseminate information and offer training to more than 150 young students on EU values and various European programs and benefits. An online quiz was held as part of the celebration of Europe Day in Gagauzia, resulting in awards for 20 participants. Around 60 participants in an essay competition and about 300 participants in a drawing competition expressed their views on the pandemic situation in the world. In addition, 50 participants in the drawing and essay competition learned about the goals of the project. Approximately 1214 web users got acquainted with the activity through regular publications on the official website of the European Center “Pro-Europa” and social networks. During the last four years around 29000 women and men have been engaged in critical debates on the development of the country.

Outcome 1.3. Men and women benefit from free, fair and inclusive elections

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (3 years)
% of respondents who believe that elections were free and fair, disaggregated by sex	14.2%	Positive trend	24.7%	Positive trend

According to the Barometer of Public Opinion, the share of people who believe that elections were free and fair increased from 11.8% in 2016 to 24.7% in February 2021. This positive trend may be attributed to a number of factors including (a) the improved performance of the Central Electoral Commission after the departure of the DPM leader as well as (b) the improved climate of holding elections noted by OSCE/ODIHR and domestic observers.



During the electoral years 2019- 2020, EEF made significant efforts to promote freer, fairer and more inclusive elections. Joint advocacy efforts led to amendments of the Electoral Code from the perspective of gender equality. Over 30 CSOs members of the Coalition for and Fair Elections managed to jointly monitor the electoral processes and reacted promptly to abuses.

Bridging Outcome 1.3.1. NGOs of Women, Roma and PwD advocate for inclusive and fair elections

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
# of advocacy campaigns resulting in commitment of political parties or electoral authorities to ensure fair access to vote and representation in politics of women, Roma, PWDs	2	3	1	10 (target exceeded)

EEF enabled the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections, comprising over 30 members, to resume election monitoring activities and advocate for free, fair and inclusive elections. The Coalition issued critical position papers before, during and after the presidential elections (2020),⁹ local general suffrage (2019)¹⁰ and parliamentary elections (2019).¹¹ Coalition members actively informed citizen, authorities and other relevant stakeholder about the identified issues and needed changes.

The Civic Coalition assessed the Presidential Elections held in 2020 as **partially correct and partially free**. The statement was based on a number of shortcomings flagged by the Coalition, including the following: impossibility of some voters to exercise their right to vote, election campaign marked by negative speech, fakes and hate speech; high number of electoral incidents on election day, cases of obstructing observation and intimidation of observers; misuse of administrative resources in election campaign; unresolved election litigations and complaints;

⁹ Relevant position papers and monitoring reports of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections on the organization of Parliamentary Elections 2020 are available online at <https://alegeliber.md/en/sectiune/alegeri-prezidentiale-2020>

¹⁰ Relevant position papers and monitoring reports of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections on the organization of Local Elections 2020 are available online at <https://alegeliber.md/en/sectiune/alegeri-locale-generale-2019>

¹¹ Relevant position papers and monitoring reports of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections on the organization of Parliamentary Elections 2020 are available online at <https://alegeliber.md/en/sectiune/alegeri-parlamentare-2019>

election campaign financing remains less transparent; unbalanced media coverage of election campaign, without informing the public of voting procedures; smear campaign against non-governmental organisations; discrimination against people with disabilities; the election campaign was carried out ignoring the COVID-19 prevention measures.¹²

During the Parliamentary Elections held in 2019, with EEF support and funding leveraged from the EU, NGOs designed and implemented five advocacy campaigns for the inclusion of vulnerable groups. Three CSO initiatives advocated for the empowerment and meaningful inclusion of persons in psychiatric institutions. One project identified barriers faced by Roma and advocated with 10 representatives of political parties to address them. Under the auspices of the Gender Equality Platform, a campaign was carried out designed to prevent violence against women candidates. INFONET provided support to the persons with physical, and sensorial disabilities to exercise their right to vote.

In addition, EEF and its strategic partners (CPD and Tarna Rom) monitored the parliamentary Elections from the perspective of inclusion of women, Roma and persons with disabilities. The findings and recommendations were regularly disseminated through press conferences conducted before and after the elections.

Advocacy efforts continued after the Parliamentary elections and brought results from the perspective of gender equality:

Influenced Electoral Code from a Gender Equality perspective:

In June 2019 the Moldovan Parliament initiated amendments to the Electoral Code and other election related legislation. Under the auspices of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections, Centre Partnership for Development and other NGOs formulated and submitted to the Parliament specific recommendations including the following: (i) lowering the ceiling of total expenses per political party during the campaign; (ii) lowering the ceiling of private donations; (iii) tagging public financial support for political parties to gender and youth representation, (iv) introducing placement requirements so that gender equality quota for each ten places within the list of candidates. As a result of continuous policy dialogue with MPs, most of these recommendations were approved by the Parliament. One specific amendment approved by the Parliament was the 40% placement requirement for every 10 places in the candidates' lists. By derogation, during the local elections held on 20 October 2019, minimum 3 out of every 10 candidates should have been of the different sex. Failure to respect placement requirements entails refusal of the electoral body to register the lists.

Before the Local Elections, held on 20 October 2019, EEF up-scaled advocacy efforts. EEF conducted a nation-wide advocacy campaign focused on electoral inclusion disseminated through TV, Radio and online. The Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections actively interacted with electoral authorities. CSOs members of the Coalition were empowered to (i) monitor media coverage, including from the perspective of gender equality; (ii) advocate for the electoral right of persons in psychiatric institutions; (iii) prevent monitor violence against women during elections.

EEF and its strategic partners continued to monitor elections from the perspective of inclusion of women, Roma, persons with disabilities. The monitored reports pointed to the fact that empowerment and advocacy efforts produced outstanding results:

¹² The Statement of the Coalition is available online at <https://alegeliber.md/en/declaratie-pozitia-coalitie-civice-pentru-alegeri-libere-si-corecte-fata-de-alegerile-prezidentiale-2020-3305.html>

Women are underrepresented in the decision-making bodies at the local level. In order to address this situation, EEF and CPD carried out a program to train and prepare women for the local elections of 2019. This program unfolded in five rounds, each consisting of three training modules. Thus, 101 women have been trained in the field of political leadership, public communication and successful electoral campaigns.

Consequently, out of 101 women trained, 44 have run for office. Among them 32 have ran for the first time, 27 have run as independent candidates, and 17 on electoral lists. The average age of the candidates was 43 years, the youngest being 20 years old, the oldest - 68 years old. The candidates represented 38 localities.

The program improved women representation in local elective decision-making bodies. As result of the empowerment initiative 2 women have been elected as mayors (out of 13 who have run for mayors); 22 women were elected as local councillors; 8 women – rayon councillors; 12 women were positioned on less eligible places.

Roma people in Moldova are significantly under-represented in local and national decision-making. During the 2015 local elections only two Roma were elected as local councillors. Against this background, East Europe Foundation (EEF) engaged in a strategic partnership with Tarna Rom (Roma NGO), working jointly to empower Roma people to stand as candidates in the local elections. To this end, during 2018-2019 EEF and Tarna trained 100 Roma from 48 localities on political leadership, successful public communication, efficient election campaigns. The trainings, along with subsequent dialogue events with political parties, contributed to increased number of Roma in the candidates lists.

The election monitoring from the perspective of Roma, conducted by EEF and Tarna Rom for the first time in Moldova, revealed that 42 Roma persons running for the position of local councillor, 17 Roma candidates registered for the position of district councillor, three Roma persons ran for the position of mayor. As a result, 12 persons of Roma ethnicity were elected as local councillors. This is a modest yet important step towards more inclusive decision-making and a cohesive society in Moldova.

With EEF support, Pilgrim Demo organized the **School of young political leaders - JUST ACT**. The goal of the initiative was to support young people from Gagauzia to realise their political projects by means of developing leadership skills and providing informational support in the field of political and civic participation. As a result of the initiative, 11 out of the 96 beneficiaries stood as candidates in the local general elections. All participants in the series of trainings were brave, purposeful and ambitious young people.

Bridging Outcome 1.3.2. Judges use international and OSCE/ODIHR standards on accessibility and free and fair elections in dispute resolution

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
% court decisions that use international and OSCE/ODIHR standards	0%	20% increase	0%	0% (target was not achieved)

EEF engaged in a strategic partnership with IDOM in order to capacitate judges to better apply human rights and international standards. In 2019, 15 judges were trained within a grant awarded by EEF to advance inclusion of persons with disabilities in the electoral process.

However, analysis of available court decisions on adjudication of electoral disputes revealed that judges are not using yet international and regional election standards in dispute resolution. Consequently, at this stage, EEF did not reveal progress towards the planned target indicator.

In 2020 EEF did not conduct capacity building activities for judges due to objective reasons. Previous experience with IDOM in 2019 revealed a number of challenges, including the difficulty of reaching out to judges and ensuring their participation throughout the training. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring the participation of judges in online format would have been even more problematic.

Bridging Outcome 1.3.3. Political parties are more inclusive towards women

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
# of political parties that observed the 40% gender quota, along with the placement requirement	1	3	all	All (target exceeded)

Civil society advocacy for mainstreaming gender equality in the electoral process brought important results. Data collected by CPD in 2019 pointed that all political parties complied with the 40% quota requirements during the Parliamentary Elections. As a result of legal amendments adopted by the Parliament after the Parliamentary elections, during the local elections held on 20 October 2019, minimum 3 out of every 10 candidates should have been of the different sex. Failure to respect placement requirements entails refusal of the electoral body to register the lists.

Bridging Outcome 1.3.4. Electoral commissioners and local authorities observe the electoral rights of persons with disabilities

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
% of polling stations accessible for persons with disabilities	15%	50%	59%	59% (on track)

The accessibility of polling stations increased by 2020 compared to 2016. In aggregate terms, the share of “partially accessible” and “accessible” polling stations increased from 15% in 2016 to 59% by 2020.¹³

However, persons with disabilities continue to be discriminated in the realisation of their rights to vote. During the Presidential Elections held in 2020, the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections noted that people with disabilities have faced barriers to physical and information accessibility. Most election candidates failed to develop and distribute materials in formats that were accessible for people with disabilities, except one candidate who published her platform in Braille. People with intellectual and psycho-social disabilities from residential institutions, which imposed a quarantine on their residents due to the epidemiological situation and restricted their contact even with family members, had no access to any election-related information.¹⁴

EEF played an important role to promote accessibility of polling stations and voting for persons with disabilities. The members of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections continuously flagged the accessibility barriers faced by persons with disabilities. Draft legal amendments to the Electoral Code were developed and advocated with decision-makers.¹⁵

¹³ Promo-Lex (2020). *Monitoring the Presidential Elections: Final Report*, p. 35, available online at https://promolex.md/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Raport-Final_MO-Promo-LEX_2020_ENG_web.pdf

¹⁴ *Position of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair elections on the Presidential Elections 2020*, available online at <https://alegeliber.md/en/declaratie-pozitia-coalitie-civice-pentru-alegeri-libere-si-corecte-fata-de-alegerile-prezidentiale-2020-3305.html>

¹⁵ Available online at <https://eef.md/index.php?pag=news&id=926&rid=1546&l=ro>

PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT OUTCOME 2: EMPOWERED PEOPLE IN TARGETED COMMUNITIES ENJOY SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved by 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
% of respondents in [targeted] communities who believe that social and economic rights are respected by local authorities	Water: 50.2% Work: 19.8% Health: 20.9% Social protection: 15.3%	increase	Water: 56.2% Work: 34.7% Health: 28.4% Social protection: 27.9%	Increase: Water: 56.2% work: 34.7% health: 28.4% social protection: 27.9%
Equality Gaps in the following areas: living standards, health, employment ¹⁶	Annex 1	Positive trend	Positive trend	Positive trend

The public perceptions on the observance of social and economic rights in Moldova has slightly improved during the last three years. According to the human rights perception survey, conducted by OHCHR and the Office of the Ombudsman in December 2018, the share of respondents who reported that specific socio-economic rights are respected “to a great extent” and “to a very great extent” augmented by around 10%.¹⁷

The Equality Gap Report, conducted by EEF and CPD in 2019, revealed a similar trend:

Poverty: Public authorities did not release the poverty figures since 2015. Data from household budget survey reveal that incomes of the poorest households increased in the last years. Another sign that incomes increased is that consumption increased among low income groups.

Health: The share of men and women without health insurance decreased in 2018. Financial accessibility to health services slightly increased. According to the National Bureau of Statistics Survey on the State of Health of the Population, in 2016 close to 56,2% of women did not use health services even if they needed to, in 2018 the figure was 42%.

Labour Market: Employment inequalities remained unchanged in 2018. Gender employment gap increased with 1 point. The pay gender gaps decreased slightly from 14,5% to 13,5%, in the economic sectors where women are paid less than men. The share of informal workers decreased a bit among young people, elderly and men. The share of wagedworkers in rural agriculture is decreasing as well.

This increase in public perceptions about the observance of socio-economic rights and slight improvement in the quality of livelihoods cannot be fully attributed to EEF interventions. However, it is worth mentioning the crucial role played by the foundation in upholding socio-economic rights and creating better opportunities for vulnerable girls and boys, women and men all over the country. The key results achieved to date are outlined below:

- ✓ Mobilised men and women in targeted communities are increasingly scrutinising the work of public authorities, demanding greater transparency and accountability along with fairer allocation of available public resources for basic social rights;

¹⁶ Proxy indicator added in 2019

¹⁷ <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/moldova/docs/Human%20Rights%20Perceptions%20Study%202018%20ENG.pdf>, p. 32

- ✓ Empowered youth in targeted communities are steadily contributing to local development and seeking business development opportunities;
- ✓ Capacitated NGOs are expeditiously contributing to improved social services and better economic opportunities for the most vulnerable groups.

These results are substantiated in the sections below.

Outcome 2.1. Organised men and women in targeted communities successfully advocate for responsive governance and address basic needs

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
% of organised men and women in targeted communities who reported successful engagement with NGOs and local authorities to address community needs	0%	10% Increase	~ 30% 86 initiative groups 6532 persons, including 4222 women and 2310 men.	30% (on track) 23047 persons mobilised, including 15118 women and 7929 men

Communities in 4 targeted districts (Cahul, Taraclia, Căușeni, Soroca) are increasingly mobilised and advocate for greater transparency and responsiveness of local authorities. Through capacity building and mobilisation sub-grants to grass-roots NGOs, by the end of 2020 EEF in partnership with CPD set up inclusive initiative groups in 86 communities. In 2020 the initiative groups mobilised around 6532 persons, including 4222 women and 2310 men. In aggregate terms, during the last years the community mobilisation program mobilised around 23000 persons around community development initiatives. According to the grantees' progress reports, at this stage around 30% of the mobilised people are actively interacting with NGOs and local authorities.

Bridging Outcome 2.1.1. Targeted grass-roots NGOs are actively using community mobilization tools to empower communities

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
# of CSOs demonstrating active involvement of people in assessing quality of local governance and designing community development initiatives	20	40	20	45 (target exceeded)

CSOs are more interested in promoting good governance at the local level. In 2020, the three District Participation Councils (set up in 2018 in Soroca, Cahul and Căușeni with funding from SDC and co-funding from Sweden) increased their membership base from 30 to 55 CSOs.

Grass-roots CSO are increasingly mobilising men and women, including the vulnerable to be more active in the community development process. With project support, 18 grassroots CSOs advanced the implementation of grass-roots initiatives, mobilising over 4200 persons in communities. As part of their initiatives, 31 participation mechanisms were institutionalised, 86 local action groups were set up and initiated dialogue with local authorities for improved service delivery and more inclusive resources allocation.

Personal assistants of people with disabilities in Taraclia demand the right to work and life balance:

CSO "Prima" from Taraclia monitored the living conditions of people with disabilities in Taraclia district and mainstreamed their rights in local decisions. Alongside, members of SCO "Prima" analysed the living and working conditions of personal assistants, most of whom are family members and identified that it is a pressing problem of families and beneficiaries with disabilities in the district - the need for a "RESPIRO" service. Personal assistants have no week-ends, no vacations, cannot move or travel for personal needs, or at least have some rest hours during the day.

To address this issue, the local CSO and its constituents initiated multiple discussions and advocacy measures targeting LPA I and LPA II on opening a "RESPIRO" Center in Taraclia district. Since no financial resources were available at district level, it was possible to identify a common solution and children and grown-ups with disabilities can be placed in two Centers (1. "Casa Angelus", in Orhei district, for children up to 18 years with various disabilities; and 2. "Hospis Carolina de Nord", based in Straseni district - for adult people with various disabilities) free of charge. DSAFP Taraclia assumed the responsibility to cover round trip transportation costs. As a result, 21 children with disabilities, beneficiaries of personal assistance service were placed at the "Casa Angelus" Center during September - December 2020.

Strengthening responsiveness of local authorities in Cahul through participatory budgeting:

Further to successful implementation of five projects out of 14 (10 are still in the process) that received funding from the participatory budgeting fund in 2020 approved SCO "Pas cu Pas regiunea Sud" focused on mobilization of new members for the Civic Initiative Group of Youth in Cahul, and their capacitation in transparency of the decision-making process, local budgeting and advocacy.

Additionally, Cahul local administration increased the participatory budgeting funds from 1 mln to 1.5 mln lei in 2021 and announced a new round of local initiatives. As result of second call for projects, 30 project proposals were submitted (compared to 26 in 2020).

Concurrently, members of SCO maintained a constructive dialog with and mainstreamed rights of youth in local policies and budgeting. Thus, the SCO team contributed to implementation, publication and promotion of the participatory instrument "Budget for Citizens"- coming to support independent analysis of the local budget by civil society. As a result, three infographic reports on approved budget for 2019, executed budget for 2019 and approved budget for 2020 were elaborated and presented to municipal counsellors and general public. Based on infographics promotional materials were elaborated and several information and awareness campaigns were carried out for the population of Cahul in order to promote understanding of budgetary process and particularly increase the interest for participatory budgeting among population.

Empowered initiative groups in Tătărauca Veche claim transparent decision-making process

CSO "Casa Sperantelor" joined advocacy efforts with members of initiative group and claimed a transparent and inclusive decision-making process in Tătărauca Veche.

Pursuant to common efforts and multiple recommendations on implementation of transparency principles in policy making, and relevant support of CSO "Casa Sperantelor" meetings of Local Council were broadcasted on social networks. It was mentioned that the online transmission of the meetings of the Local Council offers the interested persons opportunities to participate in the decision-making process, especially during the pandemic period, when the persons do not have the possibility to physically participate in meetings.

Promoting transparent and participatory decision making in Opaci, Cuseni district

CSO “CoNatal-Neo” together with its constituents advocated for elaboration and approval of “Regulation on transparency in decision-making and public consultation procedures with civil society in decision-making”. Further on, in order to insure transparency and participatory local decision-making, the mayor of Opaci village, appointed a person, responsible for organisation of public consultation.

Concurrently, SCO and members of Local Initiative Group, comprising 173 persons representing most vulnerable, successfully advocated for amendments to local budget for 2021 and influenced decrease of administrative costs (with 124 thousand lei) and their re-allocation on sports (24 thousand lei) and streets lightening (100 thousand lei) in Opaci.

Additionally, further to monitoring of decisions adopted by the local administration, SCO and members of Local Initiative Group identified and signalled a fraudulent decision whereby LPA Opaci concluded on spending funds from local budget on repairing works in Opaci church, where the church was not managed by local administration, but by Metropolitan Church of Moldova. As a result, this decision was annulled.

Bridging Outcome 2.1.2. Prioritised consumer assistance NGOs are actively using consumer rights complaints mechanisms to empower communities

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
# of NGOs that demonstrated proper engagement of men and women in reporting food incompliance with legal standards	3	6	5	5 (below target).

CSOs are increasingly promoting empowering citizens to report cases of food products that do not comply with the minimum standards. Consumer Assistance Centres continued to operate in 2020 throughout the country. Their work included awareness campaigns, primary and qualified legal aid. Consumer Assistance Centers in Balti, Cahul and Chisinau are continuing to operate. Their awareness campaigns contributed to an increase in the number of complaints from 402 in 2019 to 520 in 2020. Two additional Consumer Assistance Centres, established in Ribnita and Tiraspol in 2019, continued to operate in 2020.

Bridging Outcome 2.1.3. Local authorities in targeted communities are more responsive to the needs of targeted vulnerable groups

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
# of recommendations proposed by initiative groups and accepted by authorities ¹⁸	0	increase	20% (32/156)	20% (on track)
# of recommendations proposed by women’s initiative groups	0	increase	27	8 (on track)

CSOs are more effective in shaping local public policies from the perspective of inclusion. In 2020, the 55 CSOs members of three District Participation Council (DPC) analysed 156 emerging public policies and influenced 32 decisions adopted by public authorities. In total, during the last three years they analysed over 600 draft local decisions and managed to influenced around 120 of them. The analyses and corresponding recommendations were presented to district

¹⁸ Reflects the number of decisions influenced by CSOs (where 3 or more structural recommendations were accepted)

authorities before and during the district council sessions. Examples of influenced public policies or practices are provided below:

DPC Causeni:

As result of advocacy efforts taken by DPC Causeni, the local budget was influenced and rights of people with disabilities mainstreamed in local policy. Particularly, District Council allocated 129 thousand lei for construction of adapted sanitary block on the first floor of the Causeni District Council premises, in accordance with the legislation on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs.

Members of DPC Causeni provided multiple recommendations to District Council and influenced implementation of the Law nr. 60 on social inclusion of persons with disabilities and ensuring their equal opportunities for public life. As result of advocacy actions District Council accepted and partially implemented accessibility of sidewalks on central streets of Causeni city. Unfortunately, due to shortage of funds in local budget, the tactile pavement on the sidewalks and instalment of sound traffic lights, needed for people with visual impairments, is still postponed.

As a result of continuous advocacy efforts conducted by DPC members, the number of free of charge parking places allocated for vehicles adapted to needs of people with disabilities increased from two to four in Causeni city. Parking lot are located at Causeni Multifunctional Centre, Causeni District Council, Causeni Central Market place (Piata Centrala) and Causeni Botna Market place (Piata Botna).

DPC Soroca:

DPC members continued their effort to increase alternative transparency in decision making process in Soroca district. Thus, DPC continued broadcasting meetings of Soroca District Council and specialized commissions, as well as public consultations via <https://www.facebook.com/euparticip.md>, www.particip.eu.

DPC members actively contributed to the elaboration of the draft Development Strategy of Soroca District for 2021-2025. As result of multiple interventions and recommendations form DPC, for the first time, Soroca District Council organized open and transparent public consultation of the Strategy.

The District Council partially accepted recommendations of DPC members on elaboration of report on local budget implementation in 2020 in the easy to read format in roder to increase accessibility to information for all citizens in the district;

Other examples of influenced decisions include: the draft decision regarding water supply and related budget, recommendations on local district budget for 2021 and mid-term budget 2022-2023.

DPC Cahul:

In order to increase transparency in decision-making process of Cahul District Council, DPC Cahul organized on-line transmission of public authority meetings. By the moment of reporting, three meetings of the Cahul District Council were broadcasted.

DPC Cahul maintained its effectiveness during the second semester of 2020. In the first semester DPC members provided recommendations and advocated for improvement of Cahul District Council draft decision on the lease of social housing built under the "Housing construction project for socially vulnerable groups in Cahul district". As result of interventions, recommendation of DPC were accepted on maximum allowable number of people per square meter, who can live in social housing; and exemption from rent payment of tenants, when force majeure situations occur (such as pandemics, state of emergency, other).

The Cahul District Council also accepted the DPC recommendations on reorganization of municipal medical centre “Cahul District Dental Center” into a public medical institution, since according to new provisions of the legislation medical institutions can be either private or public medical institution. Additional advocacy efforts of DPC members resulted in partial acceptance of recommendation to draft decisions on (i) distribution of financial resources from inclusive education fund based on number of pupils and reference period and (ii) activity of the Cahul Department for Culture in 2020, which resulted in announced vacancy for a specialist in tourism to be employed within this department.

Due attention was paid to the empowerment of women to advocate for their rights. One example is provided below:

Until 2020 there was no national or local policy document that would support the community of Roma women in Moldova. In order to provide substantial support to women in line with their expectations, it was necessary to have a clear vision of how they can be supported. With EEF support, the **Roma Women Platform “ROMNI”** developed a Strategy and Action Plan for 2021-2025 to support Roma women from all over the country comprising Roma women and girls, including vulnerable (victims of violence, HIV-AIDS, special needs, uneducated, from rural areas, single mothers, unemployed, from mixed/traditional families). The developed document was consulted with community of Roma women and, based on needs analysis, tackles specific needs of Roma women and girls, solutions to problems and responsible local and district institutions. Currently, the Roma Women Platform “ROMNI” advocates to promote the Strategy at national and local level.

Mobilised women in Taraclia advocate for their rights through the UN human rights system: Single mothers are one of the five groups mobilised by “Tarsmi” CSO from Taraclia. The group mapped the barriers that affect their lives and corresponding causes: (i) single mothers face strong fears and stereotypes mounted by the patriarchal society over single mothers; (ii) Moldovan educational system promotes an image of an “ideal” or “complete” family made of “mother, father and children”; (iii) Schools are often request feeding or other informal fees for children; (iv) single mothers lack psychological support, legal advisory, larger educational and employment opportunities. Exploring the opportunity provided by Moldova’s CEDAW Committee review, the initiative group developed an alternative report on the situation and barriers faced by single mothers. The report was submitted and considered by CEDAW during 10-28 February 2020.

Bridging Outcome 2.1.4. Consumer protection institutions are effectively addressing consumer complaints

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
% of documented consumer complaints investigated by the consumer protection agency pursuant to CSO involvement	50%	80%	82%	82% (target exceeded)

Consumer Assistance Centres in Balti, Cahul and Chisinau up-scaled their legal assistance and empowerment work. The awareness campaign contributed to an increase in the number of complaints from 402 in 2019 to 520 in 2020. The complaints resulted in positive reactions from respective markets or consumer protect Consumer Assistance Centres in Balti, Cahul and Chisinau up-scaled their legal assistance and empowerment work. The complaints resulted in positive reactions from respective markets or consumer protection institution in approximately 82% of cases.

Analysis of level of nitrates in vegetables and fruits:

Zucchini, fresh cabbage and red radish are the products with the highest level of nitrates on the market and pose a health hazard. A laboratory expertise carried out during June-July this year in the laboratories of the National Agency for Public Health by the team of the Food Safety Project.

87 samples of vegetables (new cabbage, zucchini, new potatoes, tomatoes, onions, cucumbers, radishes, beets, peppers), greens (parsley, dill, green onions, lettuce) and fruits (strawberries, melons) were taken from eight supermarket chains in Chisinau and Cahul.

Of the total samples analyzed, the concentration of nitrates in 32 exceeds the maximum permissible limits.

An application designed to inform you about the quality and content of food on store shelves in the country has been launched in the country. It is easy to access and gives you access to a database of thousands of products. Just scan the product off the shelf to find out all the information you need. Thus, the authors of the application aim to help consumers and discipline producers. The "Alege Sanatos" mobile app is now on the Play Store and can be downloaded. The application contains: - 2925 food labels. The mobile application has been downloaded 1214 times, from the launch date of October 30, 2020 until present.

Outcome 2.2. Boys and girls in targeted communities actively participate in local development and claim their rights

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
% of youth in targeted localities who believe that community needs can be addressed through active youth participation	65%	Increase	80% (2019)	80% (target achieved)
# of youth led businesses created with project support*	0	10	4	70 (target exceeded)
# of new workplaces created by youth-led businesses*	0	10	3	84 (target exceeded)

Youth are increasingly empowered to address community needs through active mobilisation and participation. According to the data collected from all ten youth banks in 2019, around 80% of respondents mentioned that community issues can be solved through their participation.

In 2020 EEF continued to empower young people from an economic perspective. Leveraged funds from the European Union with the Economic and Social Development Program further contributed to the development of 10 Youth Entrepreneurship Funds that strengthened the entrepreneurship skills of 193 selected young people. The comprehensive economic empowerment interventions resulted in the establishment of 70 youth led businesses and creation of 84 new jobs.

She returned to her hometown to educate "super" skills among the children. It is the story about Dana Amaftioae, a young entrepreneur from Drochia, who inaugurated an "intelligence factory" in the city. The "factory" has been active since 2019 and offers children mental development services. The youth entrepreneurship fund from Bălți helped the young woman to obtain a grant of 2500 euros, in order to develop her business.

So far, about 40 minors, aged between 4 and 14, have opened the door of the center, which organizes online lessons for children in Chisinau and abroad. Thanks to the practical courses, in just a few weeks, children are able to calculate imaginary while talking. One of the students, Dumitru Danilciuc says that "mental arithmetic teaches me to be faster at calculating in the mind, better than my classmates and I am happier".

Now, the entrepreneur is in the process of opening two other mental development centers, in village Talmaza, district Ștefan Vodă and in Soroca town. "The alert life in which we live requires us to constantly adapt to new requirements, trades, jobs. That is why it is very important for a young person to have skills, not just knowledge. I didn't have this opportunity as a child, but I want to offer this chance to some children and teenagers ", says the founder of the intelligence factory.

NICU STIRBET, young entrepreneur: "After applying at the "Youth Entrepreneurship Support Fund from Cahul", to obtain financial support, I managed to expand my range of services by purchasing 6 kayaks and a canoe, to offer tourists ecological tours on Beleu Lake. Thanks to the financial support provided by the EU and Sweden, through the East Europe Foundation, we managed to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic more easily. I was very impressed by the support I received from AO Perspectiva. It was a logistical aid that contributed to the reinvention of the business model during the pandemic. Kayak tours saved us from several losses due to the pandemic. I can mention with certainty that it is a premiere for the region and an ecological innovation for the Prut Meadow. We can offer now ecological tours that do not pollute nature ".

Bridging Outcome 2.2.1. Youth groups in targeted regions successfully galvanize youth participation in decision-making and local development

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
# of youth groups [youth banks] that demonstrated successful youth mobilisation and empowerment initiatives	8	12	11	11 (on track)
# of boys and girls in targeted communities mobilised through the youth banks' initiatives	15000	30000	67,759	128,536 (target exceeded)
# of boys and girls actively involved in civic associations	121	200	2574	2574 (target exceeded)
# of Youth Entrepreneurship Funds created*	0	10	10	10 (target achieved)

By the end of 2020, the YouthBank Moldova network comprised 10 YouthBanks, coordinated by 165 young people from 11 localities, including Bender. Involvement in YouthBank offers young people experiences and responsibilities that foster lifelong community involvement. It combines a number of the elements that are currently being strongly promoted in policy initiatives.

In 2020 the 10 youth banks supported by EEF were managed by 165 young boys and girls from 11 regions including the Transnistrian region. These enthusiastic boys and girls supported 138 youth led initiatives (i. e. creating a playground, greening up the school, improving educational conditions, establishing a youth council) that mobilized around 35000 young boys and girls. Examples of youth mobilisation projects supported in 2020 are provided below:

With Youth Bank support, a youth group in Slobozia village managed to set up a playground for children and youth.

In Răscăieți, the youth group mobilized to ensure that school students can wash their shoes in safe conditions, especially during rainy days.

In Antonesti village, the youth group planted a green hedge close to the stadium.

In Talmază village, young people sought to promote national values traditions. The youth groups acquired national costumes and organized various cultural activities that promote cultural values.

Youth engagement across the YouthBank network has spiked from approximately 1000 youth in 2013 to more than 102,759 youth by the end of 2020. YouthBank has had direct impact on the lives of over 120,000 young people from more than 120 rural and urban communities across the country. From just 121 young people involved in civic associations in 2016, there were 3476 young people by the end of 2020.

Equality and non-discrimination are among the key principles guiding all youth banks' activities. Thus, at least 45% of the current Youth Bank members are from vulnerable groups (ethnic and linguistic minorities, people with precarious social and economic backgrounds, deprived rural areas, children of migrant parents, young people with disabilities as well as young people living in the security zone along the Nistru river).

Bridging Outcome 2.2.2. Local authorities and businesses support youth mobilization through direct funding and enabling environment.

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
% of funds raised by youth banks from local authorities	30%	50%	70%	70% (target exceeded)
% of funds raised by youth banks from businesses	10%	20%	15.5%	17% (below target)

Local authorities are increasingly supporting the YouthBanks. This high share is the result of youth groups activism, transparency and continuous engagement with local public authorities.

Local authorities are increasingly supporting the Youth Entrepreneurship Funds. The Ialoveni district Council contributed financially with 70 thousand MDL for financing the business of young people from the localities, but EEF contributed with 50 thousand MDL in 2020. The share of LA contribution in Ialoveni is 140%. Within Youth Entrepreneurship Fund Varnita the share of LA contribution is 3% (LA contributed with 10 thousand MDL for awards to young entrepreneurs). The medium of LA contribution in these 2 projects is 71.5%.

YouthBanks made significant efforts to fundraise from private sector actors. Thus, by the end of 2020, the share of funds raised from businesses increased from 18.4% in 2019 to 20.4% in 2020.

Bridging Outcome 2.2.3. School Teachers in targeted localities successfully implement joint activities with their peers from the EU

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2018	Cumulative (4 years)
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% of teachers who implemented joint student education projects with EU counterparts	65%	80%	-	82% (target achieved in 2018)
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This bridging outcome was achieved in 2018, with around 82% of teachers who implemented joint student education project with their counterparts from the European Union. Since 2019 EEF is no longer implementing the *Eramsus+* project funded by the European Union.

In partnership with CPD, EEF made significant strides to increase capacity of higher education institutions to prevent and combat sexual harassment. To date, five partner universities were selected to be involved in project activities: Academy of Economics Studies from Moldova, Technical University, Free International University of Moldova, "Alec Russo" State University of Balți, and „Ion Creanga" State Pedagogical University of Chisinau. Jointly with five selected universities, CPD developed in a participatory manner the working methodology on preventing and combating sexual harassment phenomenon. The proposed methodology includes recommended interventions to prevent and combat sexual harassment in educational institutions, quality standards for each prevention and investigation of sexual harassment cases, evaluation tools of internal policies and procedures that address sexual harassment in universities.

Outcome 2.3. Vulnerable men and women in targeted communities benefit from employment opportunities and better social services

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
% of vulnerable men and women in targeted communities satisfied with the available employment opportunities [created by the project]	0	increase	100%	According to the Independent Evaluation Report, most beneficiaries were satisfied with the provided opportunities
% of vulnerable men and women in targeted communities satisfied with the quality of available social services [created by the project]	Low	increase	100%	According to the Independent Evaluation Report, most beneficiaries were satisfied with the provided opportunities

Inclusion continued to be a third rate priority among the three successive Governments during 2017-2020. Development policies adopted by national and local authorities used a “trickle down” approach that was blind to the barriers faced by the vulnerable and resulted in better opportunities for the well-off. The poorest groups were left behind and were kept, by means of targeted payments, just above the poverty threshold.

Against this background, EEF interventions focused on most vulnerable people, primarily persons with disabilities, Roma, people in rural areas, and people with low education.

By 2020 EEF improved the livelihoods of people in over 100 communities. Due to EEF development interventions, 131 persons from vulnerable groups (rural women, rural youth, older people, persons with disabilities) were employed. Over 1000 benefitted from vocational orientation and training. Over 4000 disadvantaged people benefitted from better social services.

Bridging Outcome 2.3.1. Selected grass-roots NGOs in targeted communities are successfully running social enterprises to address the situation of vulnerable groups

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
# of NGOs that demonstrated employment or improved access to services of vulnerable persons through social enterprises	9	20	17	26 (target exceeded)
# of women's NGOs that demonstrated employment or improved access to services for women	0	3	14	26 (target exceeded)

NGOs are increasingly contributing to the employment and assistance of vulnerable groups through social enterprises. In 2020 continued to support the establishment of 17 Social enterprises established during the previous years throughout the country, including 7 in the Transnistrian region. To date social enterprises contributed to the creation of 55 new jobs. A number of 719 persons from vulnerable categories, including children, benefitted of free of charge services/products out of the income of social enterprises.

Most of the established social enterprises (12) are run by women. In this way, the project contributes to women's economic empowerment.

The Hometown Association "Ciorești - bastina mea" association applied at East Europe Foundation for the creation of social enterprise. By creating a multifunctional centre which contains a social canteen, public laundry services, and hall of ceremonies/trainings as a social enterprise, new jobs and opportunities for integration of vulnerable groups from Ciorești have appeared. During the project implementation about 25 people have had the opportunity to receive lunches at the social canteen three times per week. In the first year of functioning the association registered the LLC and had the highest turnover among 15 created social enterprises.

Due to Pandemic caused by Covid-19 the social enterprise suspended its activity for five months. The implementation team suffered from depression and fear to continue the activity. The staff needed a lot of time to re-adjust its activity during the pandemic situation. EEF staff had several discussions with the implementation team and suggested a couple of solutions. After a period of thinking, the implementation team decided to provide catering services instead of restaurant and ceremony services. EEF approved the budget reallocation and approved the purchase of a car necessary for catering services. This action was a right one which could be proved by the highest turnover also in the second year of activity among the created social enterprises. The turnover of "Taina Codrului" constitutes 33 111 euro for the period of one year and a half. In addition, the "Taina Codrului" obtained the status of "social enterprise" from the National Commission for Social Entrepreneurship.

With funds leveraged from OAK Foundation, EEF made efforts to empower and improve access to services for victims of domestic and gender based violence. Through 14 sub-grants to specialised NGOs, the following results were achieved in 2020:

1500 victims or potential victims of domestic violence or gender based violence received legal consultations

2000 victims benefitted from psychological consultations – 2000;

500 survivors of domestic violence or gender based violence received various types of support services;

60 survivors of domestic violence or gender based violence were employed– 60;

95 children received various support services;

120 protection orders issued pursuant to primary and qualified legal aid provided to victims;

5 grantees developed the Child Safeguarding Policy.

EEF also worked to and to build movements around gender equality and *Fatherhood* concept. Through a combination of five sub-grants and operational activities the following results were achieved:

2 900 000 young parents were informed and aware of the importance of gender equality norms, fathers' involvement and the equal distribution of family responsibilities and combating existing stereotypes;

277 435 persons were motivated to positively change behaviour in their families under the influence of 35 multimedia materials;

15 000 parents, both mothers and fathers were trained in implementing positive parenting programs with the focus to reduce the phenomenon of violence;

15555 people trained on the online platform "Paternity School";

170 community leaders have improved their knowledge to engage in the exchange of good practices related to the household and childcare responsibilities;

500 fathers became closer to their children due to participation in the Fathers Clubs.

Bridging Outcome 2.3.2. Prioritised social service providers (NGOs) in targeted communities are successfully using participatory tools to assess and improve quality of social services for the vulnerable and the dispossessed

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
# of NGOs that successfully engaged the vulnerable women and men in assessing and improving the quality of community services	0	10	10	39 (target exceeded)

# of vulnerable women and men in targeted communities involved in joint assessment and design of community services	0	5000	3746	8138 (target exceeded)
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In 2020, EEF supported 10 NGOs to implement projects related to increase the life quality of vulnerable groups in Moldova:

An alternative consultancy service was provided for over 300 Diabetes type 1 patients. For the first time it was provided according Dose Adjustment for Normal Eating was DAFNE - Dose Adjustment for Normal Eating.

Over 100 parents of the Children with Down Syndrome have been helped during a year with trainings and materials necessary for their children. A videocartoon was elaborated to change public stereotypes about the Children of Sun.

Over 290 children, 30 of whom are children with special needs from Hirtopul Mic village benefitted of a newly equipped play and sports yard in the school.

197 children, victims of domestic violence received psichological support to overcome certain problems. 87 % of them increased their self-confidence level.

Children with special needs from Telenesti (45), now have access to a community center equipped with Snoezelen therapy.

Over 20 children with Autism have been trained in how to obtain life skills and how to better integrate in social life.

Initiated dialogue and identification of 3 preschool education institutions requesting to be trained by the Voinicel team in Methods and empowerment of children with special needs and social inclusion (St. John Paul II, Chisinau, Institution of Early Education, Chisinau, Grenoble, Institution for children with special needs, Rîșcani)

The 4th edition of the initiative – La La Play Voices - gathered together 100 children and adolescents, girls and boys aged 12-17 years from all rayons of the Republic of Moldova, even during the pandemic period. Over 444 children from 32 rayons from Moldova came to participate at the national casting for the VoicesThey are supported to improve their music capacities and self confidece through trainings and concerts at local and national levels.

With funds leveraged from the EU, EEF enabled 29 NGOs to provide social services for vulnerable groups. Five Local Partnerships for Inclusive Marketplaces, established in Căușeni, Taraclia, Cahul, Gagauzia, Călărași, assisted the employment of 19 persons with disabilities. Other 152 persons with disabilities received consultation and vocational training for inclusion in the labour market.

Ecaterina is a Roma woman was selected as a beneficiary for assisted employment within “NGO Prima” from Taraclia. She is married, has 2 children and her husband is unemployed. She worked very few times in her life and is not adapted neither economically nor socially. Ecaterina had average working skills, tried to work at the District Hospital in Taraclia, but, being discriminated, did not work for long time and was not officially employed even. Discouraged, during 2 years she did not attempt to find a job. Also, she could not express her opinion; could not express her choices and turned her

choices into desired actions and results; did not want to make any effort to escape from vulnerability; she couldn't think that she could influence any decision.

During the project implementation Ecaterina successfully was employed at "Пламъче" Center as a cleaning persons. She takes care of all plants and pets in the center. After employment, was assisted at the workplace, consulted, encouraged and motivated; she was trained how to fulfill the duty obligations, how to communicate with the beneficiaries of the Center where it is employed, she was trained in the safety of work, human rights and non-discrimination; the employer was consulted and was encouraged to employ her.

Ecaterina fulfills her duty obligations, has adapted to the community, is motivated to work, works with diligence and pleasure. In the Rehabilitation Center, where she is employed now, the manager and employees are very satisfied with the quality of the work she does, because she is active and responsible. With the regular support of the social worker and Ecaterina's desire to be appreciated and respected by the members of the society, she has changed her life and become more self-confident.

During 2017-2019 EEF supported establishment of 13 CSO Consortia among CSOs from both banks of Nistru and joint implementation of social projects that facilitated experience sharing among communities and better services for vulnerable groups including women from rural areas, children with disabilities, rural youth. In addition, 11 social service provision grants improved services for thousands community members.

A waste ramp was built in Goian village, serving as a tool for waste management for around 100 citizens of the locality.

In Rîbnița 30 detainees received psychological and legal help (restoration of documents, housing, advise, etc), 10 of these being placed on the labour market. A special support tool for this target group was elaborated in 100 exemplars, namely a navigator that was shared with the relevant state institution.

In Bender (beneficiaries were both from Bender and Tiraspol) special equipment enabled 37 children with disabilities to get involved in sports (bocha) activities, creating sports clubs that will perform in the future.

In Tiraspol (beneficiaries are from Tiraspol, Slobozia and Bender) A community centre is offering services for vulnerable young people. To date 80 disadvantaged members of the community were trained on life skills and self-advocacy on human rights. Other 22 beneficiaries increased knowledge in life skills, while the project succeeded in introducing in the special schools curricula the course "Equal opportunities" in life skills modules.

In Tiraspol, Roma people from the left bank of Nistru river received 114 legal consultations, 68 Roma women are capacitated on how to find a job, 27 Roma people were hired, 7 obtained a special work permission. The project team elaborated a report on the State of Roma People on the left bank of Nistru river that was sent to the referent ministries for feedback.

In Bender a club for solitary and vulnerable mothers was created, that offered psychological and legal support for over 50 moms, 18 of which found a job.

In Tiraspol nine persons with disabilities were trained in the field of IT and provided psychological support. As a result, three trainees were hired to create an online design portal, in this way contributing economic empowerment of the vulnerable.

In Tiraspol 50 young vulnerable people increased their knowledge in social entrepreneurship, while 10 mini businesses received support to start operating.

In Bender 141 elderly lonely people received psychological support by finding them a pet company (from the dogs and cats shelter), 70 % of them reducing their level of stress. 80% of them mentioned the high level of satisfaction. 256 sheltered animals were sterilized, 196 were placed in homes.

623 legal counselling services were provided in various fields, and clients of the Legal Assistance Centres improved their path towards solving a legal personal matter. Another 127 legal consultations were provided by the mobile legal visits in Dubasari and Grigoriopol and 151 consultations were offered through on-line legal help.

347 pupils of the high schools in Grigoriopol and Dubasari increased their legal literacy through legal special classes. Other 40 youth representatives participated in legal thematically based events – legal quests

Bridging Outcome 2.3.3. Public authorities in targeted communities support the social inclusion of vulnerable groups

Performance indicators	Baseline (2016)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2020	Cumulative (4 years)
% funding allocated by local authorities in targeted localities for the initiated or improved social services	0%	5% increase	~20%	20% (target exceeded)

EEF and its partner CSOs continued the constructive dialogue and collaboration with local authorities. This assertive dialogue to continuous support and co-funding of various CSO initiatives. To date the financial and in-kind contribution of local authorities for improved social services is estimated at 20%.

CROSS- CUTTING ACTIVITIES

EEF Program approach

EEF continued the program approach, consisting of operating programs and strategic grant-making. Operating programs maintained the organisation’s focus on advancing human rights, empowering organised rights-holders and strengthening linkages between civic groups, constituencies, public authorities. They did so in the following ways: (i) EEF built capacities and supported initiatives of NGOs that empower and engage people in decision-making; (ii) EEF served as a convener among stakeholders on an issue, bringing various groups together to improve collective action; (iii) through operating programs, EEF leveraged the small achievements of individual activities and programs by many actors for long term, sustainable impact in the following fields: civil society participation and oversight, inclusive elections, building bridges between NGOs on both banks of Nistru River; fostering economic and social development; (v) the EEF operating programs sought to increase synergies between impact outcomes and corresponding components.

To contribute to the achievement its mission, EEF supported demand-driven projects that fall within EEF’s programmatic or mandate areas. EEF program officers guided organizations through the grants process, helping them to build and mobilize constituencies, run public outreach campaigns and strengthen the organizational administrative systems.

In pursuing its development goal, EEF in Moldova followed its commitments to integrating protection of the environment, human rights, gender equality, European integration in its work.

Protection of the Environment

Environmental stewardship is a shared responsibility for protecting the environment and minimizing the impact of our daily decisions. The Foundation is committed to reducing its environmental impact and ensuring environmental sustainability.

EEF developed its Foundation's Environmental Policy. The document promotes innovative approaches to environmental action among its staff, grant beneficiaries and local legal entities. The Policy provides guidance to employees on environmental policies and green office concept and serves as a reference guidebook on general rules and regulations on Foundation commitment to contribute to a better environment. The Environmental Policy was approved by the EEF Board of directors on 27 November 2019. The policy was subsequently operationalised in 2020 through annual action plans with corresponding baselines, targets and performance indicators.

Human Rights Based Approach to Development

EEF made progress in integrating human rights in all its priorities. Supported NGOs increasingly advocated for more inclusive policies and services. In their policy advocacy efforts, these groups continuously used the international human rights standards and principles of information, participation and empowerment, equality and non-discrimination, accountability. Under the first Civil Society Participation and Oversight Program EEF managed to resume the work of the Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination. As part of the Free, Fair and Inclusive Elections program, the consortium of NGOs on inclusive elections (EEF, Tarna Rom, Pilgrim Demo and CPD) made significant strides to advance the rights of under-represented groups in compliance with the international human rights commitments of Moldova and joint ODIHR/OSCE and EU election observation reports. Grass roots CSOs actively mobilised people to demand from local authorities more inclusive services and fairer allocation and distribution of available resources. EEF also paid due attention to empowering youth and vulnerable people in communities through social enterprises, business development start-ups.

Gender equality

EEF worked to ensure that women, as much as men, have a real voice in all institutions, so they can participate equally with men in public dialogue and decision-making and influence the decisions that will determine the future of their families and countries. In 2020 EEF actively scaled up the partnership with CPD with the view to mainstream gender equality in all interventions. As part of the Youth and Education Program, partners made significant strides to prevent and combat sexual harassment in five Moldovan Universities.

Within the Free, Fair and Inclusive Elections Component, due attention was paid to assessing the training needs of women who stood as candidates and of elected women. The finding will inform the subsequent empowerment activities targeting elected women.

With funds leveraged from OAK Foundation EEF scaled up work to (i) advance the fight against domestic violence, especially in the regions where such services do not exist and (ii) increase engagement of fathers in child-care activities.

Specific interventions were made to ensure equal opportunities for girls and boys in the Youth Banks projects. Due to more targeted interventions, the percentage of boys engaged in youth steering committees increased from 25% in 2015 to approximately 40% in 2020. Confidence building programs are also sensitive to gender equality.

Jointly with CPD, EEF identified gender-based inequalities and formulated proposals for addressing them. The second edition of the Equality Gap Report, issued in 2019, identified inequalities in living livelihoods, health and labour market along such criteria as gender, disability, age, Roma.

EEF made expedite efforts to implement the integrated gender equality perspective within the Strategic Plan 2017-2020, in compliance with the gender audit, conducted in 2016. Every component of the Strategy combined the three gender mainstreaming approaches: integration of the gender dimension, special measures, and policy dialogue for gender equality. The Strategic interventions mainstreamed gender equality, and referred to the following two types: delivery of gender equality results through project components; facilitation of the transformation of gender norms and stereotypes through projects.

Contribution to EU Integration

Through this action EEF contributed to bringing the Republic of Moldova closer to the EU. The Consumer protection program also made reference to EU standards in force.

The commitment to eliminate stigma and discrimination towards particularly marginalized individuals and groups represented integral part of the EEF efforts. The EEF employee, delegated to the Moldovan Equality Body for a second mandate in 2018, continued to actively examine complaints on discrimination and contribute to the adoption of corresponding decisions and recommendations.

Inclusion of the Transnistrian region

Building on linkages with other projects and initiatives, EEF made efforts to expand its development efforts in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova. In 2020 EEF up-scaled support of the two Youth Banks established in the region in 2018, advanced the social entrepreneurship model, promoted consumer rights, and worked to build vigorous watchdog NGO coalitions.

Accessibility of information for ethnic minorities

EEF made efforts to ensure equal opportunities and accessibility of information for NGOs that represent Russian speaking ethnic groups. To this end, the Terms of References and most important information related to grants' competitions and other opportunities were translated into Russian and widely disseminated through the NGO networks in Gagauzia, Transnistria, Taraclia, Balti and other regions.