



EAST EUROPE FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019

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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, 2019 to December 31, 2019. 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 authorities¹ and (ii) observance of human rights by public authorities (see more detailed information in the section below).² 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, in 2019 EEF actively leveraged funds from various donors, amounting to around 3.7 million USD. The cumulative funds raised to date for the implementation of the EEF Strategy exceeds 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 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:

Over 160 CSOs representing the vulnerable actively advocated for greater decisional transparency. They analysed 36 public policies and monitored implementation of 10 public policies from the perspective of inclusion of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. In 2019 they managed to influence nine public policies (25% of policies influenced to date).

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 40 trained community journalists started to post articles about the issues faced in their communities.

Over 30 CSOs, united under the umbrella of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections, demanded fairer and more inclusive 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 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).

¹ Based on the data collected from the Barometer of Public Opinion conducted regularly by the Public Policy Institute

² As measured by the latest perception study on human rights observance conducted by OHCHR and People Advocate’s Office.

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:

In 2019 over 5000 mobilised men and women in over 74 communities increasingly scrutinised the work of public authorities, demanding greater transparency and accountability along with fairer allocation of available public resources for basic social rights.

Five Consumer Assistance Centres (in Balti, Cahul, Chisinau, Rîbnița and Tiraspol) assisted over 4000 people consumers to defend their consumer rights with around 82% of complaints successfully addressed.

At district level, around 55 CSOs members of three district participation council steadily advanced transparency and responsiveness of local authorities towards community needs. Since their creation, these CSOs analysed over 500 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 84 decisions of district authorities were influenced from the perspective of equality and inclusion.

Empowered youth in 11 targeted communities increasingly contributed to local development through implementation of youth development initiatives that contributed to the mobilization of over 67000 young people.

10 Youth entrepreneurship funds contributed to the creation of 66 youth led businesses and 81 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.

EEF made significant strides to support advocacy, community mobilisation and service delivery efforts of national and grass-roots CSOs. During the reporting period EEF managed 138 grants to Moldovan NGOs, using the joint contribution of Sweden, European Union, Swiss Development Cooperation Agency, and Oak Foundation. Apart from the grants, EEF-M provided technical assistance to relevant partner NGOs and facilitated cooperation and dialogue between civil society and the government. During the project implementation, EEFM 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, UNICEF, EBRD, and others.

Challenges faced in 2019:

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 worsening 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.

Parliamentary elections were assessed by the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections as “unfair and partially free”. Major shortcoming included pressure on public employees, and indications of vote buying and abuse of public resources for partisan electoral aims.³ Local elections that took place in October and November 2019 were assessed by the Coalition as “generally free and partially fair”. Coalition observers noted a number of shortcomings, including violation of gender placement requirements, accessibility issues, transparency of campaign funding.⁴ During both election processes 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.

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, district authorities from Căușeni conducted public consultations on the budget for 2019. In Soroca the local public authorities started to livestream the district council debates. District authorities in Căușeni and Cahul 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 2019.

Despite the achieved progress with over 17 social enterprises established in 2019, 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 2020:

The activity of new Government installed after 12 November 2019 is expected to accelerate in 2020, especially prior to Presidential Elections. CSOs will have to react to increasing emerging policies and draft laws.

Similarly, at the local level, the number of emerging public policies will increase. Local Public District authorities in Soroca and Cahul will start the elaboration of new Socio-Economic Development Strategies for the upcoming four years. District authorities in Căușeni will most probably amend the current strategy. CSOs will need to actively engage in shaping these policies from the perspective of inclusion.

Due to the fact that the Government, Presidency and Parliament have a closely aligned policy agenda, which in effect speeds up the adoption of laws and amendments, with little consideration to consultations and other due diligence process. CSOs will have to find new ways to adapt to the situation while demanding observance of transparency requirements.

Since there are mixed signals from the current Government regarding the role of civil society, EEF will closely monitor the developments regarding the draft law on non-commercial organisations and inform partner CSOs and development partners. CSOs will be further empowered to immediately react to attempts to discredit civil society or limit CSO participation in decision-making process.

In targeted communities, the full participation infrastructure is coming to fruition with DPCs influencing the decisions of district authorities, CSOs implementing specific mobilization, service delivery and social entrepreneurship programs, community groups implementing community project initiatives and influencing local authorities. Increasingly, EEF and its strategic

³ <https://alegeliber.md/en/declaratia-coalitieii-alegerii-libere-si-corecte-fata-de-alegerile-parlamentare-din-24-februarie-2019-2811.html>

⁴ <https://alegeliber.md/en/pozitia-coalitieii-fata-de-alegerile-locale-generale-din-20-octombrie-3-noiembrie-2019-2886.html>

partners will have to provide individual support to grass-roots' activists and CSOs to make sure this infrastructure is functional and more sustainable.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
% of respondents who believe that policy-making is responsive to the needs and interests of the people	10%	Positive trend	23.9%	23.9%
% of respondents who believe that human rights are respected in Moldova	3%	Positive trend	5%	5%

By December 2019 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 moving to the right direction increased from 14,5% in the beginning of 2019 to 23.9% in December 2019.⁵

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.⁶

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, the positive trend in popular confidence may be inter-connected with the effective departure from politics of the PDM leader, investment of a new Government in June 2019, initiated reforms in the area of justice along with the declared commitment to improve cooperation with civil society. 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.

⁵ www.bop.ipp.md

⁶ <https://www.md.undp.org/content/dam/moldova/docs/Human%20Rights%20Perceptions%20Study%202018%20ENG.pdf>

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
Civil liberties and political rights score for Moldova	3.0% (~48%)	Positive trend	60/100 (~60%)	60/100 (positive trend)

Despite some improvement of civil and political rights score for Moldova in 2019, 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 60/100. Compared to the previous year the score increased by two points. To a great extent the score increased due to (i) the ability of opposition parties to defeat the ruling PDM party in February’s elections and (ii) because political decisions were to a large extent taken within formal government structures following the June departure of wealthy power broker from politics and from the country.⁷

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	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
CSO Advocacy Indicator	3.2	Positive trend	3.1	3.1 (positive trend)

The CSO Advocacy Indicator for Moldova remained unchanged in 2019 after a slight increase from 3.2 to 3.1 in 2018. The CSO Sustainability Index, published by USAID in November 2019, mentions that “CSOs in Moldova are becoming more mature and active in monitoring policies and holding authorities accountable”.⁸

EEF played a significant role in achieving and maintaining this positive results. In 2019 it enabled over 160 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.

⁷ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/moldova/freedom-world/2020>

⁸ <https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/resource-csosi-2018-report-europe-eurasia.pdf>, p. 145

Despite this progress, it is worth mentioning the worsening environment for CSO operation experienced during the last years. The Freedom House Report, cited above, points to some signs of shrinking space for CSO operation in Moldova. The document acknowledges CSOs' relationship with authorities is still tense following authorities' verbal attacks on the sector, and the central public administration (CPA) is no longer as open to cooperating with civil society as it was in previous years. These tendencies have also been signalled by EEF and other actors in position papers and Monitoring Reports on attacks on CSOs.⁹

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
# of prioritised public policies influenced by NGO Platforms (with more than 30% of CSOs recommendations accepted)	3	8	9	29 (target exceeded)
# of prioritised public policies influenced by NGO Platforms related to gender equality*	1	2	1	2 (target achieved)

In 2019 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 over 160 CSOs, contributed to assessing progress registered by duty bearers and identifying corrective measures for scaling up policy implementation. To date, CSO networks managed to shape nine public policies from the perspective of inclusion and equal opportunities. The networks also conducted advocacy and mobilisation work in 15 selected localities. Their advocacy work resulted in better opportunities for youth, Roma, older people and persons with disabilities.

The youth platform monitored the local budgets for youth sector in 10 regions. The monitoring report revealed that local authorities from Căușeni allocated least resources for youth compared to other districts. These findings were used by the youth advocacy group and by the District Participation Council from Căușeni in their advocacy for boosting financial resources dedicated to the youth sector. As a result of these joint efforts, the district authorities increased the budget allocations for youth sector by around 90%.

*Previous report on monitoring the implementation of the **strategy of youth sector** (2018) showed that national authorities failed to establish the youth agency that should be responsible for the implementation of youth programmes. The findings of the report were used to mainstream this priority in the Action Plan of the Government led by Maia Sandu. After the fall of the Government, the youth platform worked with the subsequent Government led by Ion Chicu and managed to keep this priority in the new Action Plan of the Government.*

*AOPD analysed the Draft Action Plan of the Government for 2019-2020 from the perspective of the **inclusion of persons with disabilities**. The Platform formulated 28 recommendations covering education, healthcare, accessibility, disability evaluation and determination, social security, social services, accessibility. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research accepted 6 recommendations covering education. Due to the collapse of Maia Sandu's Government after losing a no-confidence vote on 12 November 2019, these recommendations have not been implemented.*

⁹ https://crjm.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-03-20-timeline-atacks-OSC_2018_final-ENG.pdf

AOPD analysed the draft Regulation of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection on distribution of rehabilitation tickets for **older persons and persons with disabilities**. The platform recommended, inter alia, to increase transparency of distribution of these entitlements by setting up an atomised electronic system and ensure proper disaggregation of data based on type of disability, sex, age, and other characteristics of beneficiaries. These recommendations were accepted by the Ministry.

As the Government started to effectively exercise its mandate only in the middle of June 2019, the draft Action Plan on the implementation of the National Employment Program was initiated only in July 2019. The **Active Ageing Platform** analysed the draft policy and submitted 12 recommendations on the empowerment and inclusion of older people. Recommendations on introducing lifelong learning activities for adults and older people were accepted by the line ministry.

One of the problems identified by AOPD members was the limited **access to phone services for persons with disabilities in residential institutions**. This situation leads to their deprivation of communication with their relatives and friends. The platform submitted joint position papers and joint requests to solve the issue. As a result of the advocacy efforts, the National Agency for Social Assistance included in the 2020 budget financial resources for organising phones and conversation spaces for persons with disabilities living in residual institutions.¹⁰

Another barrier flagged by AOPD was the lack of **accessibility for persons with disabilities of specific public institutions that provide spa-sanitary and recovery services**. To address this problem, AOPD members conducted a repeated assessment of the accessibility of the “Speranța” sanatorium and submitted the assessment and monitoring report to the National Agency for Social Assistance. By the time of submitting the report, the Agency was in process of making the necessary accessibility adjustments, in this way addressing the problem.¹¹

In Carabetovca village, Basarabeasca rayon, the members of the platform for active ageing advocated for **improving the quality of roads and sidewalks**. This issue is hampering mobility and socialisation of older people, access to emergency health care and other social community services. As a result of sustained advocacy efforts, including public events and official letters, the local authorities adopted the regulation on the reparation of roads and sidewalks with corresponding funds. The rehabilitation of roads and sidewalks will improve the access to goods and services for around 368 older people living in the community.

In Ocnîța, the youth network advocated successfully for the **inclusion of a co-management commission into the development strategy of the town**. The co-management commission will contribute to increased consultation and participation of youth at all stages of the public policy including implementation and oversight.

This result inspired the youth group from Drochia who are currently advocating for a similar approach in the Development Strategy of Drochia town. A draft Co-Management Regulation is pending approval of the Drochia District Council.

Additional youth empowerment activities and advocacy for the establishment of co-management commissions were conducted in Basarabeasca, Gagauz Yeri, Edinet and Căușeni.

The **“Roma Voice” Platform mapped the communities where no Roma community mediators were hired, at odds with the provisions of the Roma Action Plan**. Previous analyses conducted by the platform revealed that Roma community mediators made significant strides to improve Roma access to education, social services, social security. The findings of the mapping results were

¹⁰ <http://aopd.md/index.php/2015-12-15-14-02-58/comunicate-de-pres/78-acces-mbun-t-it-la-servicii-de-asisten-telefonice-gratuit-pentru-persoanele-cu-dizabilit-i-din-centrele-de-plasament-temporar-ncep-nd-cu-2020>

¹¹ <http://incluziune.md/ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Raport-accesibilitate-11.10.19-Sanatoriul-Speran%C8%9Ba%E2%80%9D-decembrie-2019.pdf>

repeatedly brought to the attention of Ministry of Finance and the respective local public authorities, including Chisinau municipality (6 units), Ceadir-Lunga town, Cania village, Cantemir district, Ghiliceni village, Telenesti district. As a result, for 2020 the Ministry of Finance committed to make targeted transfers for all the communities that need community mediators, 54 in total. The platform will monitor the situation to ensure that hiring process does is fair and does not discriminate against Roma.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
# of think tanks' research and analyses used by NGO Platforms to advocate for reforms	3	10	6	9 (on track)
# of gender impact assessments conducted and used by NGO platforms	1	2	4	4 (target exceeded)

EEF facilitated transfer of at least six comprehensive analytical policy documents produced by think tank organisations, to targeted NGO platforms. The evidence-based research and analyses produced by CPD, Promo-LEX, ADEPT were used by four platforms to advocate for reforms in various areas, including (i) inclusive employment, (ii) equal pay for equal value of work, (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 the amendments to the Electoral Code and review from a gender perspective of the implementation of public policies in the area of employment, healthcare, social protection.

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.¹²

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
% of CSOs amendments to the law on transparency in the decision-making process adopted by the Government	~30%	~60%	48.3%	48.3%

With EEF support, NGOs and their produced over 40 policy analyses with at least 200 corresponding recommendations. Supported NGOs are continuously working with decision makers to promote approval of formulated recommendations.

¹² 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?pag=news&id=984&rid=1484&l=en>

EEF and partner NGOs examined observance of transparency requirements, articulating gaps and advocating for corresponding recommendations. A study commissioned by EEF in 2019 reveals the key implementation gaps, including but not limited, to: late publication of draft public policies and normative acts, lack of ex ante analyses, failure to publish all draft normative acts, insufficient number of consultations, failure to publish minutes and results of consultative meetings, lack of system of remedies for violations of the law on transparency in the decision-making process, outdated consultative platform www.particip.gov.md.¹³ Corresponding policy recommendations were developed and submitted to the State Chancellery in October 2019.

Despite the above-mentioned hurdles, in 2019 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 March 2020, around 48.3% of recommendations, submitted by civil society and other interested parties, were accepted by decision-makers in 2019.¹⁴

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
% of respondents who believe they have access to unbiased information	42.5%	Positive trend	60.5%	60.5% (positive trend)

The share of people who trust the media increased in 2019. According to the Barometer of Public Opinion, the cumulative share of respondents who mentioned that have they have confidence “to a certain extent” and “to a great extent” increased from 45.7% in November 2018 to 60.5% in December 2019.

Arguably, 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 invested in June 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	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
% of complaints on media misconduct submitted by people pursuant to awareness campaigns	35%	60%	80%	50% (on track)

With EEF support in 2019, the Press Council has effectively reached out to media consumers, encouraging them to report cases of media misconduct. EEF supported the secretariat of the

¹³ 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

¹⁴ State Chancellery (2020). Report on Ensuring Transparency in the Decision-Making Process by the Central Public Authorities, p. 9, available online at https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/raport_narativ_2019_completat.pdf

Press Council to ensure the exercise of its key responsibilities: examining complaints, working with media to promote the media ethical standards.

The Press Council examined 35 complaints against 56 media institutions from all over the country. 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:

*Following the repeated appeal of the **Press Council** to the Audiovisual Council regarding the serious infringements of the children’s rights by the Prime TV in the show “Vorbeste Moldova (Moldova Speaks)”, the Audiovisual Council changed its previously adopted decision and sanctioned Prime TV with 10.000 MDL.*

*After the decision of the **Press Council** in case of publishing by the portal Jurnal.md of the article: “Fighting between girls at a high school in the capital: one of the girls was chosen with a cerebral concussion”; the editorial office withdrew the images in which the personal data were presented of the alleged minor victims.*

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	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
# of people who used the community journalists' platforms to comment public policies or report abuses, disaggregated by sex	0	10000	38000 monthly viewers	38000 monthly viewers

With EEF support, the web portal www.stiripozitive.eu has created, placed and promoted a total of 124 media topics, one third out of 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 38,533 in 2019.

Pursuant to consultations with partner organisations in the field, in 2019 EEF developed the web platform for community journalists www.jurnalist.md. Building on the linkages available in various projects, to date EEF trained around 40 men and women, prospective community journalists, to report various issues in their communities. The platform is expected to come to fruition in 2020 as more and more community journalists will start to report issues or comment the draft decisions of national or local public authorities.

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	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
# people engaged in critical debates	1000	5000	9000	~20000 (target exceeded)

In 2019 the European Interactive Centre from Comrat actively 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 form of debates, exhibitions, drawing contests. More than 20 young people have expanded their knowledge of European processes through discussions and active involvement in solving social

problems. At least 15 representatives of NGOs and university employees, expanded knowledge in the field of affordable grant programs and the features of applying for these programs. More than 500 students and teachers participated in the training and expanded their knowledge in the field of European education and mobility programs. At least 100 children had the possibility to open up their minds through a drawing contest on the EU and its values. Hundreds of inhabitants, including representatives of civil society, students, local public authorities, journalists participated in the conference in honour of Europe Day.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
% of respondents who believe that elections were free and fair, disaggregated by sex	11.8%	Positive trend	28.9%	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 2015 to 28.9% in 2019.¹⁵ The sex disaggregated data reveal that women are more sceptical about the conduct of free and fair elections (27.6% women to 30.4% men). Some possible explanations may include the hate speech targeting women candidates during the Parliamentary and Local Elections along with the “blind eye” turned by the electoral authorities to the placement errors admitted by political parties in candidates’ lists for the position of local councillors during the local elections held on 20 October 2019.

It is worth mentioning that this positive trend may not be fully attributed to EEF interventions. Other factors that should be considered include but are not limited to: (a) the improved performance of the Central Electoral Commission after the departure of the DPM leader; (b) the improved climate of holding local elections noted by OSCE/ODIHR and domestic observers; (c) the improved climate for the judiciary after the investment of the Government in June 2019.

During this electoral year, 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. Over 100 empowered representatives of most vulnerable and under-represented groups stood as candidates during the local elections due to EEF interventions. CSOs representing Roma, women and persons with disabilities actively monitored elections from the perspective of inclusion and provided corresponding recommendations.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 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	9	9 (target exceeded)

Prior to the Parliamentary Elections EEF enabled the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections, comprising over 30 members, to resume its activities and advocate for free, fair and inclusive elections. The Coalition issued critical position papers before, during and after the elections and

¹⁵ www.bop.ipp.md

actively informed citizen, authorities and other relevant stakeholder about the identified issues and needed changes.

EEF supported NGOs to design and implement five advocacy campaign 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:

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	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
% court decisions that use international and OSCE/ODIHR standards	0%	20% increase	0%	0% (target is not yet 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.

Bridging Outcome 1.3.3. Political parties are more inclusive towards women

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
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# of political parties that observed the 40% gender quota, along with the placement requirement	1	3	all	All (target exceeded)
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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.

Overall, all electoral candidates made efforts to comply with placement requirements. However, detailed data collected by Promo-Lex and CPD pointed that a significant number of candidate's lists (around one third) were registered by electoral bodies, despite errors committed with regard to placement requirements.

*Even with the derogation applied for the 2019 local general elections, **the placement requirements increased the number of women candidates on the lists to 43.1% in rayon and municipal councils and to 45.6% in local councils.** As a result of 2019 local elections, the share of women in rayon councils is 28.73% (~10% increase compared to 2015). Similarly, in local councils the share of women constitutes 36.5% (~6% increase compared to 2015).*

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
% of polling stations accessible for persons with disabilities	15%	50%	45%	45% (on track)

The accessibility of polling station increased compared to 2016. In aggregate terms, the share of “partially accessible” (16%) and “accessible” (26%) polling stations increased from 15% in 2016 to 45% by 2019. The Monitoring Report issued by Promo-LEX report noted that most premises were not provided with a friendly infrastructure to a larger category of persons (persons with locomotor disabilities, older people, parents with babies in strollers or other category of persons with special needs).¹⁶

EEF played an important role to promote accessibility of polling stations. Efforts included, but were not limited to: (i) assistance provided to INFONET to pilot various accessibility tools and make persons with disabilities visible both as voters and candidates; (ii) awareness and advocacy campaigns conducted to promote accessibility; (iii) efforts to support monitoring of electoral processes and flag accessibility issues, taking into consideration both accessibility of infrastructure and information.¹⁷

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
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¹⁶ https://promolex.md/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/A4_RF_ALG_2019_ENG_web-1.pdf, p. 24

¹⁷ https://eef.md/media/files/files/raport-iii_-includiune-persoane-cu-dizabilitati-short_eng_9693798.pdf

% 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 ¹⁸	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%.¹⁹

The Equality Gap Report, conducted by EEF and CPD in 2019, reveals 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 waged workers in rural agriculture is decreasing as well.

The Equality Gap Report also points that incomes are likely to increase in the near future due to recent social payment increases that are targeted to low income working people in rural areas and pensionaries. However, it is not clear if these measures are financially sustainable.²⁰

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;
- ✓ Empowered youth in targeted communities are steadily contributing to local development and seeking business development opportunities;

¹⁸ Proxy indicator added in 2019

¹⁹ <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/moldova/docs/Human%20Rights%20Perceptions%20Study%202018%20ENG.pdf>, p. 32

²⁰ 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>

- ✓ 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	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 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% 74 initiative groups 5115 women and men mobilised	30%

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, in 2019 EEF in partnership with CPD set up inclusive initiative groups in 74 communities. The initiative groups mobilised around 5115 women and men to monitor the work of local public authorities and demand better entitlements and services. 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	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 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 2019, 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, 17 CSOs advanced the implementation of grass-roots initiatives, mobilising over 4800 persons in 20 communities. As part of their initiatives, six participation mechanisms were institutionalised, 46 local action groups were set up and initiated dialogue with local authorities for improved service delivery and more inclusive resources allocation. EEF and CPD made necessary preparatory work to enable additional 28 Local Initiative Groups (with a total membership of over 400 persons) to design and implement meaningful mobilisation efforts for improved participation and livelihoods.

Persons with disabilities demand access to personal assistants in Taraclia:

CSO “Prima” from Taraclia actively involved persons with disabilities in monitoring efficiency of national program on social assistance at local level. The report revealed that most persons with severe disabilities lack access to personal assistance services. Existent number of personal assistants is insufficient since 98 people with severe disabilities are still on the waiting list. Up until 2019, the Department for Social Assistance and Family Protection from Taraclia (DSAFP) covered only 22 personal assistants, who worked part-time (50% of daily norm) and could hardly provide required services up to 42 beneficiaries.

To address this issue, the local CSO and its constituents initiated multiple discussions and advocacy measures targeting the Head of DSAFP Taraclia, secretary of the district council, Head of district council’s finance department, as well as president of the district. On 12 December 2019, three people with severe disabilities and two members of the project team attended the district council meeting and further requested to increase the number of personal assistants. The meeting resulted in the decision of the district authorities to allocate 8 more units of personal assistants in the DSAFP budget. As a result, another 15 people with severe disabilities, or 57 persons in total will benefit now from the personal assistance services.

Strengthening responsiveness of local authorities in Cahul through participatory budgeting

The research conducted by “Pas cu PAS” CSO and its volunteers revealed a very low level of civic involvement and absenteeism. One of the causes identified by the group consists in the failure of the authorities to consult citizens during the budget elaboration.

Against this background, the CSO and its volunteers initiated the first advocacy campaign “implementation of participatory budgeting in the city of Cahul”. The group also assisted the municipal council to elaborate the draft regulation on participatory budgeting. The first attempt, prior to the local elections, was unsuccessful. The CSO and the group of young people did not give and up-scaled the advocacy campaign involving media, social networks and bi-lateral meetings with councillors. As a result, on 19 December 2019, the regulation on participative budgeting was unanimously approved as a public policy in Cahul municipality with a total budget of 1mln lei for 2020.

Empowered initiative groups in Pirlita and Solcani claim cultural rights and better infrastructure

CSO “Casa Sperantelor” works to organise and empower initiative groups in five communities from Soroca district. To date tangible results were achieved in two communities:

Pursuant to the training and empowerment work in Pirlita village, the initiative group brought to the attention of the local authorities the lack of an enabling environment for cultural activities, which is an important precondition for a cohesive society. The musical instruments of the local folk group were outdated and needed repair. Pursuant to the advocacy work the local council allocated 10000 MDL to buy equipment and resume the cultural activities.

In Solcani, the trained initiative group advocated for the reparation of the lot in front of the local gymnasium. The issue was articulated at the session of the local council. As a result, corresponding resources were allocated by the local council.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
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# of NGOs that demonstrated proper engagement of men and women in reporting food non-compliance with legal standards	3	6	5	5 (on track)
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CSOs from both banks are increasingly promoting empowering citizens to report cases of food products that do not comply with the minimum standards. Five Consumer Assistance Centres continued to operate in 2015 throughout the country, including two in Rîbnița and Tiraspol. Their work included awareness campaigns, primary and qualified legal aid.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
# of recommendations proposed by initiative groups and accepted by authorities ²¹	0	increase	17% (84/500)	17% (on track)
# of recommendations proposed by women's initiative groups	0	increase	5	5 (on track)

CSOs are more effective in shaping local public policies from the perspective of inclusion. In 2019, the 55 CSOs members of three District Participation Council (DPC) analysed over 500 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 84 decisions of district authorities were influenced from the perspective of equality and inclusion. Examples of influenced public policies or practices are provided below:

DPC Căușeni:

- Provided recommendations to District Council and influenced the Regulation on annual competition "the best entrepreneur of small and medium enterprises". DPC proposal to include number of employed persons with disabilities as an important criterion for selection was accepted by the district authorities.
- As a result of continuous advocacy efforts conducted by DPC members, two parking places allocated for vehicles adapted to needs of people with disabilities in the parking lot of Căușeni Multifunctional Centre;
- Members of the DPC Căușeni advocated for the reallocation of the amount of 26400 MDL, proposed by the District Council for celebration of the Christmas Party of the staff. The DPC proposed to use this amount in order to cover the needs of children from disadvantaged families. The proposal was ultimately accepted and implemented by district authorities.
- DPC Căușeni joined the efforts of the youth platform and advocated for increased budget allocations in 2020 for youth activities from MDL 40.800 lei to MDL 75.800. The recommendations were accepted by the district authorities.

DPC Soroca:

- DPC members identified and prevented a conflict of interest when Soroca District Council was about to appoint as board of directors some persons who were also managers of those public medical institutions, at odds with the provisions of the legislation in force.

²¹ Reflects the number of decisions influenced by CSOs (where 3 or more structural recommendations were accepted)

- Pursuant to a number of consultations with citizens, DPC Soroca successfully advocated to change the time of public hearings conducted by district authorities (to start at 12:00 instead of 10:00, as per usual practice). This is a reasonable accommodation that will facilitate citizen participation in public hearings;

- DPC Soroca signalled a fraudulent practice whereby the District Council was voting post-factum for some initiatives that were de facto already implemented. As a result, these practices stopped.

DPC Cahul:

A draft decision of the President of Cahul rayon on approving unique single financial aid to be paid from Reserve Fund of the Cahul rayon was approved in violation of the functional attributions, since the rayon president is not empowered with this right. Pursuant to the interventions and recommendations of DPC Cahul, this case was transferred to Cahul District Council, which has the appropriate competences.

DPC Cahul intervened by the district authorities to ensure that children with disabilities can benefit, on equal terms with others, from free vouchers to summer camps. As a result, 12 children with disabilities went to summer camps accompanied by personal assistants.

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

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 requesting 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	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
% of documented consumer complaints investigated by the consumer protection agency pursuant to CSO involvement	50%	80%	82%	82% (target exceeded)

Earlier monitoring efforts contributed to improved quality of dairy products. Based on last monitoring on dairy market conducted by EEF, a repeated laboratory testing was carried out. The results showed significant quality improvement of the dairy products.

In 2019 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 2018 to 520 in 2019. The complaints resulted in positive reactions from respective markets or consumer protection institution in approximately 82% of cases. Two Consumer Assistance Centres from Rîbnița and Tiraspol provided legal aid to 3171 consumers.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
% of youth in targeted localities who believe that community needs can be addressed through active youth participation	65%	Increase	80%	80% (target achieved)
# of youth led businesses created with project support*	0	10	66	66 (target exceeded)
# of new workplaces created by youth-led businesses*	0	10	81	81 (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.

EEF also empowered young people from an economic perspective. EEF leveraged funds from the European Union with the Economic and Social Development program. The raised funds contributed to the establishment 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 66 youth led businesses and creation of 81 new jobs.

Co-working spaces in Ceadir-Lunga: A valuable result was the creation of the co-working space in Ceadir-Lunga town within the business Incubator where a common space for potential entrepreneurs and self-employed entrepreneurs was refurbished. During the year of 2019 a number of 10 young people benefitted of co-working services and as well 25 hours of trainings were delivered in the co-working premises.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 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 2019, the YouthBank Moldova network comprised 11 YouthBanks, coordinated by 185 young people from 11 localities, including Bender and Dubasari. 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.

Youth engagement across the YouthBank network has spiked from approximately 1000 youth in 2013 to more than 67.759 youth by the end of 2019. 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 2574 young people by the end of 2019.

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).

YouthBank Ialoveni:

About 350 young people from 15 localities from Ialoveni district were actively involved in problem identification in their community and solving them through 40 community initiatives and projects, with a total budget of 307.000 MDL throughout 2019. It happened due to the Ialoveni YouthBank Program coordinated by "Eco-Răzeni" Association.

According to Sergiu Gurau, in 2019, the groups of initiative from Ialoveni district have developed sustainable partnerships with the local public authorities, educational institutions, public libraries, public associations and the business environment in the localities, thus, have managed to double-raise their grant value, obtained from East Europe Foundation.

Based on YouthBank international concept „all the young people, participating in the program, are trained and guided in the process of developing and implementing community projects. Thus, with the help of the YouthBank Program they advance skills of communication and self-confidence, teamwork, negotiation, financial management etc”. Lately, the acquired abilities enabled young people to implement 40 small initiatives and projects. Young people from Ialoveni district had the opportunity to organize their spare time usefully, being involved in various community activities. Thus, a modern mobile library was created in the district in 2019, an open-air cinema, several bike parks, a tourist club, a school newspaper, a painting club, a junior volleyball team, a house of volunteers, a debate club, a robotics club, etc.

The program is also special because it trains and develops capacities of the youth initiative groups, which manage to mobilize and convince the social actors to drive resources to small community development projects, said Mr. Gurau.

The total budget of the program in 2019 was USD 31.4 thousand, of which 49% was a grant offered by East Europe Foundation financed by Sweden, and the rest of the budget was the contribution of local actors: the Council of Ialoveni district – 213.000 MDL, local public institutions – 65.000 MDL, individuals and economic agents – 11.000 MDL.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
% of funds raised by youth banks from local authorities	30%	50%	81%	81% (target achieved)

% of funds raised by youth banks from businesses	10%	20%	18.4%	18.4% (on track)
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Local authorities are increasingly supporting the YouthBanks. The share of funds raised from local authorities in 2019 amounted to 81%. This high share is the result of youth groups activism, transparency and continuous engagement with local public authorities.

YouthBanks made significant efforts to fundraise from private sector actors. Thus, by the end of 2019, the share of funds raised from businesses increased from 15.5% in 2018 to 18.4% in 2019.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2018	Cumulative (3 years)
% of teachers who implemented joint student education projects with EU counterparts	65%	80%	-	82% (target achieved)

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.

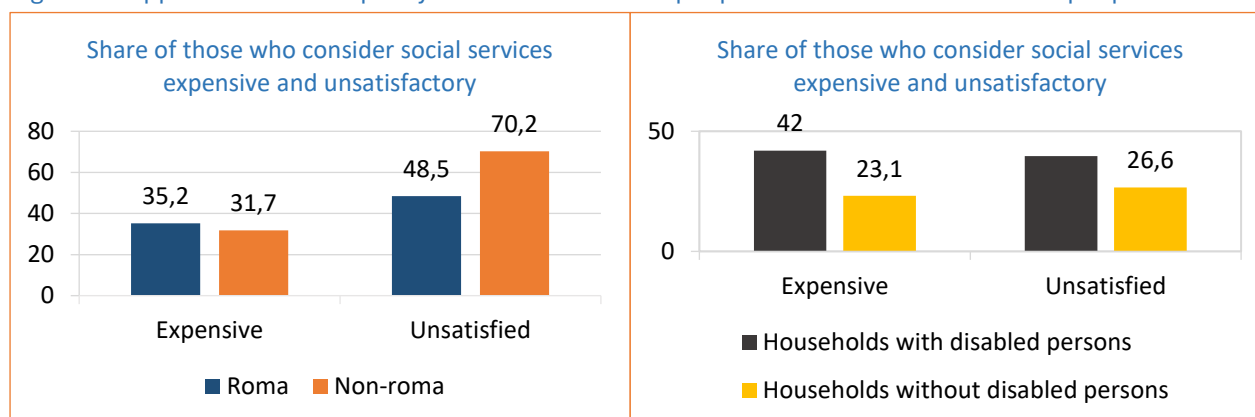
Outcome 2.3. Vulnerable men and women in targeted communities benefit from employment opportunities and better social services

Performance indicators	Baseline	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
% of vulnerable men and women in targeted communities satisfied with the available employment opportunities	0	increase	131 persons employed	Data shall be collected in 2020
% of vulnerable men and women in targeted communities satisfied with the quality of available social services	Low	increase	Data collection in process	Data shall be collected in 2020

According to the Equality Gap Report (2019), the quality of social services is low. The level of appreciation of the quality of social services is more critical in terms of price and satisfaction. Although most social services are free of charge or at a reduced price, a significant part of Roma households and households in which people with disabilities live are considered expensive, indicating rather related costs (transportation, travel time) to access these services. The significant share of people dissatisfied with social services, in fact, demonstrates the low level of services that are provided in the community or that the services accessible to certain households do not meet their specific needs.²²

²² 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?pag=news&id=984&rid=1484&l=en>

Figure 37: Appreciation of the quality of social services for people with disabilities and Roma people



Source: CBS-AXA survey conducted at CPD request, 2018

Inclusion continued to be a third rate priority among the three successive Governments during 2017-2019. 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 2019 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 vulnerable persons 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	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 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 of women	0	3	12 Social enterprise led by women	12 (target exceeded)

NGOs are increasingly contributing to the employment and assistance of vulnerable groups through social enterprises. In 2019 EEF supported the establishment of 17 Social enterprises 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 based on the income of social enterprises.

Most of the established social enterprises (12 out of 17) are run by women. In this way, the project also contributes to women’s economic empowerment.

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	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 years)
# of NGOs that successfully engaged the vulnerable women and men in assessing and improving the quality of community services	0	10	29 (5 inclusive marketplaces, 13 consortia, 11 social service grants)	29 (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)

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.

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	Target 2020	Achieved in 2019	Cumulative (3 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

In 2019 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.

In 2019 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 is operationalised 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 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. EEF actively engaged with CPD to mainstream gender equality in all interventions. As part of the Free, Fair and Inclusive Elections Component, 101 women from the regions with least representation of women have been empowered to stand as candidates in the upcoming local elections. Assistance was provided to the Gender Equality Platform to actively fight violence against women during the elections and raise public awareness of gender equality issues. EEF also leveraged funds from OAK Foundation 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 2019. 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 combines the three gender mainstreaming approaches: integration of the gender dimension, special measures, and policy dialogue for gender equality. The Strategic interventions mainstream gender equality, and refer 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. In 2019 the EEF's partners in the Free, Fair and Inclusive Elections component actively interacted with the Venice Commission and made reference to the Moldova's commitments under the EU-Moldova Association Agreement. 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 201, 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 2019 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.

