



EAST EUROPE FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021

CHISINAU - 2022

Contents

ACRONYMS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT OUTCOME 1: VULNERABLE WOMEN AND MEN ENJOY CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO EXERCISE DEMOCRATIC INFLUENCE	6
OUTCOME 1.1. ORGANISED MEN AND WOMEN INFLUENCE TARGETED PUBLIC POLICIES	6
OUTCOME 1.2. VULNERABLE MEN AND WOMEN ENJOY AND PROMOTE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ACCESS TO UNBIASED INFORMATION	14
OUTCOME 1.3. EMPOWERED WOMEN AND OTHER UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS (PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, ROMA AND OTHER ETHNIC MINORITIES) BENEFIT FROM FREE, FAIR AND INCLUSIVE ELECTIONS.	15
PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT OUTCOME 2: VULNERABLE MEN AND WOMEN IN TARGETED COMMUNITIES ENJOY SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	17
OUTCOME 2.1. VULNERABLE MEN AND WOMEN IN TARGETED COMMUNITIES SUCCESSFULLY ADVOCATE FOR RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE AND ADDRESS BASIC NEEDS (E.G. WATER, SANITATION, EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE, STREET LIGHTING)...	19
OUTCOME 2.2. BOYS AND GIRLS IN TARGETED COMMUNITIES ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS.....	26
OUTCOME 2.3. VULNERABLE MEN AND WOMEN IN TARGETED COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND BETTER SOCIAL SERVICES	31
CROSS- CUTTING ACTIVITIES.....	35
FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2021	37

ACRONYMS

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
LPA	Local Public Administration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SE	Social Enterprise
YB	Youth Bank
District	Administrative territorial unit, in Romanian "raion"
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following narrative report reflects the progress under the EEF Strategy “Engaging Citizens, Empowering Communities” 2021-2025 (hereinafter the Strategy) from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. The Strategy is funded by the following donors: European Union, Sweden, SDC. The report substantiates the results achieved during project implementation according to the results framework.

Rooted in the principles of human rights and gender equality, the strategy aims (**at the impact level**) to improve policy making and fulfilment of human rights of most vulnerable women and men in Moldova. The strategy entails two **impact outcomes**: (i) vulnerable 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 has three outcomes and corresponding bridging outcomes.

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

176 CSOs representing the vulnerable actively advocated for greater decisional transparency. They analysed over 50 public policies and monitored implementation of nine public policies from the perspective of inclusion of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. To date they managed to influence 12 public policies, that is around 24% of targeted policies to date.

EEF contributed to scaling up the work of the Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination that brings together 22 most active human rights CSOs and civic activists. They advocated successfully for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and OP CRPD. Advocacy efforts continued to strengthen protection against discrimination in the country.

225 community journalists were trained in the area field of community journalism. Members of the community developed and posted 203 articles reflecting community issues that should be addressed by local and national authorities.

36 CSOs, united under the umbrella of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections, demanded fairer parliamentary elections, reacting to abuses or misconduct of electoral authorities, electoral contestants, law-enforcement bodies.

Secondly, **vulnerable men and women 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:

At district level, around 60 CSOs members of three district participation councils steadily advanced transparency and responsiveness of local authorities towards community needs. By the end of 2021 they progressively engaged in policy dialogue with local authorities, analysed 171 draft decisions and managed to influence 48 decisions.

At community level, 18 grass roots CSOs in targeted districts advanced the implementation of comprehensive mobilisation and advocacy plans. Within the project, the grants' beneficiaries established and strengthened 59 initiative groups, acting in 38 localities.

Empowered youth in 10 targeted communities increasingly contributed to local development through implementation of youth development initiatives that contributed to the mobilization of over 1392 young girls and boys.

EEF supported the establishment of 15 Youth entrepreneurship funds that will contribute to the creation of youth led businesses and new jobs, with focus on NEET youth.

21 CSOs were equipped with tools to assess and conceptualise services targeting NEET Youth; 15 CSOs were enabled to pilot innovative youth services conducive to meaningful social inclusion of NEET youth.

In partnership with “LalaPlay Voices” CSO, 100 talented children from all over the country improved their knowledge, attitudes, confidence in their own strengths and visions of personal and professional development at the Voices Summer Camp.

Six business hubs were set up and capacitated to provide quality services for SMEs;

EEF made necessary preparatory work to support the establishment of at least 22 new work integration social enterprises targeting most vulnerable women and men.

EEF made significant strides to support advocacy, community mobilisation and service delivery efforts of national and grass-roots CSOs. In 2021 EEF managed 93 grants to Moldovan NGOs, using the joint contribution of Sweden, European Union, Swiss Development Cooperation Agency (SDC). Apart from the grants, EEF provided technical assistance to relevant partner NGOs and facilitated cooperation and dialogue between civil society and the government. 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:

In 2021 the project faced a number of challenges. The pandemic continued to show a socio-economic dimension. The state of emergency, strict containment measures, economic lockdown and travel restrictions affected most vulnerable groups of the society. Uncertainty caused by this fact, had negative impact on all levels of decision-making and advocacy efforts of project partners and beneficiaries were constantly adjusted to implement their advocacy agenda on-line.

During the second semester of project implementation the “gas crisis” emerged, raising financial pressure on economy, increased prices for main food products, as well as high inflation rate - all had an extremely negative impact on economic growth and wellbeing of most vulnerable groups.

At the time of writing the report Moldova was facing the refugee crisis. On February 24, 2022, Russian Federation began a military invasion of Ukraine. The war in Ukraine has forced people to flee their homes seeking safety, protection and assistance. The Republic of Moldova was among the first countries to receive refugees from the Odessa and Vinnitsa oblasts. By March 17, 2022, more than 350,000 Ukrainian refugees had entered Moldova, which is the highest number of refugees per capita of any country, and Moldovan authorities are struggling to deal with the massive influx of people. Most refugees are women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the increased inflation and invasion of Ukraine (as of February 2022) will have lasting negative impact in terms of increasing poverty, reducing access to

education of children from vulnerable groups, widening labour market inequalities and ever-increasing unaddressed healthcare needs.

Against this background, EEF continuously adjusted to new circumstances and swiftly respond to emerging needs. Adaptation measures included (a) constant and repeated advocacy efforts on bringing needs of vulnerable on top-priorities list and promote systemic changes; (b) better targeting of public policies; (c) constant monitoring on recommendations formulated in previous periods; (d) adapting a proactive, rather than reactive way of promoting rights of vulnerable; (e) 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.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
Civil liberties and political rights score for Moldova	3.0% (~48%)	Positive trend	62/100 ¹

In 2021 the civil and political rights score for Moldova increased with one percentage point (from 61/100 in 2020 to 62/100 in 2021). The slight increase in the scoring is due to the fact that early parliamentary election held in July 2021 were administered under a reformed legal framework and featured fewer irregularities than in previous years.

Despite some improvement of civil and political rights score for Moldova in 2021, the country is still rated by the latest Freedom House Report as “partly free. Democratic governance is hampered by a number of 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.

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 through the community journalism project;
- ✓ United CSOs demanded fairer and more inclusive elections, reacting to abuses or misconduct of electoral authorities, electoral contestants, law-enforcement bodies;

The detailed progress towards outcomes is substantiated below.

Outcome 1.1. Organised men and women influence targeted public policies

Performance indicators	Baseline (2019)	Target 2025	Achieved by 2021
CSO Advocacy Indicator	3.1	Positive trend	

¹ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/moldova/freedom-world/2022>



The CSO Advocacy Indicator for Moldova remained unchanged in 2021. According to the report, collaboration between civil society and public authorities was characterized more by ad hoc partnership activities to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic than by a prepared, structured, and agreed-upon advocacy agenda.²

EEF played a significant role in achieving and maintaining these positive results. In 2021 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.

Bridging Outcome 1.1.1. National authorities adopt and implement more inclusive public policies in a transparent manner

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
% of CSOs recommendations accepted	~25%	35%	24%
% of recommendations accepted on gender equality	~25%	35%	24%
% of draft public policies consulted with civil society	48.3%	60%	Data collection in process

By the time of writing the progress report, the State Chancellery has not published yet the 2021 Report on ensuring transparency in the decision-making process. It worth mentioning that according to the observations of the supported CSO platforms in shaping public policies from the perspective of inclusion, progress is rather modest. National authorities often neglect transparency requirements while inclusion continues to be a third rate priority.

With co-funding leveraged from SDC, in 2021 EEF increasingly empowered CSOs representing vulnerable groups to shape public policies from the perspective of inclusion of most vulnerable women and men. Four targeted CSO networks bringing together 176 NGOs of Roma, persons with disabilities, older people and youth finalized implementation advocacy cycle for 2021.

During the reporting period these CSO platforms influenced around 24% of targeted policies. Due attention was paid to policy oversight, with 9 monitoring reports developed with corresponding recommendations to scale up policy implementation. Members of the networks made strides to solve specific issues faced by vulnerable groups in 26 selected localities, mobilising over 1263 people (892 F / 371 M). Their advocacy work resulted in better opportunities for youth, Roma, older people and persons with disabilities.

Examples of most recent policies influenced by the CSO networks are provided below:

Mainstreaming rights of people with disabilities in the Government Action Plan 2021-2022:

*Further to advocacy efforts taken by members of the **AOPD platform**, the Government Action Plan adopted several amendments, becoming more sensitive to needs of people with disabilities, particularly: (i) elaboration of specific regulations, instructions and guidelines to ensure access of persons with disabilities to special quality medical services on a non-discriminatory basis, as well as prevent disability; (ii) development and approval of the monitoring mechanism on 5% quota in the*

² <https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/csosi-europe-eurasia-2020-report.pdf>

employment of people with disabilities; (iii) enhanced Regulation on dual education and occupational standards to diversify educational offer for people with disabilities, to meet the demand of the labor market; (iv) development of normative framework and budget allocation to ensure provision of assistive visual equipment and communication technologies for visually impaired and associated persons.

Rights of elderly in public policies on preventing and combating violence against women:

Members of the **Active Aging Platform** mainstreamed rights of elderly, particularly, women in the public policies on combating and preventing violence, including, domestic, since, at this moment, national and local campaigns do not target older women, do not outline their profile and do not develop key messages focused on this category of victims. In addition, cases of violence against older women and men remains low in the official reporting, though older women are at higher risk of being abused and they are less likely to report violence than other age groups. As result, recommendations of the Platform members were partially accepted, such as commitment to include older women as a target group for information / awareness campaigns, dissemination of information materials) and commitment of the authorities to adjust the system to the needs of the elderly was obtained.

Inclusive, Roma-sensitive public policies:

Members of the **“Roma Voice” Coalition (CVR)** mainstreamed rights of Roma in multiple public policies at national level. CVR promoted inclusion and Roma sensitive approach to legislation on (i) prevention and combating trafficking of humans - further to recommendations of the Coalition, Roma mediators were included into capacitation action plan/ thematic trainings on monitoring, combating and preventing trafficking of human beings from Roma communities and implementation of Roma sensitive activities from the Action Plan was facilitated by involving CVR and ANMC; (ii) Employment Program, where Roma Coalition formulated recommendations on actions specific to Roma group; (iii) National Statistical System 2022-2030, where CVR is a member of the working group and promotes the collection of disaggregated data on the enjoyment of social and economic rights by Roma.

Mainstreaming rights of youth as part of #VoceaTinerilorContează (#VoiceofYouthMatter) campaign:

As part of wide advocacy efforts on promoting rights of youth, members of the Platform re-launched #UndeiAgenția campaign, initiated #Tinerii sunt capabili doar să planteze copaci?, Tineri din Moldova #PentruDrepturileTineretului and other advocacy campaigns to bring youth on priorities list of the Government. As part of these efforts, the youth platform actively demanded Media to ensure adequate coverage of youth issues. Despite the Government’s acceptance of many recommendations formulated by the youth group, the implementation of most youth-sensitive issues, including actions under Government Action Plan “Moldova Vremurilor Bune”, is still pending.

Strengthening participation of youth in decision-making:

Rights of students and pupils to freedom of speech, opinion and participation in decision-making was consolidated by launching Pupils Council (Consiliul Elevilor) and Council of Students in Technical Vocational Education. Further to recommendations promoted by constituents of the Youth Platform, the newly approved Regulation on Youth Councils provides for: (a) Active participation of students in decision-making; (b) Supervision of students’ rights; (c) Insurance of diversity and inclusion.

Mainstreaming Roma Rights in the Government Action Plan:

Members of the Roma Coalition contributed to elaboration of Government Action Plan 2021-2022. As result, recommendations mainstreamed in the Action Plan included were: (1) creation of medical services in localities with compact Roma population; (2) facilitation of extended education program in primary and secondary schools; (3) provision of targeted support (financially and geographically) to enrol children into preschool education; (4) expanding the network of Roma community mediators in localities with dens Roma population ; (5) facilitation of employment for Roma people with incomplete schooling.

Output 1.1.1.1 Targeted NGO platforms representing vulnerable groups are more inclusive towards local NGOs and actively advocate for design and implementation of inclusive public policies

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
# of prioritised public policies influenced by NGO Platforms (with more than 30% of CSOs recommendations accepted)	29	50	12
# of prioritised public policies influenced by NGO Platforms related to gender equality	2	20	2 (gender pay gap, sexual harassment)
# of prioritised public policies influenced by the Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination	0	10	2

In 2021 four CSO networks representing Roma, persons with disabilities, older people and youth monitored implementation of nine selected public policies from the perspective of inclusion. The key findings are outlined below:

National Action Plan on the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities for 2017-2022, Objective 1 “Improving access of people with disabilities to social services at local level” (with focus on Orhei district):

The biggest challenge for 2020 in implementing activities under Objective 1 of the public policy implementation, was the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant part of activities was postponed or even cancelled. Because of insufficient financial resources new social services were not developed, but those existing were difficult to maintain or improve. However, due to collaboration of local authorities with CSOs, five social services such as community house were developed and 29 young people with disabilities were deinstitutionalized. Out of 6 actions foreseen in the action plan for 2020, 4 have been completed and 2 are in progress.

National Action Plan on inclusion of People with Disabilities for 2017-2022, Objective 3 “Increasing access to quality medical and rehabilitation services for people with disabilities”:

In 2020, very little progress has been made towards ensuring accessible quality medical and rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. A considerable reduction in state support was registered on supply to people with disabilities who require continuous and expensive treatment. Beneficiaries mostly managed on their own, purchased assistive equipment and expensive medicines, as well as paid for diagnostic services by themselves. Social support services to children with disabilities, such as early intervention in rural area, sanatorium rehabilitation and recovery were practically stopped. Out of 11 actions foreseen in the action plan for 2020, only 2 have been completed, 6 - in progress and 3 – not implemented.

Action Plan 2020 on implementing National Program on Mental Health 2017-2021:

Monitoring findings show that the level of social acceptance of people with mental health deficiencies, as well as the tendency of non-discrimination is relatively high. However, the tendency to social exclusion of people with mental health problems is still from medium to high. In districts where comprehensive community mental health services were piloted, the population is less reluctant towards people with mental health issues. Despite taken measure as part of National Program, mental health is still stigmatized and people with mental health issues tend to confess on their problems first to a professional, then to family and, at last, to employer. Again, a low degree of stigma is demonstrated by the population in the pilot districts, where people agree to accept (48%) a person with mental health problems in their immediate vicinity. Still, out of 26 actions planned, 9 have been completed, 17 are still in progress.

Monitoring report on the Law no. 547/2003 on social assistance to older people:

At the beginning of 2021, 22.5% of the total population in Moldova represent people aged 60+ and this number is constantly growing. In the last five years, the share of elderly aged 70-74 increased significantly, from 13.0% in 2017, to 19.0% in 2021. In this regard, a major challenge is the current state of the social protection system for the elderly, in particular ensuring that the right to social assistance is respected. In 2020, circa 2 thousand social workers provided free home care services to 17.5 thousand beneficiaries, including 14.4 thousand elderly people who have reached retirement age (82.4%). Although social benefits target a large proportion of older people, the programs are not targeted at the most vulnerable. Social services for the elderly have not received enough attention and funding, they are fragmented and sporadic. In recent years, social services have evolved continuously, but not uniformly. Since local public authorities tend to set their social priorities without needs assessment and are guided by the political agenda and available support from external donors. This resulted in major differences in geographical distribution of services between districts, weak links between supply and demand and poor correlation of provided social services and distribution of elderly in need (who live below the threshold of absolute poverty).

Evaluation report on social services provided to elderly (Law No 547/2003):

Mapping of social services for elderly in 3 districts under evaluation revealed insufficiency of social services for this group of beneficiaries. Current supply of social services available at the local level does not cover the needs and fails to respond effectively to growing trend of vulnerability of the elderly during the COVID-19 pandemic: about 57% of the elderly reported their struggle to cope with loneliness, 29% - cannot afford buying basic personal protective equipment, older women are victims of gender-based violence, with some being exposed to multiple abusers in the same household, and 50% of them would not report the violence. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic negatively influenced accumulation of financial resources to Population Support Fund and, respectively, the minimum package of provided social services has been affected. As result, financial resources for some services were reduced, other services were suspended or even closed.

National Strategy on strengthening interethnic relations from the perspective of youth:

Around 21 per cent of the activities planned in the National Strategy on strengthening interethnic relations target young people. One of the most relevant activities is organization of the state language study courses for the foreign language population. Only 1800 young people benefitted from the Romanian courses, and 868 children aged 5-6 years - from simultaneous learning of Romanian and Gagauz.

A shortcoming of the strategy is that funding of the relevant required costs depends on the available budget and can be covered from: 1) the state budget; 2) external assistance. In addition, no clear objectives are formulated with tailored and measurable indicators and financial coverage. Moreover, the strategy on strengthening interethnic relations for 2017-2027 does not contain objectives and actions dedicated exclusively to young people.

Evaluation and monitoring of the national program on alcohol control for 2012 – 2020:

Most young people tasted alcohol for the first time at the age of 08-10, believing that man can drink as long as he controls his actions. Drinking 10 glasses of wine would be normal for most of them. 28% of 11-year-olds, 43% of 13-year-olds, 73% of 15-year-olds, and 82% of 17-year-olds have consumed alcohol at least once in their lifetime. Main causes of alcohol consumption among youth are stress or need to be part of the group. Despite the findings, the national alcohol control program for 2012-2020 foresees just a few specific indicators for young people and no specific measures for this age group. Information and awareness campaigns organized by authorities did not have a significant impact on young people, and amendments to the most important laws on marketing, advertisement and consumption of alcohol produced modest impact or remain ineffective for the issue. The major factor leading to the normalization of excessive alcohol consumption is positioning of these products as "social drinks" necessary for spending time in group, traditionalism and normal consumption of homemade drinks, indirect advertisement in media and low prices.

Impact of COVID-19 on the rights of youth:

The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on the rights of young people, particularly affecting the right to freedom of assembly and association, the right to education, social activism and freedom of expression. Mental health of young people, online violence and bullying; isolation and increased domestic violence were among most problems faces by young people as result of pandemic. However, when their rights are violated, young people mostly turn to their parents, teachers and friends. The state is not perceived as a duty-bearer by youth, who tend to consider that authorities did not get involved enough and did not prioritize the youth sector, generating a chain of consequences at several levels.

Roma Action Plan 2022-2025:

Members of the "Roma Voice" Coalition provided inputs and recommendations to the newly elaborated Roma action plan for 2022-2025 as part of public dialogue initiated by the Government. Roma community mobilized their efforts to advocate for (i) Creation of the Roma Office; (b) Ensuring access of young Roma to budget-funded studies in educational institutions (one place with budget funding distributed to Roma outside the competition) and providing free accommodation in dormitories; (c) Promoting of dual education, where 5% of the total number of seats with budget funding are allocated for young Roma. Approval of the Roma action plan is still pending.

With funding from the European Union, in 2021 EEF supported four additional CSO platforms: (i) Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination; (ii) Platform on Business and Inclusive Employment (PBIE); (iii) Platform for Development of Social Entrepreneurship (PDSE); (iv) Trade Platform. Their advocacy efforts are presented in the section below.

Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination



Within the project "Advocacy for Better Protection against Discrimination", in 2021, EEF continued to strengthen the established Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination that brings together most active human rights CSOs. The strategic coalition conducted public actions, developed and submitted joint positions papers, monitored 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 22 CSOs

(14 CSO in 2021) 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. The Coalition successfully advocated for the **ratification of the Istanbul Convention and Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

As part of the work of the Coalition, nine CSOs representing vulnerable groups were enabled to empower victims of discrimination to document cases of discrimination and submit complaints. To date, over 20000 constituents were informed about the discrimination phenomenon, 448 were empowered to claim their rights to non-discrimination and 187 submitted complaints to local authorities or Equality Council.

A large part of the elderly people mentioned that their rights were violated when they addressed to the Territorial Social Insurance House for the recalculation of the pension. According to the provisions of Article 33, paragraph (41) of Law no. 156-XIV of 14.10.1998, the old-age pension is re-examined based on the length of service achieved after setting out the pension, only when the pension paid is lower than the average salary during the working period after the setting out of the pension. This provision is not favorable for a large part of retirees, who have worked for many years after the pension and cannot now benefit from the right to recalculation. For example, Mr. X, from Nimereuca village, with a total work experience of 60 years, who worked after retirement for 13 years, with a salary lower than the pension paid, was refused recalculation. Another example, Mrs. T., from Soroca town, who worked after retirement for 25 years and who contributed to the Pension Fund with more than 50,000 lei, was also refused recalculation. However, other persons, with an identical and even shorter length of service, whose pension paid was lower than the average salary for the years worked, benefited from the right to recalculate the pension. All who worked after retirement paid social security contributions during employment, but the legislator favours only those individuals who received a higher salary than the pension paid, thus discriminating individuals who received a smaller salary. Within the project support, the persons were empowered to claim their rights to non-discrimination and submitted complaints to the Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality. Now, the Equality Council is in the process of examining the complaint till April this year.

Andrei, a young man with disabilities, in a wheelchair, in search of a job, called one of the call Center in Tiraspol. The HR manager answered and conducted an interview, which Andrei successfully passed, being offered the job at the call Centre office right the next day after the interview. Andrei did not say anything about his locomotor disability.

Andrei arrived in a wheelchair to the company's office, however, when the director of the call center saw Andrei, he immediately informed Andrei that the Centre had some problems and the project is about to be closed, eventually Andrei being refused employment.

Within the project support, of the legal experts met with the director of the call Centre. During the meeting, the director was informed about the fact that the beneficiary of our project was legally refused employment, namely because Andrei had all the moral and business skills necessary for the work, nonetheless, the recruitment of employees continued. Moreover, the director of the Centre was informed of criminal liability for committing discrimination on disability grounds, and his actions will be brought before law enforcement bodies. Following these actions, Andrei was hired, thus his right to work being claimed.

Platform for Development of Social Entrepreneurship (PDSE)

The platform brings together 22 members: 14 CSOs, 4 social enterprises, two individuals, two coalitions (the Transnistrian Social Entrepreneurship Platform with 23 members) and National Platform of Entrepreneurs Women.

Platform on Business and Inclusive Employment (PBIE)

The National Business and Employment Platform was set up on 04 May 2021, consisting of an Executive Bureau -6 members and 4 regional groups with 52 members. The platform works to improve the business environment in Moldova. Its members identified the following priority needs of the business environment in the regions:

1. The Transnistrian Region

- a) the complicated procedure for starting the export, specifically: non-compliance by the producers with the established standards (Transnistrian, Moldovan and European standards);
- b) unfavourable conditions for lending to entrepreneurs;
- c) difficulties in identifying crowdfunding platforms;
- d) recruitment of qualified employees;
- e) difficulties in the accounting of individual entrepreneurs;
- f) difficulties in starting a business (lack of financial support).

2. Central Region

- a) low level of managerial skills of SME managers.
- b) reduced financial support for SMEs;
- c) high unemployment rate among young people/women;
- d) lack of motivation among young people to start a business;
- e) lack of efficient cooperation between the private and public sector;
- f) the need to provide advisory support for SMEs in order to promote services/products, staff qualification and company management.

3. Northern Region

- a) the difficulty of qualified workers on the labour market for the production sectors;
- b) the limited access of young entrepreneurs from urban areas to financing;
- c) the need to develop advocacy mechanisms for certain groups of entrepreneurs;
- d) improving the dual qualification system of specialists and increasing the interest in involving stakeholders (young specialists, entrepreneurs, state institutions, etc.)

4. Southern Region including ATU Gagauzia

- a) the need to increase the attractiveness of dual education, by improving the mechanisms and increasing the number of companies involved;
- b) improving the mechanisms for vocational guidance of young people and their employment;
- c) the need to expand the financing/subsidy programs of SMEs in the non-agricultural sectors.

Trade Platform

The Trade Platform coincides with the European Business Association (EBA), which is an independent, non-governmental organization, founded by 10 founders in 2011. It currently has 90 members, represented by the largest companies in the Republic of Moldova.

The Trade Platform aims to align the national economy and business legislation with EU standards and promote European values and best business management practices in the Republic of Moldova business community.

Within the Trade Platform EBA has worked and submitted 12 position papers (see Annex 26 EBA Position Papers), out of which 2 have been achieved and 10 are in progress.

As part of the programme, EEF sought to build the capacities of NGOs to conduct monitoring and advocacy work. Innovative approaches were explored to promote policy and behavioural changes from a human rights perspective, engaging a wide range of actors, including rights holders, MPs, Government representatives, justice sector actors, media, academia, political parties, trade

unions and other relevant actors. One of such initiatives was pursued in partnership with **Promo-Lex NGO** that implemented the project “Civic monitoring of the Police reform in Moldova”. The main objective of the action will be to strengthen the accountability, efficiency and transparency of the Police Reform in Moldova. Promo-LEX NGO coordinated the civic monitoring and evaluation of the undergoing reforms & activities, laid out in the current Police Development Strategy.

In 2021 Promo-LEX efforts have been concentrated on assisting the independent review of the public procurement monitoring and evaluation report for 2016–2020 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the General Police Inspectorate.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2020	Achieved in 2021
% of respondents who believe they have access to unbiased information	42.5%	Positive trend	50.3%

The share of people who trust the media increased in 2021. According to the Barometer of Public Opinion, the cumulative share of respondents who mentioned that have they have trust “to a certain extent” and “to a great extent” in Moldovan media increased from 42.5% in 2020 to 51.1% in February 2021.³

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 critical thinking, pluralism, citizens’ journalism and positive news. The progress to date is substantiated in the sections below.

Bridging Outcome 1.2.1. Public authorities and other community actors (businesses) increasingly take corrective measures to address issues reported by vulnerable women and men

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
# of issues solved through the intervention of local authorities	0	100	1
% of solved issues that were reported by women	0	increase	0

At this early stage of project implementation, modest progress is registered towards the achievement of bridging outcomes. As the community journalists will develop and post more articles reporting various community issues, the mediatic impact will increase along with the pressure on decision makers to solve specific issues.

Nicoleta Albot, a promising young woman in community journalism

The community journalist reported one of the most sensitive problems of the communities from the country – migration. She mentioned in one of her articles that the phenomenon of migration also affects the village of Mihăileni in Râșcani rayon. About 15.5% of the 4,200 inhabitants of the village are abroad. About 250 residents have chosen to go abroad permanently, and another 450 are temporarily out of the country, for work, according to Mihaileni Mayoralty.

³ <http://bop.ipp.md/>

Through a very ambitious initiative of the local initiative group “Tinerii Mihăilenari”, beside the interpersonal communication of those who leave, they maintain a dialogue with those who remain in Mihăileni, at community level. This is because the young people from the locality, together with the seniors, maintain a good communication of those from the diaspora on community web platforms.⁴

Output 1.2.1.1. Community journalists freely express their views on key public policies and report abuses through the Community journalists' platform

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
# of vulnerable men and women who used the community journalists' platforms to comment public policies or report abuses	10	1000	61

To advance community journalism EEF engaged in a strategic partnership with two CSOs specialised in the field: *Deca-Pres* and *Urma Ta*. The two NGOs worked to promote involvement of active citizens from the communities of six districts of the Republic of Moldova in the practice of community journalism on the www.jurnalist.md platform, providing media support to stimulate critical thinking in these regions.

Since the start of these initiative the following was achieved: three support materials for online training developed amongst which The Community Journalism Guide. The organisations trained 225 women and men in the field of community journalism.

To date 61 people are part of the network of community journalists of the www.jurnalist.md platform. Members of the community developed and posted 203 articles separately or jointly with the editor of www.jurnalist.md were published on the platform. Around 105 comments on the articles were approved on the www.jurnalist.md platform and on the Facebook page of the site. In addition, during the reporting period 58221 Facebook users have interacted with www.jurnalist.md

Outcome 1.3. Empowered women and other under-represented groups (persons with disabilities, Roma and other ethnic minorities) benefit from free, fair and inclusive elections.

Performance indicators	Baseline (2019)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
% of respondents who believe that elections were free and fair, disaggregated by sex	28.9%	Increase	27.1% (June 2021)

By the time of writing the report, the latest barometer of public opinion has not been released yet. According to the Barometer of Public Opinion held in June 2021, the share of people who believe that elections were free and fair decreased from 28.9% in 2019 to 27.1% in June 2021. This negative trend may be associated with the long political stalemate before the early Parliamentary Elections held and the political debate about the legitimacy of the Parliament elected through the mixed electoral system.

⁴ <https://jurnalist.md/2022/03/13/peste-15-din-locuitorii-satului-mihaleni-sunt-plecati-peste-hotare-tinerii-din-localitate-au-creat-si-mentin-punti-de-comunicare-cu-ei/>

In 2021, EEF continued to promote freer, fairer and more inclusive elections. With funding from Sweden, 36 CSOs members of the Coalition for and Fair Elections managed to jointly monitor the electoral processes, reacted promptly to abuses and demanded a more inclusive suffrage.

Bridging Outcome 1.3.1. Political parties are more transparent and more inclusive towards under-represented groups (women, Roma, persons with disabilities)

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
# of political parties that ensure a balanced representation of women and other under-represented in their internal governance	0	3	all

The share of women in Parliament substantially increased after the early elections. This is the results of 2019 amendments of the Electoral Code pursuant successful advocated by members of Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections and development partners. Data collected by CPD in 2021 pointed that all political parties complied with the 40% quota requirements during the Parliamentary Elections. As a result of legal amendments adopted by the decision makers in 2019, in 2021 Moldova registered the highest number of elected women MPs – 40,6% out of the total number of members of the parliaments. In 2020, the share of women was only 25%.

Bridging Outcome 1.3.2. Electoral commissioners and local authorities are more sensitive to the electoral rights of persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
% of polling stations accessible for PwD	45%	increase	Progress stalled
Ballots are accessible for minority groups	ballots are accessible in Russian	ballots are accessible for minority groups	Ballots were accessible in Russian

In 2021 EEF supported the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections to conduct democratic oversight of the early parliamentary elections held on the 11th of July 2021. After the early parliamentary elections its members concluded that “[e]lections took place in an environment marked by hate speech, biased coverage, suspicions of political influence on electoral bodies”.⁵

The Coalition also noted the persistence of discrimination against people with special needs, who continue to face barriers to physical and information accessibility. More 70% of polling stations were not accessible for the people with locomotor disabilities, the number of accessible polling stations being less than 1%. Except two electoral contestants who published their electoral manifestos in Braille, the other electoral contestants did not develop and disseminate materials and formats accessible to people with special needs. Only the CEC and CICDE developed and broadcast video spots with translation into sign language. At least three TV broadcasters – PRO TV, TVR and Moldova 1- provided sign language interpretation of the electoral debates.⁶

Output 1.3.1.1. NGOs of Women, Roma and PwD advocate for inclusive and fair elections

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
------------------------	-----------------	-------------	------------------

⁵

⁶ *ibid*

# 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	9	12	1
---	---	----	---

The Coalition increasingly advocated for fairer and more inclusive elections. Before and after the early parliamentary elections the members developed and widely disseminated seven position papers designed to address shortcomings identified during the monitoring process.⁷ Due attention was paid to the topic of inclusion, including persons with disabilities⁸ and diaspora.⁹

With funding from Sweden, the Coalition was enabled to map the activity of its 36 CSO members, identify funding gaps, communicate with donors and other relevant stakeholders. Due to the proactive approach of the Coalition, five out of nine initiatives that required support were accepted for funding by various donors which received the mapping document.

PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT OUTCOME 2: VULNERABLE MEN AND WOMEN IN TARGETED COMMUNITIES ENJOY SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
Equality Gaps in the following areas: living standards, health, employment	positive trend compared to 2017	Positive trend	Access to services – positive trend; Poverty – negative trend; Health – progress stalled; Employment – negative trend

The third Equality Gap Report,¹⁰ issued by the EEF and CPD during the last semester of 2021, revealed that inequalities slightly decreased in access to community services, healthcare coverage, participation and personal security. However, the analysis income inequalities increased along with the unmet healthcare needs of the most vulnerable groups. Key findings are substantiated below.

Income inequalities: Poverty is significant and increasing due to pandemic and insufficient policy response. By 2020, a quarter of the country's population was below the absolute poverty line (calculated at 1819.2 MDL in 2016) and 10% were in extreme poverty (with incomes below 1467.2 MDL in 2016). The most affected are people with disabilities and Roma, but for women with disabilities and Roma the situation is even worse. Poverty among children is worrying. By 2020, absolute child poverty has risen to 26%, in rural areas it is about 36 percent. Child poverty in cities has also increased significantly. (iii) The incomes of poor households have increased in 2020 by 10% compared to 2019, but the incomes of households with disabilities increased by only 4%.

Access to community services: access to community services has increased over the last decade due to ever increasing public investments. In case of public aqueduct networks and access to sewerage (sanitation) systems has increased by about 30pp, indicating a relative improvement in living conditions. Inequalities of access decreased. In 2010, access inequalities of bottom 20% of households on the income scale were 2.7 times higher compared to top 20% of households, in

⁷ Position papers of the Coalition are available online at <https://alegeliber.md/en/sectiune/alegeri-parlamentare-anticipate-2021>

⁸ <https://alegeliber.md/en/aliana-infonet-anunta-rezultatele-intermediare-ale-campaniei-de-educatie-civica-si-electorala-incluziunea-sociala-a-alegatorilor-cu-dizabilitati-intre-asteptari-barriere-obstacole-declara-3589.html>

⁹ <https://alegeliber.md/calc-recomanda-deschiderea-mai-multor-sectii-de-votare-pestre-hotare-3406.html>

¹⁰ Available online at https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CPD_MOLDOVA-INEGALA-2021.pdf

2018/2019 there were 1.6 times higher. The access inequality for solid waste management service decreased from 2.37 times higher for high income households in 2018 to 2.24 times in 2021.

Health: COVID-19 pandemic increased the unmet healthcare needs even though the share of men and women with access to a health insurance increased. Close 52% of women, 50% of Roma and 46% of households with persons with disabilities did access a health professional when they had health issues. The cost of services is one of the main factors preventing the population from accessing healthcare. 45% of households with people with disabilities give up request for medical services due to lack of money (for consultations, medicines, transport, informal payments etc.). A significant burden is also unofficial costs for medical consultation and treatment.

Participation: The level of participation has increased in recent years due to increased number of local initiatives and opening up of democratic and civic space. In 2021, every sixth person knew about his right to participate in the decision-making process. Particularly, the progress is more significant in case of women, where community mobilization initiatives, empowerment of women and young people strengthened good governance practices. However, although growing, the actual level of participation remains low. In 2021 close to 13% of the population participated in consultations of local budgets, elaboration of strategic plans, writing community-oriented projects. An increase of 5pp compared to 2018, could be explained by positive dynamics and increased level of trust towards LPA. Vulnerable groups, especially people with disabilities, elderly and Roma still have low level of participation and willingness to get involved in decision-making process.

Representation: Representation increased both at the local and national level dues to significant policy changes. The project addressed policy gaps in various areas that are crucial for social cohesion. The most tangible policy result achieved to date is the reduced inequalities in terms of representation of men and women in the local government. After the 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).

Personal Security: The trend of recent years reflects an improvement in perception of safety due to improved police interventions and increased CSOs interventions at the local level. Compared to 2018, less people indicate that they feel insecure. However, vulnerable groups still have the perception of a lower level of security. Persons from the most vulnerable groups (retired, with disabilities, Roma, women in rural areas with lower incomes) are at greater risk of situations that could harm their security, including in their own homes. The study shows that the incidence of violence is higher among Roma women and those of pre-retirement age (45-59 years). However, the willingness to report is quite low, especially in the case of Roma women, who, in fact, is the category most affected by domestic violence.

Labor Market: Inequalities in the labor market increased due to COVID-19 pandemic. The Gender Equality sub-index on Labor Market was 61 in 2017 (out of 100) in 2022 it decreased to 55. The employment rate of persons over 55 is decreasing, the employment rate of women with preschool children is decreasing as well although the overall NEET rate and the NEET are among young women decreased to a certain extent.

Social cohesion: registered only slight improvements compared to the previous years, mostly doe increased trust in public institutions and increased public participation. Analysis of comparative data for the previous years reveals a stagnation in the implementation of policy measures that would contribute to accelerating cohesion between members of the society, as well as between decision makers and citizens. Thus, in 2021, the value of social cohesion was 0,34 points, that is only 0,01 points increase compared with the previous year (2020).

Acceptance and prejudice: *The level of prejudice has not improved in recent years due to lack of policy response and increase hate speech by prominent politicians.* The social index in 2020 was 2.4. and did not change compared to 2018, the index sets the level of prejudice from 6 (very high prejudice) to 0 (lack of prejudice). Close to 40% of citizens would not agree to be neighbor with a Roma person and 70% would not accept an LGBT person to live in the same community.

In 2021 EEF and its partners made a tangible contribution to community mobilization for more inclusive policies, mobilising over 2500 women and men. Significant efforts were made to mobilise boys and girls to participate in local development through 10 youth banks all over the country. Preparatory work was conducted to promote employment opportunities for NEET youth, through capacity building, seed funding, work integration social enterprises. Efforts were made to support small and medium enterprises and advance work integration social enterprises targeting most vulnerable women and men.

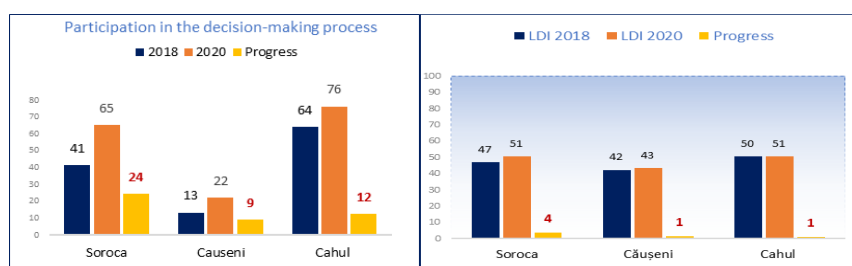
Outcome 2.1. Vulnerable men and women in targeted communities successfully advocate for responsive governance and address basic needs (e.g. water, sanitation, education, healthcare, street lighting)

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
% respondents who believe that social and economic rights are respected by local authorities	Water: 56.2% work: 34.7% health: 28.4% social protection: 27.9%	increase	Data collection in process

Progress towards outcome is difficult to assess at this early stage of project implementation. In 2021 the Ombudsman Institution did not produce additional research on the perception of the population on the observance and social and economic rights.

However, some progress is registered in terms of local democracy in targeted district. The second Local Democracy Index (LDI) in three targeted districts, developed by EEF and CPD during the second semester of 2021, points that the **level of participation in the decision-making process increased during the last three years**. The figure below shows specific values of each district for 2018 and 2020. For example, for Soroca this progress is assessed at 24pp, for Causeni – only with 9pp and for Cahul with 12pp. In this way, even if some progress is observed, the initiatives aiming at increasing the level of involvement in decision-making process should continue.

Despite this progress, the average value of local democracy is still low. In 2020, LDI average score was set at 48 points out of maximum of 100pt, which does not even reach the average level of democracy. In comparison with 2018, slight improvement was registered in case of Soroca (4pp)¹¹, on the basis of ensuring a higher level of the principles of good governance.



¹¹ Calculated based on Local Transparency Index provided by IDIS Viitorul

The project achieved compelling progress in terms of mobilising CSOs and local communities to promote greater transparency and accountability of LPAs towards more inclusive public policies. Specific progress is substantiated in the sections below.

Bridging Outcome 2.1.1. Local authorities in targeted communities are more responsive to the needs of targeted vulnerable groups

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
Number and % of recommendations proposed by initiative groups and accepted by authorities	17%	30%	28%
# of recommendations proposed by women' initiative groups and accepted	30	100	27

With co-funding leveraged from the Swiss Cooperation Office, in 2021 members of the District Participation Councils in Soroca, Causeni and Cahul constantly interacted with decision-makers to mainstream the perspective of vulnerable persons and groups in local policies. They mapped 171 emerging public policies and influenced 48 decisions adopted by public authorities. The analyses and corresponding recommendations were advocated to district authorities before and during the district council sessions. Most recent examples of results achieved by DPCs to date are outlined below:

District Participation Council in Causeni:

During the reporting period, members of the DPC Causeni, continued their dialogue with decision makers on providing necessary budgeting for professional assistants for persons with special needs in the district. So, by the end of 2021, local budget approved for 2022 included supplementary funding for 13 more professional assistants.

Further to advocacy efforts of DPC Causeni, budget expenditures planned by District Council were optimized and unjustified costs were reduced. In order to avoid redundant budget expenditures, DPC members recommended to reduce the number of District Deputy Presidents to be employed, from three to two. As result, saved resources were proposed for other categories of much more stringent social priorities.

District Participation Council in Soroca:

Further to continuous dialogue with local governments, as well as lobby and advocacy measures taken by members of DPC Soroca, the transparency level of decision making by district authorities constantly improved. Thus, summaries of recommendations, including inputs from Soroca DPC, are regularly published on the web page of Soroca District Council. The quality of published documents continuously improves, containing relevant details, including descriptions of interventions, technical aspects of infrastructure works, findings of monitoring reports.

District Participation Council in Cahul

In order to increase transparency in decision-making process of Cahul District Council and specialized commissions, members of DPC Cahul took part in the meetings of the Commission for financial aid and Commission on allocation of social housing. This is a new practice for meetings of District Council and specialised commissions. The participation of CSO representatives will enhance transparency and inclusion of the decision-making at local level.

The DPC members replicated this participation mechanism in three communities of Cahul district: Crihana Veche, Lebedenco and Tătărești. Initiative groups and members of LPA were mobilized and

capacitated. In addition, DPC Cahul to facilitated the collaboration among these groups and promoted the one-voice approach towards decision-makers. Such an approach will increase the chances that authorities will accept the policy recommendations formulated by people.

With project support, 18 grass roots CSOs in targeted districts advanced the implementation of comprehensive mobilisation and advocacy plans. Within the project, the grants' beneficiaries established and strengthened **59 initiative groups**, acting in 38 localities. In turn, by 2021 these groups mobilised over 20990 persons (11989 F; 9001 M). Initiative groups continuously advanced the mapping of community issues and proceeded to promoting specific priorities through joint mobilisation and policy advocacy.

People with disabilities in Taraclia actively promote the right for social services:

In the process of initial evaluation of the Public Social Services available in Taraclia, one of the pressing problems was the need for a temporary placement center for children separated from their parents. Subsequent to sound advocacy campaign of AO PRIMA and its constituents, the Taraclia District Council allocated the premises of former boarding school in Corten village, where the new Temporary Placement Center for children could be set up. However, the local authorities could not ensure the needed financial resources for renovation and endowment, capacity building of specialists in providing services to children at risk. Against this context, the initiative group of AO PRIMA carried out supplementary fund-raising initiatives. To date, financial support was secured from Soros Moldova Foundation. The project will be implemented during 2021- 2023 and LPA together with Social Service will carry out further Centre management responsibilities.

Promoting participatory budgeting in rural areas of Cahul district:

Members of SCO "Pas cu Pas regiunea Sud" and SCO "Azi" successfully advocated for implementation of participatory budgeting in six localities of Cahul district, including Cahul municipality. As result, regulations on participatory budgeting were approved by local councils and corresponding budgets for 2022 were allocated in Slobozia Mare (100,000 lei), Cucoara (80,000 lei) and Cahul (1.5 mln lei). Local initiative groups will continue their dialogue with LPAs and monitor implementation of the resources allocated resources within the participatory budgeting mechanism.

With support of SCO "Azi" and its members, four small projects focused on the inclusion of persons with disabilities were implemented in Pelinei (accessible recreation and communication space near the House of Culture), Slobozia Mare (exhibition and sale stand for hand-made products), Rosu (inclusive sports) and Cahul (capacity building and advocacy for non-discrimination and inclusion). The total budget allocated in support of these initiatives was 38,980 lei.

Perspective of single mothers in Taraclia brought to the attention in Universal Period Review:

Single mothers are one of the five groups mobilised by "Tarsmi" CSO from Taraclia. The group mapped the barriers and specific problems faced by mothers taking care of child(ren) as a single parent: (i) Single mothers face strong fears and stereotypes mounted by the patriarchal society over single mothers, as well as disapproving and condemning attitudes and comments; (ii) Moldovan educational system promotes an image of an "ideal" or "complete" family made of "mother, father and children", when other types of families are presented within this system as "incomplete" or "deficient"; (iii) Moldovan pre-schools operate based on policies which are not adapted to needs of single mothers, i.e. closing down for 1-2 months for summer vacation; operation hours are only until 17.00-17.30, children accepted at a minimum age of 3 years old; (iv) Schools are often request feeding or other informal fees for children and "support of the school"; (v) very weak and lacking specialized healthcare services in Taraclia as for children so for adults. Exploring the opportunity

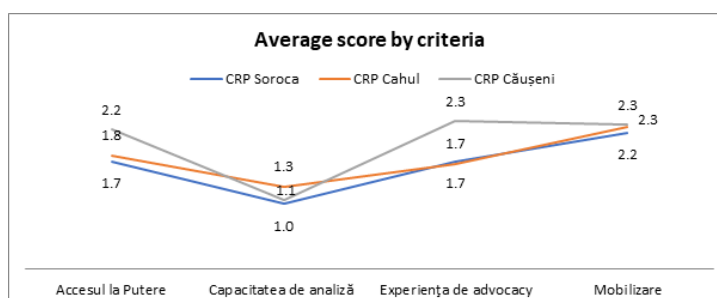
provided by the review under the 3rd UPR cycle, the initiative group developed an alternative report on the situation and barriers faced by single mothers and submitted it in July 2021.

In 27 targeted communities where no CSOs exist, initiative groups successfully finalized implementation of small grants and initiated activities meant to insure durability of created social society infrastructure. Considering implementation of local initiatives in 27 communities, the total number of people mobilized was 11450 (4650 M; 6800 W), including 15 participants of the fellowship programme, 27 team leaders and 654 persons of the extended local teams from almost the most marginalized communities from Cahul, Causeni and Soroca of the mentoring programme “INSPIRA și pe ALții”.

Output 2.1.1.1. Targeted grass-roots NGOs representing vulnerable groups are actively using community mobilization tools to empower communities

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
# of CSOs demonstrating active involvement of people in assessing quality of local governance and designing community development initiatives	45	90	60
# of Gender impact assessments conducted to draft decisions of local public authorities	0	45	0

Three district participation councils, bringing together 60 grass-roots, demonstrated active involvement in promoting good governance and greater accountability of local public authorities toward community needs. The assessment of DPCs’ advocacy and watchdog capacities, conducted during the last semester of project implementation, places DPC on intermediate to consolidated level of development. The DPCs have similar and comparable experiences and performances based on developed practices and applied tools.



Overall, *DPC Căușeni* registers constant scores from intermediate to consolidated level (except for the analysis capacity); *DPC Soroca* and *DPC Cahul* have deficiencies on several evaluation criteria (access to governance and advocacy experience), which have negatively influenced the average performance. However, the general performance of all three DPCs lays between intermediate to enhanced performance level.

DPCs paid special attention to profound analysis of specific issues that are key for social inclusion and local democracy. These topics ben have been identified in a participatory manner. The conducted analytical papers can strengthening positions of District Participation Councils in their dialogue with local decision-makers.

Analysis on the execution of 2020 social budget in Causeni district:

Budget of social insurance and social services in Causeni district was executed in the share of only 84.88%, compared to the budget approved for implementation in 2020. Main reasons identified in the analysis are: (i) fluctuation of staff and under-employment; (ii) inefficient monitoring and management of beneficiaries (current and potential); (iii) wasteful organisational culture within social service; (iv) weak mechanisms at community level to identify new eligible beneficiaries; and other. Since under-execution of social budget in Causeni district is an issue acknowledged not only in 2020, the DPC will carry out further in-depth analysis and initiate advocacy actions in this field.

The cost of non-transparent decision-making in Soroca district:

a) Construction of a stadium in Rublenita, Soroca district:

Decision on construction of the stadium in Rublenita was taken by the Soroca district council in 2019 in a non-transparent and non-participative way. Technical specifications, budget estimate and technical monitoring requirements were elaborated with delays and deviations from the relevant regulations. Total estimated budget was of MDL 16,070,258.54 or EUR 795,557.35 and construction timeframe was 2019-2022. However, by the end of 2021, local budget already allocated planned EUR 100,000 from local budget and unplanned MDL 66,666 on unforeseen technical assistance, but the stadium is abandoned, not even half built.

b) Grant project on trans-border cooperation with Romania – reconstruction of Soroca fortress:

The grant project will be implemented in Soroca district during 24 months, until 2023 and provides for finalisation of the necessary restoration works at the Soroca Fortress. According to donor requirements, Soroca District Council approved the co-financing commitment amounting Euro 118,633.00. However, the co-financing guarantee letter also mentions commitment to finance "any other ineligible expenditure or any other costs necessary for the implementation of the project". This special clause leaves room for interpretations and suspicions that Soroca District Council, under pretext of ineligible expenses or other occurred costs, may allocate additional sources at any time, in the most non-transparent manner.

Impact evaluation of the Socio-Economic Development Program (SEDP) in Cahul district for 2017-2020:

Implementation of the Socio-Economic Development Program finalized in 2020 at the rate of 73% of planned activities and objectives. The lowest implementation results refer to "Economic development" – 64% and "Social services" – 46%. In addition, the SED Program was missing the problems analysis, evaluation of consequences of inaction, potential impact analysis; risk assessment, performance indicators and other. The program objectives were formulated in a non-transparent and non-inclusive manner.

By the end of the reporting period 18 local CSOs finalized implementation of local mobilisation initiatives. Their progress to date is summarised in the table below:

CSO	Project summary	Cumulative progress by 2021
AO Prima (closed in November 2021)	Monitoring and evaluation of "Mobile Service team/Echipa Mobila" in Taraclia	Monitored and evaluated the social service "Mobile Service Team/Echipa Mobila"; Elaborated advocacy action plan on improving social service "Mobile Service Team" (MST); approval of Multifunctional center for children separated from their parents by Taraclia district council; 60 PwD and parents of children with

		disabilities received consultancy on eligibility criteria for MST and the list of social services provided by MST
AO VICON/ Salcuta-Acasa (closed in January 2021)	Establishing a youth participation council in Sălcuța village; advocating for youth rights and youth inclusion	Elaborated and approved participatory budgeting implementation plan for January - December 2021; trained 15 people, including representatives of LPA on implementing participatory budgeting
AO Casa Sperantelor (closed in May 2021)	Involving community members from 5 localities in Soroca into decision-making process, focusing on vulnerable groups	37 (17 M, 20 W) members LPAs from 5 communities capacitated on transparent and inclusive decision - making process and durability of implemented actions; in 5 localities of Tătărăuca Veche community installed public WCs; members of initiative groups and LPAs organised an exchange visit to Riscani district; locals of Pirlita village solved the problem of the well with in-kind support of LPA
AO Agroinform (closed in September 2020)	Advancing community participation in local decision-making by establishing a local participation council in Tanatari village	Tănătari Local Council for Participation in cooperation with LPA carried out fundraising activities and mobilized 406 thousand lei (AIPA) on procurement of multifunctional equipment for local roads; 534 thousand lei („DAR 1+3”) on paving lighting and planting trees in local park
AO Azi (closed in November 2021)	Implementing participative budgeting with focus on PwD in Cahul and 3 surrounding communities	4 projects implemented based on participative budgeting principles; 335 persons involved, including 27 PwD, local budgets influenced with 38,980 lei; flash mob on promoting rights of PwD, inclusion and non-discrimination organized in Cahul by 100 young people, including 13 PwD; ensured constant monitoring of One-Stop Shop in Cahul implementation
APE Cremenciug (closed in August 2020)	Engaging youth from Cremenciuc and Sobari villages in local policy influencing and policy monitoring	Young people in Cremenciug and Sobari implemented two local mobilization activities; participated in meetings of Local Councils; local newspaper elaborated by Youth and distributed 100 pieces each month
CRT Dacia (closed in March 2021)	Strengthening youth participation in Soroca and 3 surrounding villages by establishing youth participation councils	Soroca Local Youth Council influenced the local budget with MDL 30,000 on youth programmes; “Budget for citizens” was elaborated and published on web-page of Soroca town-house; 7 public debates organized with participation of young people and public authorities; 1 recommendation accepted out of 4 submitted on 2 local draft decisions
AO Pas cu Pas regiunea Sud (closed in November 2021)	Engaging youth from Cahul and 2 surrounding communities in decision-making and inclusive budgeting	3 info-graphics on executed budgets of Cahul (2020), Slobozia Mare (2017-2020) and Cucoara (2017-2020) elaborated and published; Regulation on PB approved in SLobozia Mare and Cucoara; 19 projects financed and implemented in mun. Cahul and 4 in two localities based on BP principle; 75 young people trained
AO Eco-Sor	Strengthening local civic activism in Soroca to influence local	Members of Local Initiative Groups influenced 5 decisions on District Council on environmental issues; wastes disposal service set up in Vasilcau; plastic waste storage platforms installed in 4 localities; members of LIG took part in local consultation on

(closed in November 2021)	environmental public policy	treatment plant to be constructed in 2022; four FB pages created for LPAs; 75 people trained (16 M, 48 W); 50 persons implemented local mobilization initiatives
AO ACTIE/IMPACT (closed in October 2020)	Enhancing capacities of young people in advocacy and participative decision making	5 out of 16 project proposals elaborated by Youth on solving community problems successfully implemented; 25 young people and 2 teachers were capacitated
AO Acva-Chircaies (closed in February 2021)	Engaging women, young people, people with disabilities, pensioners into local civic activism and creation a social enterprise	Local budget influenced with 200,000 lei on construction of a leisure complex; LPA contributed to “Ma implic” project by allocating MDL 112,927; 3 draft decision influenced; 30 pensioners benefited from free sewing services at social sewing Studio created within the project
AO Tarsmi (closed in October 2021)	Involving most vulnerable from Taraclia in local decision-making based on HRBA and GE	E-Taraclia platform ready for launching; 21 journalists trained in applying HRBA and GE in media; IG of elderly took part in consultations on local budget; carried out advocacy actions on promoting rights of vulnerable and PwD in employment in Taraclia; IF of single mothers submitted alternative report on UPR
AP Tighina (closed in February 2021)	Strengthening Community Initiative Groups in 3 localities enhanced the dialogue between civil society and local authorities	Local Initiative Groups in three communities, comprising 42 persons participated in public consultations on local budgets for 2021; “The guide of the active citizen/Ghidul cetateanului activ” elaborated and distributed among partners, LPAs, other SCOs
AO Speranta Taraclia (closed in June 2021)	Engaging most vulnerable 10 families in community participation and local decision-making by establishing a Local Participation Council in Taraclia	Local Participation Council contributed to amendment of Regulation on kindergarten and increased nr of children beneficiaries; 243 people trained, including 179 participants to School of the Family; members of LPC took part in 2 public consultation
AO Destin (closed in November 2020)	Strengthening local civic activism among Youth; advocacy on HRBA in decision making; building of inclusive sport space	4 Initiative Groups set up comprising 86 members (16 M, 69 W), local budget influenced and 2 initiatives approved by LPA (co-funding of streets lightening and sports ground in the amount of 105,500 lei), 10 members of IG attended 3 meetings of Local Council, 2 advocacy campaigns on promoting Inclusive Community Centre and local streets lightening; 45 young people capacitated on local mobilization and journalism
AO Speranta Cirnateni (closed in June 2021)	Mobilization and empowerment of young people in Cirnateni to engage in local policy influencing and participative decision making	11 members of the Local Youth Council attended all meetings of Local Council; 56 persons, of which 30 young people, were mobilized to implement local initiatives

AO CoNatal-Neo <i>(closed in April 2021)</i>	Increase local civic activism by increasing information, participation and involvement of vulnerable into decision-making process	Regulation on Civic Initiative Group (CIG) of Opaci elaborated and submitted to LPA for approval; local budget influenced with MDL 30,000 on children security issues; commitment from LPA provided on 20% co-founding under project proposal to AIPA
ANPM <i>(closed in November 2021)</i>	Support social inclusion of former detainees into community life and their involvement into decision-making process	Two beneficiaries-former detainees employed; 9 petitions highlighting local problems submitted to LPAs, one problem solved in Drochia; media representatives mobilized to broadcast media event on inclusion of former detainees
Summary of outputs		In the course of program implementation 59 initiative groups were set up; over 1360 persons trained; over 70 draft decisions influenced; and mobilized directly and indirectly in total 20990 (11989 F; 9001 M) people to promote inclusive local development; policy dialogue with 38 local authorities carried out

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

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
Share of NEET young women and men in targeted communities	26% at national level	At least 10% decrease	Data collection in progress

During the reporting period EEF initiated the baseline data collection at the results level. After the selection of 15 partners which will administer the youth entrepreneurship funds, partners proceeded to data collection in targeted communities.

At this stage of programme implementation it is premature to assess progress at result level. EEF and its partners prepared the ground for initiating setting up and initiating the work of 15 youth entrepreneurship funds. Additional efforts were made to prepare the ground for the establishment of 7 social enterprises targeting NEET youth. The capacity building and seed funding for youth business development, along with youth social entrepreneurship are expected to start coming to fruition by the end of 2022.

During the reporting period EEF continued to monitor the progress achieved by the beneficiaries of youth entrepreneurship funds within the previous strategic cycle. One example is provided below.

Success Story of KidsAcademy Center Cahul



KidsAcademy Center is a center which provides English, Programming and Robotics courses for children and teenagers. KidsAcademy started its activity in 2018, with 50 children/month. In 2019 Mariana Pascal, the founder of Kids Academy, applied for grant to NGO "Perspectiva" from Cahul, under the youth entrepreneurship funds, supported during the previous EEF Strategic Cycle 2017-2020. After a series of training from professional company in development of business, Mariana improved the business plan and she became one of five grant winners.

Mariana has invested and continues to invest 90% of the company's profit in development of the Center to strengthen services in the marketplace and increase customers' confidence in the services they provide. She has fully equipped and digitized the company with modern technology and has created the website www.kidsacademy.md

In May 2018, the centre was operating within 35m2 office, now the centre has 4 offices with total number of 156 m2. From a single employee, they have reached in 3 years the number of 12 employees, and in March 2022 another 5 teachers will be hired. At the moment, more than 300 students study at KidsAcademy, 5 of them are sponsored. The academy has got online students from 7 different countries: Canada, Germany, Russia, Belgium, Italy, Austria, Moldova.

The academy has obtained international certifications for 5 teachers (4 English and 1 IT). Although the company is young (3 years old), their services are competitive with the services of other companies in the same field that have an experience of over 20 years and operate in Cahul. Although it was extremely difficult for them during the pandemic, the company still had a very large increase in the number of customers of almost 100% (April 2021 compared to April 2020).

The value of Center is Passion and Professionalism. The mission is to provide training in IT, languages, professional and personal development and to prepare children, adults and companies from Moldova and abroad for a rapidly changing world. That's why they offer courses that will help both children and adults get a much better job in the future (or a career promotion) such as: English, Programming, Photoshop, Financial Education, Emotional Education, Leadership, Communication course, Teacher Training, Summer School for children.

Programming and Robotics courses are focused on the practical side. Basically, the theory is proven, and children are not given formulas or other information to memorize. Each IT and Robotics lesson is a project, the child receives the task and with the help of colleagues and teachers must fulfill it. Children create computer games that they later play with friends or even parents at home. The seniors' group (13-16 years old) advanced so much for two years that Mariana had to invite a representative of Microsoft from the USA to teach children in Cloud Computing and a teacher (their partner from Bucharest) from Polytechnic University of Bucharest to teach them more advanced courses such as Python, Java Script and C +, Photoshop, Gimp, etc. In September 2020 one of the students of the Center was hired as a Programming teacher.

In August 2021, one of their IT students created the KidsAcademy administrative platform that helps us a lot in organizing and tracking the company's progress.

In March 2022, the academy's team will go to Bulgaria for an international exhibition to present the computer game "Guguta" created by KidsAcademy students.

Recently, in 2022, Mariana has purchased a “Boom Kids” franchise that contains eight additional courses: Mental Arithmetic, Fast Reading, Mnemonics, Triz, Early Development, School Preparation and Boom Art (Master Classes), courses for ages 2- 14 years. We hope to enjoy the results of this franchise soon.

At the end of every school year the academy asks for feedback from their customers for the continuous improvement of their business. They receive a lot of appreciation and thanks from parents.

Bridging Outcome 2.2.1. Local authorities and businesses support youth mobilization through direct funding and enabling environment.

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
% of funds raised by youth banks from local authorities	81%	81%	88.7%
% of funds raised by youth banks from businesses	18.4%	20%	5.3%

The YouthBank network is improving at diversifying their sources of financial support and some of them have managed to attract funding from the Ministry of Education, local public authorities, local businesses and donations from individuals during fundraising events.

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.

In 2021, the Ialoveni district Council contributed financially with 218 thousand MDL for financing the small grants. The LPA contribution in these is 88.7%.

YouthBanks made significant efforts to fundraise from private sector actors and during fundraising events. Thus, by the end of 2021, the share of funds raised from businesses is 5.3% and during the special events 5.95 %.

In 2021, there were conducted 17 fundraising events including the charity events, donation boxes, door-to-door campaigning, face painting and others. A successful example is Youth Ialoveni who managed to involve a number of 600 young people in fundraising events.

Finally, young people are empowered to develop their competencies and to engage their peers in small projects and initiatives in their towns and villages. To assist the YouthBank members, a programme of training backed up by on-going support is constantly provided by EEF and local coordinators.

The project "Creativity - between tradition and modernity", implemented by the "ActivART" Initiative Group, aims to ensure a quality, inclusive and equitable education, promotes lifelong learning opportunities and develops traditional and modern creativity for children and young people, by creating a History and ethnography Museum in Pelinei commune, Cahul district. It is considered a successful project that the team are proud of, due to the fact that the Museum is accessible to all the inhabitants of Pelinei commune, guests and tourists from the country and abroad. It is an attractive tourist destination, with many exhibits made by local craftsmen, young people and volunteers, who have contributed to the task of enriching the existing local heritage. A qualitative, inclusive and equitable education will be ensured this way, with opportunities for continuous learning and development of traditional and modern creativity of children and young people of Pelinei village. The Museum will promote the traditions and customs of different ethnic groups, as well as various artistic crafts, specific for the southern region of the Republic of Moldova. The

project was financially supported by LPAs, gymnasium and economic agents as well, with a contribution of 29 671.00 MDL, and 8 000.00 MDL from Cahul Youth Fund.



Output 2.2.1.1. Youth groups (boys and girls) in targeted regions successfully galvanize youth participation in decision-making and local development.

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
# of youth groups [youth banks] that demonstrated successful youth mobilisation and empowerment initiatives	10	10	10
# of boys and girls in targeted communities mobilised through the youth banks' initiatives	128536	200000	8879
# of youth led businesses created with project support, disaggregated by sex	66	120	Preparatory work
# of new workplaces created by youth-led businesses	81	200	Preparatory work

Youth Banks

In 2021 the 10 youth banks supported by EEF were managed by 150 young boys and girls from 10 regions including the Transnistrian region. These enthusiastic boys and girls supported 86 youth led initiatives (i. e. establishing a youth Media Club, creating a playground, greening up the school, improving educational conditions) that mobilized around 1392 young boys and girls. Examples of youth mobilization projects supported in 2021 are provided below:

Ruseștii Noi local youth council have strengthened their efforts for raising public awareness and sensitizing the inhabitants regarding the importance of selective waste collection;

The group of students from Bardar “United through diversity!” promotes inclusive education by endowment the local Resource Center for students with special educational needs;

In Bălți municipality, with the Youth Bank support the Media Club was created which operates in partnership with the Laboratory for Journalists developed within the editorial office of the Nord Regional TV portal.

Through the “Local youth space” project, a group of young people from Tipala procured the necessary materials for arranging the space for the activities of the local youth councils.

In order to prevent the harmful effects of bullying, the civic initiative group “Youth Clinic Avante” organized various workshops for students from Ialoveni educational institutions.

Varnița Youth Fund managed to organize and carry out a series of activities for personal and professional development of the team. They created initiative groups in several localities of Anenii Noi district and obtained remarkable results: growing number of beneficiaries, including those from socially vulnerable families, more applications for the Small Grants Program, new partnerships.

The “YouthBank” program has had direct impact on the lives of over 8879 young people from more than 80 rural and urban communities across the country. The number of youth bank activists increased from 121 boys and girls in 2020 to 150 young people by the end of 2021.

Equality and non-discrimination are among the key principles guiding all youth banks’ activities. Thus, at least 46% 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).

Youth entrepreneurship funds

With funds leveraged from the EU within the project “Better opportunities for Young Women and Men Not in Education, Employment and Training in Moldova (NEET Inclusion Initiative)”, EEF established 15 youth entrepreneurship funds that will support self-employment of NEET youth through subcontracting CSOs. This effort was possible within two EU funded initiatives: Local Civil Society contributes to Inclusive and Sustainable Local Economic Development

Pursuant to competitive processes, the following CSO partners were selected to administer the youth entrepreneurship funds:

1. „NEET-Integration”, AO Pharos;
2. „GoYouth +”, AO Henri Capitant de Cultură Juridică;
3. „CATalizator – oportunitate de dezvoltare a IMM-urilor din nord”, AO Centrul De Instruire Și Dezvoltare Personală „Anima”;
4. „Antreprenoriatul mai aproape de tinerii NEET din Bălți, Fălești și Sângerei: construim acasă!”, Asociația pentru Drepturile Omului Lex XXI;
5. „Abilitarea economică și integrarea socio-profesională a tinerilor NEET cu dizabilități”, Asociația Alianța Organizațiilor pentru Persoane cu Dizabilități din Republica Moldova (AOPD);
6. „Tineri mai aproape de piața muncii”, AO Asociația De Sprijin A Copiilor Și Tinerilor Cu Dizabilități „Dorința”;
7. „Timpul Startup-urilor este timpul meu”, AO Центр Социальной Поддержки «Тринити»;
8. „Incluziunea socială și profesională a tinerilor NEET”, AO Asociația Umanitară „Filantropia Creștină”;
9. „Fondul de susținere a antreprenoriatului pentru tineri”, AO „Agenția de Dezvoltare Rurală – Centru”;
10. „Fondul de Antreprenoriat pentru Tineri Ștefan Vodă”, AO Asociația De Dezvoltare Durabilă „Generația Pro”.
11. The Agency for Regional Development on the left bank of the Dniester
12. AO Eco-Razeni;
13. AO Perspectiva
14. AO Sansa
15. AO Dezvoltare prin implicare.

During the reporting period, all the CSOs focused their efforts on mapping disadvantaged youth in the regions and identifying their needs, some of them elaborated reports and studies based on this

action (Annex 78 NEET Youth Study). Additionally, the CSOs conducted focus groups, outreach meetings with local partners to identify young NEET people at the local level.

In 2022 all the CSOs will announce Calls for proposals for small grants program and will select youth business ideas to be funded. At least 60 entrepreneurship ideas of young NEET people will be awarded.

During the reporting period EEF worked to strengthen the fundraising capacity of the established youth entrepreneurship funds. Pursuant to a needs assessment report, over 10 staff members of the Youth Entrepreneurship Funds (first cohort CSOs 1-10) benefited from project capacity development opportunities and improved their fundraising capabilities by participating in a two days practical training course on fundraising carried out by Contact Centre. Contracted experts helped the participants to understand the key principles in fundraising and provided examples and positive fundraising practices. Internal and external fundraising techniques were discussed and exemplified, such as: Fundraising and management through Crowdfunding; Fundraising through social networks, 2% mechanism, Collection through P2P transfers); External sources of fundraising (donors); Provision of services (public and private sector). For the second cohort of CSOs, capacity building activities will be initiated in 2022.

Youth services targeting NEET

During the reporting EEF made efforts to empower local CSOs to contribute to more inclusive youth services targeting NEET youth. To this end, a capacity building programme for local CSOs in the areas of monitoring of youth services, conducting innovative outreach services, ensuring sustainability of such services at the local level was carried out. To date EEF and its partners strengthened the capacity of 21 CSOs from different regions of the country to analyze and conceptualize services.

Pursuant to the capacity building effort, EEF organised a grant competition to support 15 local CSOs which will contribute to NEET youth inclusion by piloting innovative inclusive services or monitoring the youth services that already exists.

Pop Symphonic

In addition to the aforementioned efforts, in partnership with “LalaPlay Voices” CSO, 100 talented children from all over the country improved their knowledge, attitudes, confidence in their own strengths and visions of personal and professional development at the Voices Summer Camp.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
Share of women and men who declared zero tolerance to domestic violence	tbc	increase	Preparatory work
Share of homeless people in targeted regions	tbc	decrease	Data collection in progress
Share of inactive population in targeted districts	tbc	decrease	Data collection in progress

EEF initiated baseline data collection in some targeted regions. Implementing partners have been identified in the field of SME development: (i) Tiraspol, (ii) Comrat; (iii) Balti; (iv) Orhei; (v) Chisinau.

Accordingly, in those regions baseline data collection has been already initiated by project partners and will be available during the next reporting period.

The targeted regions and rights holders in the field of (i) social entrepreneurship and (ii) empowerment for victims of violence against women including domestic violence are still to be identified during the next reporting period. Accordingly, baseline data will be collected and posted in due time.

During the reporting period EEF continued to monitor the progress registered by social enterprises supported during the previous strategic cycle. One success story is provided below.

The experience of social enterprise "Darul Albinelor" created by NGO Association of Deaf Children of Moldova



The social enterprise "Darul Albinelor" was created in 2019 within the project "Local civil society contributes to economic and social development of the country" funded by EU and co-funded by Sweden.

At the initial stage a collaboration agreement was signed with the City Hall of Cimișeni village, Criuleni district, which offered the Association a 1 ha plot of land, free of charge, for 15 years, in order to develop the "Darul Albinelor" Social Enterprise. In October 2019, the apiary was registered with passport no. 7798 and obtained the Sanitary-Veterinary Authorization of operation. In order to provide the bees with food, flowers of the phacelia have been planted - a nectar-producing plant. This has essentially contributed to increasing honey production. Although a small amount of honey was extracted -200 kg, a part of it was sold very fast and 350 euro has been gained. Another part of the honey was distributed among deaf children, beneficiaries of this association. The major difficulty is the lack of transport which hinder the employees -people with special needs- to get to the apiary. By the end of project, by 2020, a number of three persons with disabilities have been employed and one person from the village Cimiseni, Criuleni district.

The pandemic and the state of emergency had a negative impact on the bee business. However, the social enterprise has continued its economic activity.

After the project has ended, during 2021 and 2022 in order to continue the smooth running of activity, the management team used:

- Income from the sale of bee products (40,000 MDL/2000 euro).*
- Financial resources obtained from the 2% income tax rate - 43,300 MDL/2150 euro);*
- Financial means offered by People In Need in the amount of 94,500 MDL (4500 Euro) based on the project proposal submitted by ACSM.*

Thus, it was possible to pay salaries to employees, ensure transport and procure the necessary materials for maintenance of the apiary and adjacent land.

During this period, the association supported 44 women from rural communities.¹²

Bridging Outcome 2.3.1. Local authorities are increasingly sensitive to the needs of victims of domestic violence and of homeless people

¹² <https://www.facebook.com/Asociatia.Copiilor.Surzi.din.Moldova/videos/275038663847010>

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
% of budget allocated for services addressing needs of victims of domestic violence	tbc	at least 3 p.p. increase	Data collection in progress

At this initial stage of project implementation, progress is not registered under this bridging outcome. Preparatory work has been made, in partnership with other domestic CSO, to launch a comprehensive initiative that will both improve livelihoods of victims and improve accountability of public authorities for domestic violence. Additional information is provided under Output 2.3.1.1. below.

Bridging Outcome 2.3.2. Improved business capacities of Social Enterprises and SMEs run by vulnerable groups

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
# of SMEs who reported increase of profit due to business development assistance provided with project support	531	1000	90 SMEs (consulted)

During the reporting period EEF made significant strides to support the work of six business hubs. The competition for the creation of Regional Business Support Hubs was launched on the 10th of March 2021, aiming to support six regional Business Support Hubs in their efforts to support SMEs in providing business development services across the. On the 19th of March 2021 two info sessions, one in Romanian and one in Russian languages, have been organized for all interested CSOs willing to submit project proposals. A total number of 42 persons, representatives of CSOs have attended the info sessions.

After due diligence procedures one CSO was rejected for sub granting-AO Anima from Balti. Instead of it was taken into consideration the following CSO from the experts' panel list for recommendation-Foundation "Youth development for Innovation (Y4I)". At the pre-award visit the Y4I team had shown professionalism and motivation to engage in project activity. Thus, the following CSOs were selected and have been contracted on 6th of July 2021 during an official ceremony (see Annex 56 Ceremony Agenda and Annex 56A Ceremony List of participants):

1. AO Ecovisio, "Social Entrepreneurs HUB" project
2. «Агентство Инноваций и Развития»/ Innovation Development Agency (IDEA), Tiraspol; project "Center for Business Support and Development in Transnistria" (Business Hub)
3. "Ассоциация бизнесменов Гагаузии "NEXT"/ "NEXT" Business Association, Comrat; "BusinessHUB"- Business Support Center project
4. „Asociația Femeilor de Afaceri din Municipiul Bălți”/ Association of Business Women from Balti"; "Business Skills Hub" project
5. Agenția Regională de Dezvoltare Durabilă Orhei/Regional Agency for Sustainable Development in Orhei; "Orhei Business Support Center - promoter of small and medium business development" project
6. Foundation „Youth Development for Innovation” (Y4I), Chisinau; project "Youth4Entrepreneurship - business support center for young entrepreneurs".

Since the establishment of Business Hubs, 90 SMEs have been consulted by four business hubs, while two of them (Ecovisio and Y4E) are not consulting yet SMEs. On average the satisfaction percent of consulted SMEs is 90%. The highest satisfaction percent is at the Business Hub in Tiraspol-100%.

Output 2.3.1.1. NGOs successfully promote zero tolerance to domestic violence and provide support to victims of domestic violence and gender based violence

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
# of victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence assisted with legal and psychological counselling, as well as other services	tbc	increase	Preparatory work
# of victims who improved the socio-economic condition with project support	0	300	Preparatory work

In 2021 EEF continued the negotiations with the World Bank, with the view to starting the implementation of the project “Moldova: Improving access to justice for the vulnerable, with a focus on families affected by domestic violence (DV) and gender-based violence (GBV)”. The \$3.2 million action was preliminarily selected for funding by the World Bank in 2020. It is designed to be implemented in 48 months and shall be implemented in close partnership with domestic CSOs, including Women’s Law Center, La Strada, Expert Grup.

The project is designed to achieve the following objectives: (i) improve livelihoods for survivors and economic empowerment of survivors and those at-risk; (ii) raise awareness about Domestic and gender-based violence and related Services Promotion of GBV and DV services for victims; (iii) strengthen public sector-civil society collaborative engagement for reducing DV & GBV.

The project is expected to start in 2022. The initiative will improve livelihoods for at least 595 survivors and at risk of DV & GBV through targeted livelihood interventions.

Output 2.3.2.1. Selected grass-roots NGOs in targeted communities are successfully running social enterprises to address the situation of vulnerable groups

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2021
# of Work Integration Social Enterprises created (data disaggregated by the sex of the manager of the social enterprise)	17	30	Preparatory work
# of vulnerable women and men in targeted communities assisted by social enterprises	131	300	Preparatory work

With co-funding leveraged from the European Union within the project “Local Civil Society Contributes to Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Development in Moldova”, in 2021 EEF laid the ground for supporting the creation of at least 15 new social enterprises.

Before launching the call for proposals to support work integration social enterprises, EEF began by strengthening the capacities of CSOs in the area of social entrepreneurship. To this end, two trainings were conducted (23rd-24th; 28th-29th of July 2021) for 44 selected representatives of CSOs throughout the country, including the Transnistrian region and Gagauzia. Each training was attended by 20-22 participants. The beneficiary CSOs had been selected pursuant to a call for expression of interest, based on the following criteria: (i) interest to engage in social entrepreneurship activities or in designing and implementing inclusive employment service; (ii) availability to attend both trainings; experience of the organisation in social entrepreneurship.

Subsequently, a call for proposals was launched on 24th of September 2021. The call was placed on www.eef, www.civic.md and on Facebook page (see Annex 49 Media distribution SE)

The total budget of launched grant competition was 525 000 EUR, the maximum amount allowed for each grant is 35,000 EUR. The deadline was set by the October 24, 2021. As a result, a total

number of 40 project proposals from CSOs have been submitted. After the internal evaluation 37 project proposals have been considered for evaluation.

CROSS- CUTTING ACTIVITIES

EEF Program approach

EEF explored 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. Committed to reducing its environmental impact and ensuring environmental sustainability, in 2021 started to operationalise the policy by integrating compliance in the sub-grants and corresponding monitoring procedures.

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 scale up the work of the Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination. As part of the Free, Fair and Inclusive Elections program, the Civic Coalition consistently called the electoral authorities to ensure the rights of under-represented groups in compliance with the international human rights commitments of Moldova. 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 2021 EEF actively explored the strategic partnership with CPD with the view to mainstream gender equality in all

interventions. As part of the Civil Society Participation and Oversight Program, partners made significant strides to promote legal amendments conducive to equal pay and better protection against sexual harassment.

Within the Free, Fair and Inclusive Elections Component, due attention was paid to assessing the extent to which the gender quotas, adopted during the previous years, contributed to the empowerment and increased representation of women.

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.

Jointly with CPD, EEF identified gender-based inequalities and formulated proposals for addressing them. The third edition of the Equality Gap Report, issued in 2021, identified inequalities in living livelihoods, health and labour market along such criteria as gender, disability, age, Roma.

Contribution to EU Integration

Through this action EEF contributed to bringing the Republic of Moldova closer to the EU. 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 2021 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.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2021

Program areas	Budget, EUR	%
Program 1: Civil and political rights and democratic governance		
Component 1.1: Civil Society Participation and Oversight	695.629	24,26%
Component 1.2: Community Journalism	67.337	2,35%
Component 1.3: Free, fair and inclusive elections	32.749	1,14%
Program 2: Socio-economic rights and sustainable local development		
Component 2.1: Community mobilization for responsive local governance	245.535	8,56%
Component 2.2: Youth Participation and Economic Empowerment	992.826	34,62%
Component 2.3: Social Actions and Economic Development	762.830	26,60%
Sub-Total Program budget	2.796.906	97,53%
Sub-Total Administrative budget	70.819	2,47%
Total budget	2.867.725	100,00%
Donors	Budget, USD	%
European Union	1.796.374	62,64%
Government of Sweden	579.910	20,22%
Swiss Development Cooperation Office	437.003	15,24%
OAK Foundation	53.834	1,88%
Others	604	0,02%
Total budget	2.867.725	100,00%