



EAST EUROPE FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

CHISINAU - 2024

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ACRONYMS

CEC	Central Electoral Commission
CPD	Centre Partnership for Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
District	Administrative territorial unit, in Romanian “raion”
DPC	District Participation Council
DPO	Disabled Peoples’ Organisation
EEF	East Europe Foundation
EU	European Union
LPA	Local Public Administration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SDC	Swiss Cooperation Office
SE	Social Enterprise
YB	Youth Bank
YEF	Youth Entrepreneurship Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following narrative report reflects the progress under the EEF Strategic Plan “Engaging Citizens, Empowering Communities” (hereinafter the Program) from January 1 to December 31, 2023. The program is funded by Sweden, European Union and Swiss Development Cooperation Agency. The report substantiates the results achieved during project implementation according to the results framework and approved work plan.

The program aims to improve policy making and fulfilment of human rights of most vulnerable women and men in Moldova. The program 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.

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:

Over 200 CSOs representing vulnerable groups (Roma, older people, youth, persons with disabilities) actively shaped public policies from the perspective of inclusion and equal opportunities. During this reporting period they influenced 16 out of the 61 targeted policies.

EEF supported the advocacy efforts of the Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination that brings together 23 most active human rights CSOs and civic activists. In 2023 they worked with policy to strengthen practical application of legislation on countering hate crimes and hate speech.

Three platforms, bringing together social enterprises, business hubs and businesses, demanded a better business and social entrepreneurship environment.

Over 100 trained community journalists during this reporting period developed and posted 257 articles reflecting community issues. In 2023 duty bearers addressed 14 issues reported by means of the portal www.jurnalist.md

39 CSOs, united under the umbrella of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections, actively monitored the local general elections held on 05 November 2023. Nine CSOs conducted comprehensive campaigns that empowered under-represented groups to stand as electoral candidates and demanded more inclusive elections.

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:

Over 100 CSOs in six targeted districts (Cahul, Soroca, Causeni, Floresti, Stefan Voda, Cimislia) steadily advanced transparency and responsiveness of local authorities towards community needs.

In 2023 they analysed 197 draft decisions and influenced 74 local decisions from the perspective of inclusion.

38 initiative groups were set up in three targeted districts (Floresti, Stefan Voda, Cimislia) to promote more inclusive policies

Empowered youth in 10 targeted communities from three districts increasingly contributed to local development through implementation of youth development initiatives that contributed to the mobilization of over 140000 young girls and boys.

10 Youth entrepreneurship funds contributed to the creation of 78 new jobs, with focus on NEET youth.

In partnership with “LalaPlay Voices” CSO, 120 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.

Four social business hubs provided social economy training to 293 potential social entrepreneurs; Six business hubs worked to strengthen capacity of 1717 entrepreneurs; capacity building efforts resulted in increase in sales among 366 enterprises;

25 work integration social enterprises targeting most vulnerable women and men were set up. To date they created 107 new jobs and provided free of charge or partially paid services to 1875 vulnerable women and men

10 Consortia of NGOs piloted innovative employment services for most vulnerable groups, contributed to the employment of 208 vulnerable women and men

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

In 2023 EEF managed 130 grants awarded to Moldovan NGOs, most of them grassroots organisations. This support has been possible due to the joint contribution of Sweden, European Union, Swiss Development Cooperation Agency (SDC).

Apart from 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, SKAT (manages *Ma Implic* project), UNDP Moldova, UN Women, Council of Europe office in Moldova, UNICEF, EBRD, and others.

Update of the context and challenges:

In the reporting period the most important event was the decision of the European Council from 14 December 2023 to open accession negotiations with Moldova. This was a landmark moment for the Moldovan people who have consistently shown their European aspiration.

Regarding information security, there has been an increase in hostile foreign interference in the domestic media space, prompting authorities to systematically address national security. Efforts to protect the national media space of subversive narratives have been more determined than in

previous years, but their impact has been limited. For instance, some websites blocked by the Security and Intelligence Service in 2023 created "clones" still being accessible to the public¹.

At local level, transparency in the decision-making process registered slight improvements, yet local public authorities often continued the practice of organising extra-ordinary sessions to bypass transparency requirements. The three new district participation councils struggled to build a fruitful collaboration with new councillors elected pursuant to the local suffrage conducted on 05 November 2023. As yet, policy dialogue was not always successful, with lack of confidence from both sides. To tackle this issue, the project will encourage and facilitate more policy dialogue events at the local level.

In 2023 the country continued to face the unprecedented refugee crisis, increasing inflation, summer drought, disruption of regional supply chains, ever-increasing energy prices, internal destabilization risks. Against this background, the project continuously adjusted its interventions by (i) mainstreaming the needs and the barriers faced by refugees in the advocacy plans of the supported national and local CSO networks; (ii) raising awareness, in targeted districts, on the available services and entitlements for refugees in Russian, Romanian and Ukrainian; (iii) designing recommendations focused on fairer redistribution of available public resources.

The opening of EU accession negotiations will prompt policy discussions around 33 chapters. The supported CSOs shall seize this opportunity to advance inclusion at least in the following areas: statistics (Chapter 18), social policies and employment (Chapter 20), regional policy (Chapter 22), human rights and justice (Chapter 23), Education and research (Chapter 26), Environment (Chapter 27).²

Supported CSOs shall capitalise on recent amendments to legislation on CSO participation in the decision making process to actively engage in permanent consultative platforms provided by the law, in this way maximising prospects for influencing both policy design and implementation.

The project shall upscale efforts to foster sustainability of the supported networks. Organisational assessment findings conducted in 2023 will inform the efforts designed to further increase advocacy and oversight as well as financial sustainability of CSO partners.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
Civil liberties and political rights score for Moldova	3.0% (~48%)	Positive trend	61/100 ³	61/100

¹ <https://mediacritica.md/clonele-site-urilor-blocate-care-altereaza-spatiul-informational-o-lupta-cu-morile-de-vant/>

² <https://particip.gov.md/ro/document/stages/proiectul-de-hotarare-cu-privire-la-aprobarea-planului-national-de-actiuni-pentru-aderarea-la-uniunea-europeana-pentru-anii-2023-2027/11222>

³ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/moldova/freedom-world/2024>

In 2023 Moldova scored 61 out of 100 points under the Civil liberties and political rights score, still being rated as “partly free”. Compared to the previous year, the electoral process rating decreased due to the influence of illegal financing on the electoral process in 2023, as well as non-transparent changes in electoral legislation which were implemented right before the local elections (despite being deemed unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court), restricted candidates’ right to be elected, and effectively disenfranchised some voters.⁴

Despite these challenges, EEF played an important role in ensuring that civil society platforms representing vulnerable groups are increasingly able to engage in policy influencing and oversight. Building on linkages available in various projects, due attention was paid to promoting critical thinking and ensuring that women and men in various communities are able to articulate their issues and demand greater accountability through community journalism. In addition, EEF enabled civil society to promote fairer and more inclusive elections and empower under-represented groups to stand as election candidates and independent observers.

- ✓ Coalesced and empowered CSOs actively advocated for greater decisional transparency, design and implementation of more inclusive public policies;
- ✓ CSOs promoted pluralism and freedom of expression through community journalism;
- ✓ United CSOs promoted inclusive elections campaigns and monitored the local general elections held on 05 November 2023.

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 2022	Achieved by 2023	Cumulative indicators
CSO Advocacy Indicator	3.1	Positive trend	3.1	3.1	3.1

The CSO Advocacy Indicator for Moldova remained unchanged during the reporting period. The most recent CSO Sustainability Index for Moldova commends the openness of the authorities to working with CSOs. It mentions the cooperation between CSOs and LPAs in Soroca, Causeni and Cahul via the district participation councils and the important contribution of CSOs in advancing European integration and monitoring the implementation of reforms in multiple sectors. However, the report expressed concerns about limited government’s transparency in decision making and limited acceptance of CSOs’ input on anti-corruption issues, the government program, justice reform, and other sensitive areas.⁵



⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/moldova/nations-transit/2024>

⁵ <https://www.fhi360.org/wp-content/uploads/drupal/documents/csosi-europe-eurasia-2022-report.pdf>, pp. 52-

Despite these deficiencies, EEF played a pivotal role in shaping public policies in targeted areas from the perspective of inclusion. Exploring the opportunity provided by the openness of the Government to improve collaboration with civil society, in 2023 EEF scaled up policy advocacy efforts. With program support around 250 NGOs representing most vulnerable groups increasingly shaped public policies from the perspective of inclusion.

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 20223	Cumulative indicators
% of CSOs recommendations accepted	~25%	35%	26%	~35%
% of recommendations accepted on gender equality	~25%	50%	75%	~60%
% of draft public policies consulted with civil society	48.3%	60%	60%	~55%

By the time of submitting the report, the official report on the observance of transparency in the decision-making process in 2023 was not published on the web site of the State Chancellery.⁶

With co-funding leveraged from Swiss Cooperation Office in Moldova (SDC), in 2023 EEF progressively 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 2023.

Coalition for Inclusion and Non-discrimination worked to build the capacity of police in the area of combating hate crimes and hate speech. Three additional platforms steadily promoted social entrepreneurship and a better business environment.

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 20223	Cumulative data
# of prioritised public policies influenced by NGO Platforms (with more than 30% of CSOs recommendations accepted)	29	50	16	58
# of prioritised public policies influenced by NGO Platforms related to gender equality	2	20	4	6
# of prioritised public policies influenced by the Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination	0	10	2	4

⁶ <https://cancelaria.gov.md/ro/advanced-page-type/rapoarte-anuale-privind-transparenta-procesul-decizionala>, lasts accessed on 15 April 2024

During the reporting period the supported networks analysed 61 emerging public policies and draft decisions. By the reporting date they managed to influence 16 targeted policies, that is around 26% of them. Influenced policies will contribute to reducing gender inequalities; more inclusive public budgets; increase access to education for Roma children and youth; foster access to social services for people with disabilities; facilitate mainstreaming needs on youth in local public policies, promote decent livelihoods for older people.

Most recent examples of influenced policies are provided below:

Roma Youth Merit Scholarships:

Roma Voice platform actively advocated for positive measures designed to ensure equal opportunities in education for Roma. The advocacy efforts contributed to the approval of Roma Youth Merit Scholarships approved by Government Decision 818 of October 27, 2023. At the end of 2023, 49 young people applied for the scholarship and all were selected. The scholarship consists of the amount of 1200 lei per month and is awarded to young Roma students starting from high school up to master's/doctorate.

Active Ageing Program:

After many years of advocacy efforts initiated by the Active Ageing Platform, the Moldovan Government approved the Program for active and healthy aging (2023-2027) and corresponding action plan. This is an important step towards meaningful inclusion of older people in all spheres of live.

Increasing the allowance for children with disabilities placed in guardianship services:

AOPD managed to influence amendments to the Government Decision no. 1278/2018 for the approval of the Regulation regarding the types, amounts and specific conditions for granting allowances for raising and caring for children placed in guardianship/guardianship services. They manage to achieve an increase of the allowance from 30% (as previously stipulated) to 100%. The amendment will improve the livelihoods of hundreds of children with disabilities placed in guardianship.

Accessibility of information for persons with disabilities:

AOPD influenced the Law no. 148 of 09.06.2023 on access to information of public interest. The accepted amendment provides for the obligation of public authorities to publish information on the web sites in formats accessible for persons with disabilities.

Better access to services for persons with visual disabilities:

AOPD influenced the Government's Action Plan for 2023. As a result, the document included the amendment of Government Decision no. 567 of 26.07.2011, regarding the way to provide certain categories of citizens with technical aids in order to ensure the development of the system of quality services for people with visual disabilities.

Youth inclusion in Anenii Noi:

The youth platform, supported by the program, facilitated the creation of three youth advocacy groups. The groups were supported to develop youth rayon strategies. During the reporting period, the rayon strategy for youth in Anenii Noi was approved.

Harnessing new international commitments to end harassment and violence in the field of work:

CPD successfully advocated for Ratification of ILO Convention 190 on the Elimination of Harassment and Violence in the World of Work. Around 80% of CPD recommendations for aligning the national legislation to the standards set out in the Convention CPD were accepted.

More inclusive state budget 2024:

CPD has successfully militated for allocating resources and expanding public nursery services. As a result of a dedicated analytical note, the amendments to rectify the state budget were registered. The draft law on state budget for 2024 was approved in the final reading during the plenary session of December 22, 2023.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
% of respondents who believe they have access to unbiased information	42.5%	Positive trend	51.3%	51.5%

The share of people who trust the Moldovan media was 51.3% in 2023. According to the latest 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 51.3% by August 2023.⁷

This increase in popular confidence may only partially be attributed to the efforts made by EEF and its partners. Other contributing factors could include the media monitoring efforts conducted by the Broadcasting Council as well as the creation of the National Council for Strategic Communication and Fighting Disinformation.

EEF made significant strides to promote a more inclusive media reporting, critical thinking, pluralism, citizens’ journalism and positive news. With funding leveraged from Swiss Cooperation Office in Moldova (SDC), the [second edition](#)⁸ of the “Journalists for diversity and inclusion” competition was organized on 04 December 2023 in the framework of the Moldova Media Forum 2023.⁹ A total number of 92 journalists and media outlets participated and a total number of 12 journalists and 2 media outlets were awarded in in the 2 editions of the “Journalists for diversity and inclusion” competition. The difficulty faced in the reporting period refers to one of the

⁷ IPP (2023). *Public Opinion Barometer*, p. 36, available online at https://ipp.md/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/BOP_08.2023.pdf

⁸ <https://api.md/ro/api-a-premiat-jurnalistii-care-promoveaza-diversitatea-si-toleranta-in-media/>

⁹ <https://mediaforum.md/event/2023>

categories announced in the “Journalists for diversity and inclusion” competition. The Media products made by students of journalism faculties in the country and beginners in journalism was a new category introduced in the competition. On one side this was an appropriate decision, in order to encourage students and beginners to write about tolerance and inclusion; on other hand, API encountered difficulties in registering a smaller number of applications within this new category, but promoting on social media and approaching concrete contacts from universities helped us to act proactively and finally having 8 applications. Also, the jury members adjusted to some extent the evaluation process for this category, as they could not be compared with the criteria applied for the rest of the categories, where the competitors were journalists with experience.

The second stage of the media monitoring report on diversity and inclusion were conducted, and the most important findings, conclusions and recommendations, were publicly presented on December 22, 2023. In the period September-October 2023, a number of 15 media outlets were monitored how they cover the subjects related to the marginalized groups, socially vulnerable persons etc. The key findings of the report are outlined below: (i) Some newsrooms monitored do not give enough space to inclusion and diversity issues; (ii) women are the group most often featured in press materials; (iii) Some groups – e.g. people who have been in detention, Roma, LGBT; (iv) people, appear very rarely in press materials; (v) Most of the material on the topic monitored is presented in the form of news, articles; investigative reports and other genres are present in a much smaller number; (vi) In some cases, the opinions of representatives of the group targeted in the material is missing; journalists prefer to get information from citizens (i.e. other people in the community), representatives of state institutions or the associative sector; (vii) With some exceptions, in most journalistic material on the topic of inclusion and diversity journalists used balanced, neutral language; (viii) For the most part the materials did not promote hate speech towards ethnic minorities, disadvantaged groups; (ix) With some exceptions, journalists followed rules of ethics when writing and editing news about the groups monitored; (x) Compared to the previous monitoring period, fewer cases of misuse of terminology related to disadvantaged groups were reported; (xi) Some portals that allow the publication of comments do not moderate their content.

The media monitoring in [2022](#) included 10 media outlets. In [2023](#), according to the project the same 10 media outlets and additional 5 media outlets should have been monitored. Based on the decision (from January 2023) of the Commission for Exceptional Situations (CSE) by which the licenses of 6 TV channels were suspended, some of the monitored media were replaced. Consequently, in case of seven media monitored in 2022 and 2023 it is possible to compare the results of media monitoring and to assess reporting trends. The comparative analysis of the reports reveals that five media outlets (out of seven) registered a significant quantitative increase in subjects related to the marginalized and vulnerable persons. For example, the SP newspaper increased the number of such reports from 7 articles in 2022 to 28 articles in 2023. Similarly, the national portal www.Newsmaker.md registered an increase from 58 articles in 2022 to 157 articles in 2023. In addition, the case of SP reveals a diversification of the topics addressed in the materials. Thus, in 2022 SP covered primarily the topics of old people and the Ukrainian refugees. In 2023, the newspaper included in its news reports the situation of the Roma and persons with Down Syndrome.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
# of issues solved through the intervention of local authorities	0	100	14	37
% of solved issues that were reported by women	0	increase	8	14

During the reporting period important progress was registered towards enhancing accountability of duty bearers through community journalisms. As the community journalists are developing and posting more articles reporting various community issues, the media impact is increasing along with the pressure on decision makers to solve specific issues. Examples of issues solved through community journalism are provided below.

Nicoleta Albot: "People motivate and inspire me"

Nicoleta Albot is 18 years old, she is a student at the "Eugen Coșeriu" Theoretical High School in Mihăileni village, Rîșcani district, a local activist and a community journalist. Nicoleta is one of the beneficiaries of the project "Media education and community journalism for young people from the north of the Republic of Moldova" and one of the young women awarded in the community journalism contest organized by DECA-press Agency within the nominated project.

Nicoleta Albot has been working with the community journalism platform Jurnalist.md for almost two years, but involvement in this project, as Nicoleta says, was useful in the sense that it strengthened her knowledge and skills in writing news and articles community.

Nicoleta is one of the leaders of the local organization „Tinerii Mihăilenari”, which organizes various activities in the village and gets involved in solving community problems

Talking about the advantages of participating in the project, Nicoleta says that she and six other young people from the organization benefited, benefited on November 5th, 2022, from a mentoring session in community journalism.

"My colleagues and I were pleasantly surprised by the quality of the training, which took place right in our town. We deepened our knowledge in community journalism and worked in the field. We approached people and we really liked that, we all found it interesting. The training was very useful", says Nicoleta, noting that she will continue to collaborate with the portal and jurnalist.md.

Referring to how she got involved in writing press materials on community issues, Nicoleta Albot said that this gave her more opportunities to interact with people.

"I like people with soul. People motivate and inspire me a lot. It was beautiful and, at the same time, a challenge and even a new success for me", says Nicoleta Albot.

As for the issues addressed in the materials, Nicoleta says she found the identification process more difficult because she likes to see "the full side of the glass."

"Even if there are problems in our town, the community and the local administration join their efforts to solve them," says the young woman.

Nicoleta Albot also says that in Mihăileni there is a "quite close" collaboration with the local public administration, because they support the community initiatives of young people.

Daniel Creangă, a student at the "Olimp" Theoretical High School in Sîngerei, was one of the most active community journalists in 2023.

In 2023, Daniel became one of the most active community journalists in Sîngerei. He wrote a series of articles on www.jurnalist.md, addressing a variety of local issues, including:

- The disastrous ecological state of the Ciuluc River: Daniel described in detail how the river was polluted with household and industrial waste, endangering both the environment and the health of the residents of the area.

- The deplorable situation of the Gări Auto station building in Săngerei: Daniel drew attention to the advanced state of decay of the building, which represented a danger for the safety of travelers.

Daniel's articles had a significant impact. After the publication of the article about the garbage in the Ciuluc river bed, the authorities reacted promptly and organized a campaign to clean up the area. Daniel actively participated in this campaign, joining the volunteers who collected the garbage and cleaned the banks of the river.

Daniel's activism did not stop there. He continued to write about the problems in Sîngerei, inspiring other young people to get involved in the life of the community. It proved that students also can have a real impact and contribute to positive change in the world around them.

Daniel Creangă's story is an example of civic activism for young people. It is proof that, regardless of age, anyone can make a difference if they have the courage to raise their voice and fight for what is right.

Sergiu Onofrei is a 15-year-old teenager, lives and studies in Taxobeni commune, Fălești district. Sergiu is one of the winners of the "Reporter in your locality" contest, organized by DECA-press Agency within the project "Media education and community journalism for young people from the north of the Republic of Moldova".

Sergiu Onofrei is one of the 109 young men and women from the north of Moldova who were trained in community journalism. "At the community journalism training sessions I learned many useful and interesting things. They helped me in my personal development. I still want to learn new things and hope, in the future, to become a journalist", says the young community journalist.

About the collaboration with the Jurnalist.md portal, Sergiu says that "it was a beautiful experience. I've had a lot to learn and I'll probably continue to learn more. Even if the project has finished, I will continue this collaboration to be able to continue making beautiful, useful and interesting things for me", Sergiu Onofrei confesses.

The young man also tells about the experience of his interaction with the local authorities, when he reported community problems in his articles. "I interacted with the people of the village, the local public administration which was open and responsive. When I approached the topic of a problem, the representatives of the local administration promised to solve the community's problems", says Sergiu.

The young community journalist says that he regularly talks with the local administration and conducts "negotiations" to identify solutions for community problems. Sergiu Onofrei published a series of articles on Jurnalist.md about the problems faced by the locals in Taxobeni. Topics covered include waste management; about a young people's initiative to set up a recreation area.

A topic addressed by Sergiu in a material published on Jurnalist.md and which sparked discussions in Taxobeni was the one about how the students of the high school classes in Taxobeni, Fălești district, took steps to benefit from food at school, but also a material about how the local "community vandals" remain unsanctioned.

The Zagarancea Town Hall in Ungheni district signed an agreement with the Association "Prietenii nostri" from the city of Ungheni regarding the solution of the mudlark dogs in the village, after it was reported by community journalists

The young volunteers from Măcărești, Ungheni, managed to obtain the afforestation of some areas with landslides, after reporting the problem.

Young people from Mihăileni, Râșcani district, set up a volleyball court and a badminton court, after the problem of the lack of spaces for practicing sports was reported.

New car parks were set up in Balti after the problem was reported by community journalists.

In Balti, solutions were found to reduce the problem of community dogs, after this problem was reported by community journalists

The problem regarding waste management in the village of Taxobeni, Râșcani district was solved, after community journalists wrote about it

The problem of providing drinking water from the aqueduct in a region of the city of Sângerei was solved, the problem being addressed by community journalists.

A recreation plan was developed and partially implemented at the city lake in Balti, after community journalists raised the alarm.

In Taxobeni, Fălești district, a playground for children was inaugurated, after its need was reported by community journalists.

In Boroseni, Râșcani district, a recreational park was set up for the villagers, after its need was reported by community reporters.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
# of vulnerable men and women who used the community journalists' platforms to comment public policies or report abuses	10	1000	180	290

In 2023 the project strategic partners engaged in the promotion of community journalism, Deca-Pres and *Urma*, scaled up their efforts focused on advancing community journalism. The produced and widely disseminated 10 podcasts on community journalism. The www.Stiripozitivo.eu portal includes a domain¹⁰ that groups various community journalism topics and maintains a banner that reveals some landmarks from the content of workshops with young people about community journalism. The statistics reveal that the topics created within the project "Community Journalism: Communication for the Community" have so far reached 30,646 people. Meanwhile, the network of Community journalists released 257 news and articles that were published on www.journalist.md and <https://www.facebook.com/jurnalismmd> with an impact of 17258, while 30.646 persons were informed about the opportunities of exploring community journalism to raise awareness of and solve community problems.

Following the goal of growing a new generation of community journalists, during the reporting period EEF enabled nine CSOs to run local campaigns that encourage civic engagement through the use community journalists. The grants' beneficiaries were selected on a competitive basis by an independent panel of experts. The brief description of each sub-grant is provided in the table below:

1. **AO "Studem", Balti:** The "Young Community Journalists in Action" project aims to train a new generation of young community journalists to generate authentic media content from Singerei, Făleşti, Rîșcani districts and Bălți municipality, using news platforms such as studem.md and jurnalism.md.
2. **AO „Alfa Beta”:** The goal of the project is to increase the civic involvement and active participation of young people in the life of their community, using community journalism that can be a powerful tool to build a more united and proactive community in finding solutions to their common problems.
3. **AO „Dezvoltare prin Implicare”, Cimislia and Basarabasca:** The project seeks to create a sustainable network of well-trained and motivated community journalists, who will contribute to positive local change and civic engagement in Basarabasca and Cimișlia districts.
4. **AO Centrul De Dezvoltare Durabilă Și Inovare Civică, Drochia:** The project aims to empower citizens from communities with skills, techniques, and tools to practice community journalism. Also, through this initiative, social journalism will be promoted as a very effective tool for disseminating information, forming public opinion and monitoring the social activities of decision-makers.
5. **AO Est-Curier, Criuleni:** The goal of the project "Local reflections in the pages of the regional press" is to promote freedom of expression, access to information as a mechanism for making decision-makers accountable by supporting and developing community journalism..
6. **AO "Nufarul", Rezina:** The project goal is to support the processes of democratic participation, to promote freedom of expression in order to improve the situation of local citizens, by using community journalism.
7. **Asociatia Psihologilor Tighina, Causeni:** The project "No filters: my community - in the objective" aims to promote community journalism in partnership with the local TV studio "Studio - L" by raising

¹⁰ <https://stiripozitivo.eu/category/jurnalism-comunitar/>

awareness about freedom of expression and access to impartial information in the communities from Căușeni.

8. **AO „Centrul Regional pentru Inițiative Sociale și Dezvoltare Durabilă”, Florești:** the goal of the Project "Community Journalism: Youth in Movement for Positive Change" is to promote community journalism in the Florești district - as a tool for identifying and solving the problems faced by young people at the local level.
9. **Asociația Internațională a Tinerilor, Chisinau:** The "Youth Activation Program 3.0" project aims to advance and develop the spirit of community journalism among young people, by creating a sustainable offer of empowerment opportunities, continuous information, including the commitment of young people in identifying and writing articles. Thus, local problems will be highlighted by young people and followed up by APL and other relevant local structures, which will later be managed together with the locals.

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 2022	Achieved in 2023	Cumulative indicators
% of respondents who believe that elections were free and fair, disaggregated by sex	28.9%	Increase	24.2%	27.3%	24.2%

Citizens' confidence in free and fair elections slightly improved during the reporting period compared to the previous year. According to the latest Barometer of Public Opinion, the share of people who believe that elections were free and fair increased from 24.2% in 2022 to 27.3% in October 2023. This positive trend may be explained by the extensive debates on the proposed amendments to the electoral legislation and the intense communication of the Central Electoral Commission with voters and civil society organisations concerned with free and fair elections.

EEF made significant strides to ensure that civil society, united under the umbrella of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections, are actively following the local general elections. Due attention was paid to enabling CSOs to empower under-represented groups to stand as candidates and to demand more inclusive elections.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
# of political parties that ensure a balanced representation of women and other under-represented in their internal governance	0	3	all	all

Gender quotas and placement requirements adopted in 2019 by the Parliament contributed to a significant increase in the share of women in Parliament and local councils. In light of these developments, during the reporting EEF consulted the Coalition members on the needs and strategies designed to support and scale up women's participation in the local general elections.

The consultation fed into the design of the call for proposals for advancing inclusion of the local general elections. As a result, four of nine supported initiatives were focused political empowerment of women (output 1.3.1.1 below).

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
% of polling stations accessible for PwD	45%	increase	N/A	In progress
Ballots are accessible for minority groups	ballots are accessible in Russian	ballots are accessible for minority groups	Ballots were accessible in Russian	Ballots accessible in Russian

In 2023 the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections worked to assess the election process and promote a fairer and more inclusive local suffrage held on 05 November 2023. As part of these endeavours they developed a joint advocacy plan, designed and widely disseminated two joint assessments of the electoral process, mapped the initiatives of the members, developed briefs about the electoral process, articulating shortcomings and recommendations for corrective measures.¹¹

Despite the adoption of regulations on accessibility of voting for persons with disabilities, CEC has not made public the information about the share of accessible polling stations. Reports developed by CSO members of the Coalition revealed that an important share of polling station are, as yet, not accessible.¹² Accessibility of polling stations remains a challenge for the upcoming elections in 2024 and 2025. Against this background, EEF supported initiatives that monitored the electoral process from the perspective of disability, taking into account their diversity and empowering persons with disabilities to stand as observers and claim their rights. Other initiatives focused on empowering women, ethnic minorities, women in detention and awareness raising on the importance of political inclusion.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
# 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	9	10

During the reporting period EEF enabled nine CSOs to advocate for increased inclusion of women, persons with disabilities and other under-represented groups. The nine campaigns conducted by CSOs strengthened the capacity of over 50000 representatives of vulnerable or under-represented

¹¹ The joint position papers of the Coalition are available online at www.alegeliber.md

¹² https://comunicate.md/index.php?task=articles&action=view&article_id=12208

groups to know and defend their electoral rights. Details results achieved by grantees are presented in the table below:

IDIS Viitorul – before the local elections IDIS conducted 18 debates on issues faced by vulnerable groups and electoral inclusion in 6 targeted communities, involving 506 representatives of underrepresented groups; after the elections the grantee trained 319 elected counsellors (including 244 women) on responding to the needs of most vulnerable groups.

Women’s Political Club 50/50 - empowered 125 women belonging to vulnerable groups in five targeted districts (Călărași, Nisporeni, Căușeni, Leova și Rezina) to stand as candidates during the local elections. The partners increased the knowledge of 203 first time voters from Balti and Singerei on democratic processes and encourage them to vote. In addition, the organization raised awareness among 70 representatives of political parties, development partners, media, civil society on the barriers faced by women belonging to vulnerable groups and corresponding solutions.

Women’s Alliance South - strengthened the capacities of 32 women from the southern region of Moldova to stand as election candidates. The project contributed to advance the turnout of voters by organising a campaign designed to promote a culture of participation among 81 persons belonging to vulnerable groups, by means of capacity building seminars conducted in three languages – Romania, Russian and Gagauz. In addition the grantee conducted get out the vote campaign, reaching out to 1100 voters.

Contact Centre - developed knowledge and skills of engaging in the electoral campaign for 42 women and men, including persons with disabilities, women, Roma and other under-represented groups, 16 of which stood as electoral candidates. A spot on electoral inclusion developed and widely disseminated by the grantee reached out to 163467 online users.

Moldovan Institute for Human Rights (IDOM) - informed people with mental disabilities from residential institutions about their electoral rights. The project trained 28 electoral observers and monitored the electoral process in 9 targeted residential institutions. As a result of the oversight process, the grantee informed decision-makers about the monitoring findings and corresponding recommendations.

Eternitate - empowered over 300 persons with disabilities to engage as voters and candidates in the electoral suffrage. The grantee enabled 15 persons with disabilities from 15 communities from Glodeni, Fălești și Edineț districts to monitor the elections from the disability perspective. In addition, the organisation raised awareness about the barriers faced persons with disabilities and equal political rights by means of district media, TV and posts on social networks.

Consultancy and Civic Education Centre - encouraged political and electoral participation of over 1000 women and men, including 75 persons with disabilities, 50 women in detention, 103 older persons. In addition to training and electoral rights and electoral inclusion for various target beneficiaries, the grantee developed and widely disseminated over 1000 leaflets and other online materials on inclusive elections.

Media Guard - informed Moldovan citizens, including minorities and disadvantaged groups, about their right to stand as candidates during local general. The fostered accountability of political actors, which were be invited to report on the role and representation of minority and disadvantaged groups in their political programs and party lists. The grantee carried out a vast information campaign that included supplements in one of the most read national newspaper, production and dissemination of explanatory videos on inclusive elections, public debates on the rights of marginalised groups to participate in elections, including the opportunity to stand as candidates, reaching out to over 50000 voters.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
Equality Gaps in the following areas: living standards, health, employment	positive trend compared to 2017	Positive trend	Data collected. The report will be published in 2024	Access to services – positive trend; Poverty – negative trend; Health – progress stalled; Employment – negative trend

During the reporting period the country faced multiple crises including the refugee crisis pursuant to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, energy crisis, high inflation. These negative factors affected the incomes access to basic needs, especially for the most vulnerable groups.

During the reporting period the partners collected the data for the Equality Gap and Social Distance Index to measure progress at impact level. The survey focuses on three main components (samples): (i) National Survey – aims at identifying the most relevant inequalities faced by the adult population of Moldova regarding participation, access to services, local development priorities, attitudes towards vulnerable groups, social distance, the labour market; (ii) Analysis of inequalities among people with disabilities – aims to identify inequalities affecting people with disabilities compared to people without disabilities; (iii) Analysis of inequalities among people of Roma ethnicity – aims at identifying the inequalities affecting people of Roma ethnicity compared to people of other ethnicities.

In 2023 EEF and its partners made a substantial contribution to community mobilization for more inclusive policies, mobilising over 18000 women and men around local development initiatives. Significant efforts were made to mobilise boys and girls to participate in local development through 10 youth banks all over the country that mobilised around 140000 women and men to address community needs. EEF and its partners created more employment opportunities for NEET youth, through capacity building, seed funding, work integration social enterprises. With project support, small and medium enterprises strengthened their export readiness capacity. In addition, the project enabled work integration social enterprises to contribute to the employment of 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 2023	Cumulative indicators
% 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	Water: 75.5% work: 63% health: 50.6% social protection: 44.8%	on track: significant increase

During the reporting period data on the public perception on the observance of social and economic rights became available. According to the recent report made public by the Ombudsperson’s Office, the public perception with regard to fundamental rights such as right to water, right to work, right to health and to social protection significantly increased.¹³

This positive change may not be fully attributed to the EEF programme. Additional factors include the significant support provided by development partners with the view to improving water infrastructure, creating economic opportunities, reform of the social assistance sector.

However, EEF made a profound contribution to this positive trends. The program made significant strides to ensure that citizens are better informed about the draft decisions of local public authorities and are increasingly able to shape design and implementation of decisions that affect their livelihoods, including social and economic rights.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
Number and % of recommendations proposed by initiative groups and accepted by authorities	17%	30%	37%	~40%
# of recommendations proposed by women’ initiative groups and accepted	30	100	N/A for the reporting period	27

In 2023 the District Participation Council (DPC) model was expanded in Floresti, Cimislia and Anenii Noi. To date, the six DPCs bring together 109 CSOs, including 70 CSOs in Soroca, Cahul and Causeni. During the reporting period these participation mechanisms analysed 197 draft decisions of district authorities and influenced 74 of them, that is approximately 37%. Examples of policy influencing efforts are presented below:

¹³ Vremis, Canatarji (2023). Studiu: percepții asupra drepturilor omului în Republica Moldova, Council of Europe Publishing, F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, accesibil online la <https://ombudsman.md/studiu-perceptii-asupra-drepturilor-omului-in-republica-moldova-in-2023/>

Promoting compliant and responsible budget spending in Causeni: members of Causeni DPC closely monitored implementation of district budget, particularly unjustified funds allocations. Thus, financial resources amounting 300 thou lei planned for repairing of two offices in District Council premises and 302 thou lei on repairing library and paving the corridor new gymnasium in Ursoaia village were put on hold since DC draft decisions were not properly justified by relevant documentation, such as needs assessment, technical evaluation, proper budgeting as well a clear justification of the need to carry out these works. As result, no unjustified expenses incurred.

Mainstreaming needs of NEET in local public policies: members of **DPC Floresti** and **CPC Cimislia** identified in 2023 the target groups for their analysis and mainstreaming in public policies the needs and difficulties faced by young people, NEET, in their districts. Thus, members of both DPCs carried out complex, pre-advocacy actions: (i) collected data on the number of NEET in their districts; (ii) identified the problems faced by young people; (iii) mapped the efforts taken by local state entities to facilitate specialized education and further employment; (iv) initiated dialogue with local public servants/specialists in education on enlarging access to schools and enhancing academic performances. All the summed-up data in Cimislia and Floresti shall serve as basis for advocacy efforts on mainstreaming needs of NEET in local public policies in both districts.

As a results of the **DPC Causeni** efforts The National Agency for the Development of Youth Activities programs launched the Support Program for local public authorities of level II regarding the strengthening of budget planning capacities for the youth component. The program will have two major interventions and will offer: Support in the implementation of the regional plan of activities on the youth sector for the year 2024, by providing the necessary consultancy, guidance and expertise; individualized assistance support in the development of the action plan for the year 2024 on the youth component based on needs, oriented on results and in accordance with available resources.

EEF and the DPC secretariats in the six targeted districts organised annual District Democracy Forums in the six targeted rayons. The goal of the activity was to promote strengthen accountability of new district authorities elected pursuant to local general elections held on 05 November 2023. The events also sought to advance transparency in the decision-making process and democratic policy influencing.

The Local Democracy Forums, conducted in December 2023, showcased the important role of citizen participation mechanisms. They also advanced policy dialogue with new decision-makers, elected pursuant to local elections held on 05 November 2023. During the forums, the members of the district participation councils presented the results achieved pursuant to policy analysis and dialogue with rayon councils. They also shared the monitoring reports findings and recommendations on the observance of the legislation on transparency in the decision making process.¹⁴ EEF produced and widely disseminated press releases, video materials, and social network posts about the Annual Democracy Forum, policy dialogue results and recommendations.¹⁵

¹⁴ The reports are available online at <https://eef.md/ro/publicatii/341>

¹⁵ <https://zugo.md/toate-stirile/foto-forumurile-anuale-ale-democratiei-locale-2023-democratia-participativa-in-raionul-cimislia-constatari-probleme-si-solutii/232305/toate-stirile>,
<https://www.facebook.com/fundatia.est.europeana/posts/pfbid02zYBefm2TvJxCoAdAj525iSqVrwHev1Dpmpfgqs>

In communities where no CSOs exist, the mentorship program, set up in partnership with Centre Partnership for Development (CPD) and co-funded by the Swiss Cooperation Office, contributed to the creation of inclusive initiative groups in 21 communities. By the end of the reporting period, these groups brought together 239 persons (women-166, men-73), of which: 37 young persons under 30; seven persons with disabilities; 29 persons over 60 and 45 other people at risk of marginalization. The teams mainly included persons from groups at high risk of marginalization (115 people at risk involved in the community groups).

The primary inclusion index of community groups conducted in 2023 varies from 0.4 to 1.9 (in the previous phase the score reached 2.8 points). While the inclusion rate is still low, EEF and CPD will continuously strengthen the teams and increase the score. At the first training the participants have learned the principles and values of inclusion, the need for inclusion, the necessary steps to follow to build a successful inclusive team. Specific individual consultations were provided to each team. Each community team was expanded with at least 2-3 new members. Subsequent trainings were focused on Good Governance through Inclusive Community Mobilisation, Inclusion and Integration Methods, Project Writing. The coalescing and capacity development efforts resulted in the design of community mobilisation action plans and corresponding grant applications to enable their implementation.

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 2022	Achieved in 2023	Cumulative indicators
# of CSOs demonstrating active involvement of people in assessing quality of local governance and designing community development initiatives	45	90	94 (including 34 CSOs in three new districts)	109	109 (including 34 CSOs in three new districts)
# of Gender impact assessments conducted to draft decisions of local public authorities	0	45	3 (gender analyses conducted as part of the selection process)	0	3 (gender analyses conducted as part of the election process)

With co-funding leveraged from the Swiss Cooperation Office, during the reporting period EEF made significant strides to promote and build additional community participation mechanisms in three additional districts targeted by the project. Pursuant to a competitive process, 10 selected CSOs were awarded community mobilisation and advocacy sub-grants. The sub-grants are outlined below.

[bDh9cvEpr3xJvKwfKkfXL6EsfGf](https://www.facebook.com/share/cDopevXHZfKfdFEg/?mibextid=WC7FNe), <https://www.facebook.com/fundatia.est.europeana/posts/pfbid033YP6e1hhwV77Jpo9e13Bf6XZuMUowX5RFKwA9pfAJTUijkY8WL684YciT7RuyFFMl>, [https://www.facebook.com/fundatia.est.europeana/posts/pfbid0M8x4iDJRDh9NbWaPe24tUDxUvqq7wK8qN2Ny2g5TJMi8xVWCMGqCyAe99MPAAtzCI?_cft_\[0\]=AZVLTWmhxt4Ny2f5iqAxdesh5VUGdfGSLfjpeaUSP3fBljQLHI88aumvQh5iOo3zisQJWh0UasdwiywkO-m4qfzYEhLUEHgyHQQeFoEAAQ4rF1Dg_XrTyXt37G8Cg9E1rOfPokO-cNddbAON_EYJGMpNPZlHq-oqSDWkxbMop3DaH7F18rkR353h-T4Bx99IEI&_tn_=%2CO%2CP-R](https://www.facebook.com/fundatia.est.europeana/posts/pfbid0M8x4iDJRDh9NbWaPe24tUDxUvqq7wK8qN2Ny2g5TJMi8xVWCMGqCyAe99MPAAtzCI?_cft_[0]=AZVLTWmhxt4Ny2f5iqAxdesh5VUGdfGSLfjpeaUSP3fBljQLHI88aumvQh5iOo3zisQJWh0UasdwiywkO-m4qfzYEhLUEHgyHQQeFoEAAQ4rF1Dg_XrTyXt37G8Cg9E1rOfPokO-cNddbAON_EYJGMpNPZlHq-oqSDWkxbMop3DaH7F18rkR353h-T4Bx99IEI&_tn_=%2CO%2CP-R)

1. **AO "Asociația Băștinașilor din satul Mărculești", Florești:** The project will mobilize and empower NEET youth to solve community problems. NEET young people will connect Local Councils with the virtual space of social media, thus ensuring the transparency of decisions regarding this vulnerable group.
2. **AO „Mișcarea Ecologistă Ștefan Vodă”, Ștefan Vodă:** The aim of the project is to increase the civic spirit and mobilization of the community in the city of Ștefan-Vodă and involve citizens into good governance at local level. The grantee will support the creation of sustainable initiative groups and facilitate policy dialogue with local decision makers.
3. **AO „RENAȘTEREA”, Ștefan Vodă:** The project will develop functional and sustainable participation mechanisms, aimed at improving the level of participation of young people in the decision-making process, facilitating the dialogue between young people and social actors.
4. **AO Prezentul și viitorul tinerilor din comuna Gura Camencii, Florești:** The project will support the creation and activity of three Seniors' Clubs and volunteer groups for older people. They will provide the opportunity to get involved into such activities as caring for the environment, supporting children or organizing community events.
5. **AO Pro-Democrație, Cimișlia:** The project seeks to improve the participation and involvement of older people in local decision-making and promote human rights and decision makers' accountability in the Satul Nou community. To achieve this goal, the project proposes a series of planned and structured activities, including awareness raising, capacity building and policy dialogue.
6. **AO "Silent Generation", Florești:** The project will mobilize young people from the communes of Gura Căinarului and Vărvăreuca and engage them in the creation and consolidation of youth self-governance structures in these localities, as well as increase the level of access to public resources for the youth.
7. **GAL „Lunca Răutului”, Florești:** The grantee will build the capacities of young people from 5 localities in the Lunca Răutului LAG (C.Prajila, s.Lunga, c.Gura Căinarului, or.Mărculești, s.Mărculești) to be able to evaluate and formulate recommendations to draft decisions relevant to young people or to develop new policies in priority areas.
8. **AO „Părinți educatori "Andrieș", Ștefan Vodă:** The project will familiarize the citizens of the village of Emoclia with the methods of information, consultation, public participation in the participative budgeting process and the advantages of public participation in the life of the community, for good governance at local level.
9. **Centrul de Dezvoltare a personalității Ungherașul Fericii, Florești:** The project will foster active involvement of 25 most vulnerable women in the decision-making process at the local level. This approach will bring on public agenda the perspective of disadvantaged women, thus fostering social inclusion.
10. **Asociația Obștească „Paideia”, Florești:** The project will promote NEET youth inclusion by motivating them through media products attractive to young people. The action also connects young people with local authorities and local business.

To date, the sub-grantees managed to set up 17 initiative groups, including 15 groups of young women and men and two groups focused on the empowerment of older people.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
Share of NEET young women and men in targeted communities	30,8% at national level	At least 10% decrease	26,6%	~26%

The progressive efforts made by EEF brought important results in terms of diminishing the NEET youth rate. By the end of 2023, the NEET rate dropped to 26.6 compared to 30.8 in 2019. EEF

interventions included Youth banks, Youth Entrepreneurship Funds (YEF), social services targeting youth.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
% of funds raised by youth banks from local authorities	81%	81%	83%	83%
% of funds raised by youth banks from businesses	18.4%	20%	10%	10%

By the end of 2023 the YouthBank Moldova network comprised 10 YouthBanks, coordinated by 140 young people from 10 localities, including Bender in the Transnistrian region. Involvement in YouthBank offers young people experiences and responsibilities that foster lifelong community involvement. It combines a number of elements that are currently being strongly promoted in policy initiatives.

During the reporting period EEF and its local partners advanced participation and opportunities for young women and men, designed to achieve positive impact for themselves and their communities. Local partners successfully conducted thematic trainings which build young people's self-esteem and confidence and provide them with an opportunity to learn new skills in leadership, team-work, decision-making, problem-solving, communication, empathy development, negotiation.

Considering these efforts, we can notice that youth are increasingly empowered to address community needs through active mobilisation and participation. According to the data collected from all ten youth banks in 2023, around 80% of respondents mentioned that community issues can be solved through their participation.

Local businesses are increasingly supporting the YouthBanks. This high share is the result of youth group's activism, transparency and continuous engagement with local stakeholders.

YouthBanks made significant efforts to fundraise from the LPA (83%), from the private sector actors and during fundraising events (7%). In 2023, the Ialoveni district Council contributed financially with **382 000** thousand MDL for financing the small grants programme. In 2023, there were conducted **35 fundraising events** including the charity events, donation boxes, door-to-door campaigning, face painting and others.

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.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
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# of youth groups [youth banks] that demonstrated successful youth mobilisation and empowerment initiatives	10	10	10	10
# of boys and girls in targeted communities mobilised through the youth banks' initiatives	128536	200000	14000	293068
# of youth led businesses created with project support, disaggregated by sex	66	120	73	225
# of new workplaces created by youth-led businesses	81	200	78	225

Youth Banks

EEF increasingly strengthened the capacity of youth steering committee members. In all of the 10 YouthBanks across Moldova including Transnistria region there are well trained initiative groups made up mainly by young people who are implementing local initiatives, projects and small grants programs, thus participating in youth-driven decision-making and community development. Their creative perspectives, dynamic spirit and contagious enthusiasm are transforming the shape of their community and living up the community life. The YouthBank program has contributed significantly to the increase of voluntary engagement of young women and men in community development initiatives.

Equality and non-discrimination are among the key principles guiding all youth banks' activities. Thus, at least 50% 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).

In 2023, these enthusiastic boys and girls supported **174 youth led initiatives** (i. e. creating a playground, improving educational conditions, creating guidance and career info point, the greening of the space, sanitation actions, collection of funds for refugees) that mobilized around **14000 young boys and girls.**

200 young people from Popeasca Gymnasium including 20 refugees and 18 young families benefitted of the YouthBank community initiative "Through sport to friendship".

The project initiative group "Creators of the Future" set up a friendly space for young people from the secondary school, but also for Roma children refugee, beneficiaries of the local Placement Centre. With the 15000 MDL grant support they managed to install sports equipment, adapted for outdoor use: tennis table, armwrestling table, chess table and checkers, which will contribute to the social integration of Ukrainians in the local community.

Young people have been actively involved in the set-up and installation process. This action is highly appreciated by the community members and LPA as healthy lifestyle concept which includes activities and habits that encourage the development of total physical, mental, and spiritual fitness, and which reduces the risk of major illness.

The sustainability of the project will be ensured by the Gymnasium in collaboration with the City Hall.

Youth Entrepreneurship Funds

During the reported period, EEF continued to empower young people from the economic perspective. Leveraged funds from the European Union with the *Economic and Social Development Program* further contributed to the development of **10 Youth Entrepreneurship Funds** that are oriented to strengthen the entrepreneurship skills of young people and to support self-employment of NEET youth through development of entrepreneurship ideas of young NEET men and women at the local level.

Based on identified needs, staff members of the Youth Entrepreneurship Funds benefited from project capacity opportunities and improved their fundraising capabilities by participating in a two-days practical training course on fundraising. Contracted experts helped the participants to understand the key principles in fundraising and provided examples and positive fundraising practices. Also, several 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) etc.

As a result of these efforts, all the participants have improved their knowledge and are ready to share it with the team at the local level. Following this training program, the **10 Entrepreneurship Funds** benefited from individual mentoring in order to develop and implement fundraising plans.

All 10 Youth Entrepreneurship Funds proved to be reliable and trusted organizations which contributed to the creation of **73 small businesses**. Moreover, 48% of total businesses are led by women, which is a great input for the economic empowerment of women and a proven advantage of gender-balanced leadership in the small and medium-sized business. All created YEFs have had a great success at local level.

It is worth to mention that this project offered opportunities to young people to participate in professional business trainings, coaching, change of experience between different funds, work in teams. The social impact of this training could be seen at local level, young people are motivated to stay in the country in order to set up a business. The applicants who didn't receive grants were referred to other programs like "Femei in afaceri" and/or "Start pentru tineri" managed by ODA. Some of these young women and men received grants from ODA, others were helped to obtain financial resources on crowdfunding platforms in order to be motivated to persevere in this field. The young people also were informed about the program "Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs" and the contact point for this program.

During the implementation period there were identified several challenges at local level:

- Lack of databases in the town halls with reference to the number of NEET young people in their localities, their occupation, the level of education, their needs, etc.
- The low participation rate of the young students in the information sessions organized in the town halls, due to educational system - universities, colleges, vocational schools.

It is important to note that, despite the difficulties, the sub-grantees and the young business community continued to apply new formats and flexibility, altogether were able jointly to obtain good results for further development. The cooperation with the LPA is a strength within all youth entrepreneurship funds. The best appreciation of the project constitutes the feedback of the final beneficiaries who are young NEET entrepreneurs in this specific case.

The story of Tamara Andrieş din Ilenuța, Făleşti, who transformed the obstacles in opportunities (Romanian)¹⁶

Nicolae Cneazev: „Due to this project I managed to buy equipment for starting a new business (Romanian)¹⁷

Quail farm - soul business for Nicolae Golovatii (Romanian)¹⁸

Andrei's Mini-farm extended with European funds (Romanian)¹⁹

Mihai took the step towards realizing his dream - expanding a rabbit farm (Romanian)²⁰

Youth services targeting NEET youth

EEF supported 14 inclusive pilot programs in partnership with territorial divisions of the National Employment Agency (NEA), Youth Centres, other relevant stakeholders. The project initially strengthened the capacity of 21 CSOs to analyse and conceptualize services. Subsequently, the action enabled these CSOs to launch these initiatives. Thus 14 CSOs succeeded in offering services targeting NEET youth. Thus, 400 NEET young people from the whole country, including left bank of Nistru River have benefited of increased capacities and strengthened knowledge in various vocational, life skills, basic employment opportunities, IT, marketing and small business fields. Moreover, 64 NEET young women and men are currently employed after they benefited of services launched through the inclusive pilot programs, the employment of whom was mostly facilitated by of them being National Employment Agency, local business and other educational and youth organizations.

CSOs increased their organizational capacities to monitor services for NEET youth at the local level and pilot innovative services. A series of actions empowered local CSOs to contribute to more inclusive youth services targeting NEET youth. EEF carried out 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 were carried out. Under this program 21 organizations have been equipped with tools for monitoring, planning and developing services for

¹⁶ <https://aopd.md/tamara-andries-din-ilenuta-falesti-a-transformat-obstacolele-in-oportunitati/>

¹⁷ <https://aopd.md/nicolae-cneazev-datorita-acestui-proiect-am-reusit-sa-mi-procur-materiale-pentru-constructia-custilor-iepuri-si-hrana/>

¹⁸ <https://aopd.md/ferma-de-prepelite-afacere-de-suflet-pentru-nicolae-golovatii/>

¹⁹ <https://aopd.md/miniferma-lui-andrei-jealeascov-extinsa-cu-bani-europeni/>

²⁰ <https://aopd.md/mihai-a-facut-pasul-catre-realizarea-visului-sau-extinderea-unei-crescatorii-de-iepuri/>

NEET youth and thus were enabled to analyze and monitor youth services, conduct innovative outreach services, promote sustainability of such services at the local level.

"Inclusive service: EduCare for life skills": "Principii Sănătoase" Association

The development of the "Young NEET Guide" and the launch of the online platform for NEET youth-friendly organizations are some of the several activities carried out by the "Principii Sănătoase" Association, as part of the "Better opportunities for Young Women and Men Not in Education, Employment and Training in Moldova (NEET Inclusion Initiative)" funded by the European Union, co-funded by Sweden and implemented through East Europe Foundation.

The "Principii Sănătoase" Association team developed, together with the experts, the "Inclusive Service: EduCare for life skills" and "NEET Youth Guide" to promote the topics included in this guide. In addition, the online platform for NEET-friendly organizations is operational, which can be accessed at www.educareon.wordpress.com. This online platform was created to facilitate the access of NEET youth to the service includes "EduCare for life skills" and to help them connect with NEET friendly organizations in the locality for the sustainable development of healthy life skills and active citizenship.

This approach will subsequently contribute to the prevention of school dropout, the development of healthy life skills, as well as to increasing interest in employment among young people, especially from the NEET category. In continuation of the initiative activities "Inclusive service: EduCare for life skills", a board game was created, entitled "EduCare for life skills".²¹

"MY profession and I am proud of it": Social Justice Center "EQUITY" for NEET Youth

The "Echitate" Social Justice Center organized, the "Vocational Fair" which was attended by young men and women from the Criuleni town, economic agents, and other stakeholders. The fair was organised within the "Better opportunities for Young Women and Men Not in Education, Employment and Training in Moldova (NEET Inclusion Initiative)" funded by the European Union,

As part of the "Equal opportunities for all and everyone" project, the Social Justice Center "Echitate" carried out several activities to support and empower 18 NEET young men and women from the Security Zone with the aim of motivating NEET young people, to change their attitude and to access a profession or to follow their studies.

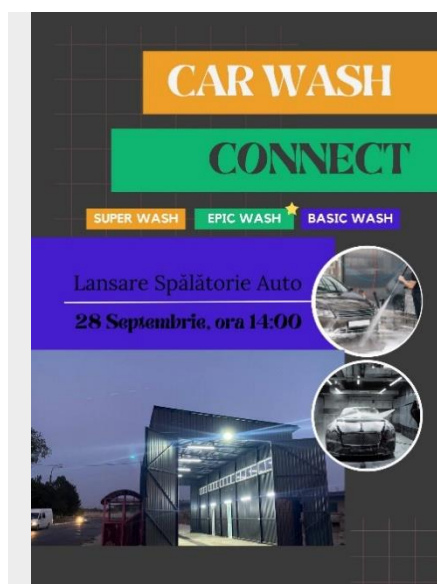
The "vocational fair" was organized with the aim of bringing NEET young men and women closer to each other, to show that they are not alone, that they can ask for help, that there are both authorities and members of civil society ready to offer them a help and give them advice, guidance. EEF representatives met 3 out of 6 NEET young people that are now employed due to this project activity.²²

²¹ <https://eef.md/ro/video-tinerii-si-tinerele-neet-asociatia-principii-sanatoase-and-asociatia-initiativa-pozitiva/335>

²² <https://old.eef.md/index.php?pag=news&id=929&rid=1710&l=ro>

Work integration Social Enterprises targeting NEET Youth

EEF supported the development of five inclusive social enterprises established with the support of the project, 37 NEET young people are officially employed by these enterprises. In addition the social enterprises contributed to employment of 110 NEET young women and men by offering trainings and internship opportunities in independent living skills, improvement of professional skills, in the field of drying and processing services o; wrapping and packaging process, production of developing games and toy, marketing, bakery, etc



The "NEET's ECOdriving" project aimed to establish a social enterprise "ECO DRIVING" in Florești, focused on the inclusion of NEET young people in the field of work. As a result of the project the „Connect” Car wash is now functional, having employed two NEET young people. The Enterprise was part of the project “Better opportunities for Young Women and Men Not in Education, Employment and Training in Moldova (NEET Inclusion Initiative)” funded by the European Union, co-funded by Sweden and implemented through East Europe Foundation. It is worth mentioning, that the implementing CSO, as a follow up and continuation of the Car Wash business, obtained another grant, which generated the launch of a cafe as an extension of the Car Wash business, hiring other NEET young men and women.

Pop Symphonic – partnership with “LalaPlay Voices” CSO

A total of 120 children from 32 districts of the country, including ATU Gagauzia and the left bank of the Dniester, of which 80 beneficiaries are from the previous period were well integrated and empowered with knowledge, attitudes, self-confidence and visions of personal and professional development, by participating at the 9th edition of the Pop Symphonic. This initiative contributes to the empowerment of talented children and young people from socially vulnerable groups.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
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	
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During the reporting period EEF made significant strides to improve access of most vulnerable groups to employment opportunities and social services. This result was achieved through: six business hubs that provided counselling to around 2000 small and medium enterprises; 25 social enterprises that created 107 new jobs and provided free of charge services to over 1875 vulnerable women and men; support to 10 consortia that piloted innovative employment services for disadvantaged groups and contributed to the employment of 208 persons, mostly persons with disabilities.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2023	Cumulative indicators
% 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 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. Detailed 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 2022	Achieved in 2023	Cumulative indicators
# of SMEs who reported increase of profit due to business development assistance provided with project support	531	1000	913 (224 men, 689 women) consulted	366	897

During the reporting **period four regional social business hubs** set up by EEF with co-funding from the EU registered significant progress, increasingly supporting the development of social enterprises. They organized 26 events for SMEs and potential entrepreneurs. In 2023 the regional business hubs consulted 145 women and men in the area of social entrepreneurship. In addition, the four business hubs provided trainings and consultancy for 293 entrepreneurs, most of them women.

Region	Organization	No. of consultations offered to social enterprises and individuals

Northern region, Singerei district	PA Center for Socio-Economic Policies CONSENS	25
Southern region, Cahul municipality	Chamber of Commerce and Industry from Cahul	57
Transnistrian region, Tiraspol city	Association of Social Entrepreneurs	47
Central region, Chisinau	Chamber of Commerce and Industry from Chisinau	15

In addition, **Six Business Hubs** set up during the earlier stage of project implementation (Chisinau, Tiraspol, Comrat, Balti, Orhei) made progress to measure their performance. Surveys focused on the profit of SMEs pursuant to the assistance provided by the project were conducted in each region. The key results are presented below:

- Collected data revealed that 366 SMEs have reported increase of sales due to improved knowledge and better visibility provided by EEF and its partners.
- Six business hubs consulted 1027 entrepreneurs, out of which 564 from the urban area and 453 from the rural areas.
- They trained 1717 entrepreneurs, including 1097 women.
- Business hubs offered 60 grants to entrepreneurs.
- To date, 31 paid services are created by business hubs.
- With project support, 42 SMEs exploring new export-related economic opportunities under AA/DCFTA

EEF and its partners made significant strides to facilitate exchange of good practices among business and to promote small and medium enterprises:

- Two big networking events organized by Business Skills Hub from Balti and Business Hub from Tiraspol. The events have been attended by all 6 business hubs with its beneficiaries small companies;
- Eco fair organized at Balti “Ecoplai”-first eco fair in the northern region attended by 30 small local producers;
- Four podcast with managers of social enterprises have been filmed for promotion of the social entrepreneurship concept.

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
# 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	
# of vulnerable women and men assisted through more inclusive services ²³	0	Increase	2616, including 208 employed persons	2616

²³ This is an additional indicator, included to better reflect the results achieved during the reporting period.

The achievement of this output was contingent upon funding expected to be raised from the World Bank, under 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)”. At this stage progress was stalled.

Despite the hurdles faced in achieving this bridging outcome, in 2023 EEF advanced employment opportunities and support for most vulnerable groups, including former detainees, women, persons with disabilities.

Consortia for more inclusive services

During the reporting period 10 CSO consortia, bringing together 30 domestic CSOs, advanced the implementation of sub-grants grants designed to improve services and opportunities for vulnerable groups. The initiatives were awarded in 2022 with funding from the EU and co-funding provided by Sweden.

The beneficiaries of supported consortia:

4 consortia - **persons with physical disabilities**

2 consortia worked with the **unemployed women and men**

1 consortium - **young persons with special educational needs**

1 consortium - **NEET young people**

2 consortia - were focused on the inclusion of **persons with psycho-social and intellectual disabilities**

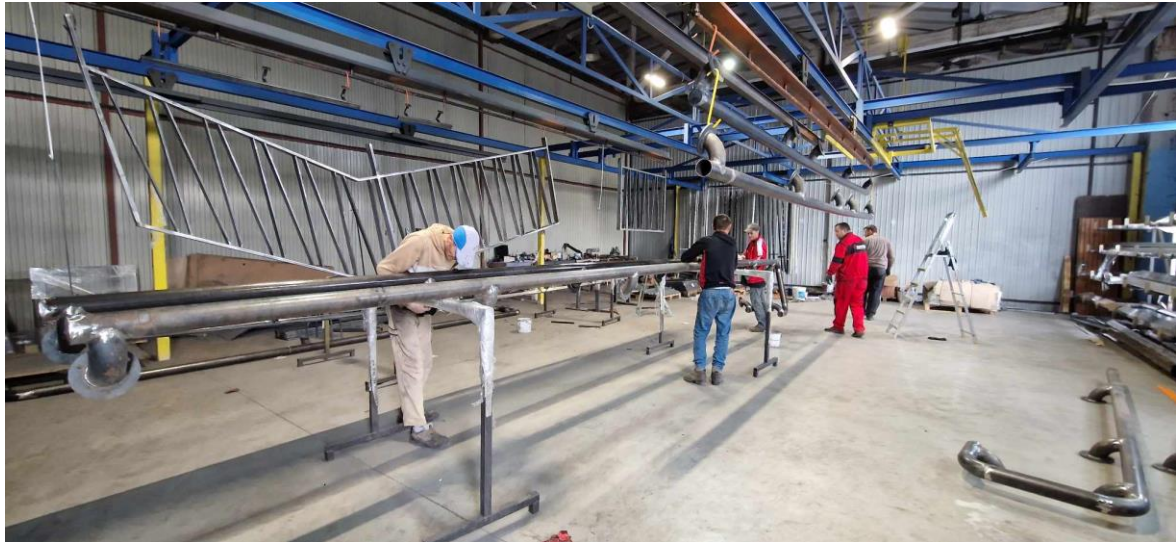
1 consortium worked for the inclusion of **persons released from detention, former drug users, people infected with HIV/AIDS.**

Consortium for the employment of former detainees

Within the consortium led by Regional Center for Community Policies, ten persons have been assisted for inclusive employment. These persons are ex-detainees. One person spent 20 years in prison. He entered at 30 years and exited at 50. He has no one. And Bertam company, where he is employed, became his family. Now he has a decent salary and friends.

Bertam itself is a social enterprise, which has no status for now. Out of 60 employees, 40 are former prisoners. The company's annual turnover is 30 million MDL/1 500 000 Eur.

In addition to all the listed, the impact of the business is the fact that 6 people who passed the rehabilitation and were employed for some time at Bertam, opened their own companies.



In the picture: marginalised persons employed by Bertam SRL

The table below summarises the key results achieved by Consortia for more inclusive services by the end of 2023:

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Achieved in 2023	Cumulative indicators
No. vulnerable women and men consulted within the consortia initiative on employment opportunities	0	2616	2616
No. of vulnerable people trained within 10 consortia	0	2322	2322
Number of vulnerable people who were employed as a result of the consortium's assistance	0	208	208
Number of vulnerable women who were employed as a result of the consortium's assistance	0	86	86

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 2023	Cumulative indicators
# of Work Integration Social Enterprises created (data disaggregated by the sex of the manager of the social enterprise)	17	30	25 (17 – w, 8- m)	42
# of vulnerable women and men in targeted communities assisted by social enterprises	131	300	1875 including 107 new jobs	1875

With co-funding leveraged from the European Union, in 2023 EEF supported 25 social enterprises created 107 new jobs for vulnerable women and men, including persons with physical and psycho-social disabilities, ex-detainees, drug abusers, single mothers, mothers with children with autism, older people, persons living in poverty. Overall, during the reporting period social enterprises

offered free of charge products and services to more than 1875 persons with various vulnerabilities.

Vibe Academy - a successful social enterprise

In 2022 Asociatia de Dezvoltare a Competentelor Profesionale received a grant of 35 000 euro for setting a social enterprise in Cahul.

"Vibe Academy" Educational Center comes to offer courses to develop a generation for the future, competent on the labor market. Its team are experienced practitioners who can explain courses in a way that children can understand, even when it seems impossible and extremely complicated. The program is created by own team and is an individualized one, based on tasks and game activities through which students will fall in love with the fields of IT, Robotics, Painting, English and the After School Program.

In 2022 Vibe academy was placed in Chisinau and opened a branch in Cahul. In 2024, Vibe Academy has 7 branches in: Edinet, Criuleni, Orhei, Hincesti, two in Chisinau and Cahul.

At Cahul branch, there are 68 beneficiaries who attends the courses on a paid basis, aged between 4-15 years, 23 children attend the Robotics, IT and English courses completely free of charge and 6 children with a 50% covered fee.

In Cahul branch there are 3 employees: a mother on maternity leave, who has pedagogical studies and work in the AfterSchool program; another mother on maternity leave as an English teacher (flexible schedule) and a full administrator -time, who is a part-time student.

The children from all towns must have opportunities at local level and Vibe Academy achieved this target.

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, EEF continuously operationalised 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. 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.

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. In 2023, 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 2023 EEF up-scaled support of the two Youth Banks established in the region in 2018, advanced the social entrepreneurship model and employment opportunities through social entrepreneurship and youth entrepreneurship targeting NEET youth.

Accessibility of information for ethnic minorities

EEF worked 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.

