



EAST EUROPE FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024

CHISINAU - 2025

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ACRONYMS

API	Association of Independent Press
AOPD	Alliance of CSOs for Persons with Disabilities
CPD	Centre Partnership for Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EBA	European Business Association
DPC	District Participation Council
DPO	Disabled Peoples' Organisation
EEF	East Europe Foundation
EU	European Union
LPA	Local Public Administration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SE	Social Enterprise
YB	Youth Bank
District	Administrative territorial unit, in Romanian "raion"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following narrative report reflects the progress under the EEF Strategic Plan “Engaging Citizens, Empowering Communities” (hereinafter the Program) from January 1 to December 31, 2024. 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.

Key results achieved in 2024:

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 150 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 21 out of the 43 targeted policies.

A new Civic Engagement for Youth and Women Empowerment initiative, launched in 2024, is paving the way to strengthening the advocacy and oversight capacities of 50 women and youth associations.

522 prospective community journalists, identified during this reporting period, developed and posted over 500 articles reflecting community issues. In 2024 duty bearers addressed at least 11 issues reported by means of the portal www.journalist.md.

The strategic partnership with the Association of Independent Press contributed to significant amendments approved to the Media Code of Ethics regarding the coverage of the vulnerable and marginalized groups

31 CSOs, united under the umbrella of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections, actively monitored the Presidential Elections and the Constitutional Referendum and articulated corrective measures for electoral bodies, local authorities, law enforcement bodies and political actors

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:

109 CSOs in six targeted districts (Cahul, Soroca, Causeni, Floresti, Stefan Voda, Cimislia) steadily advanced transparency and responsiveness of local authorities towards community needs. In 2024

they analysed 131 draft decisions and influenced 37 local decisions from the perspective of inclusion.

47 local initiative groups (21 within the mentorship component, 26 within the sub-grants component) actively interactive with local public authorities to address local issues

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 110000 young girls and boys.

Four social business hubs provided social economy training to 162 potential social entrepreneurs;

10 work integration social enterprises targeting most vulnerable women and men were set up. In 2024, these social economy entities employed 52 persons and provided free of charge or partially paid services to 1696 vulnerable persons (572 men and 1124 women)

EEF and its strategic partners launched the “Impact Space” initiative, paving the way towards a supportive ecosystem for social enterprises in Moldova.

EEF made significant strides to support advocacy, community mobilisation and service delivery efforts of national and grass-roots CSOs. In 2024 EEF managed 119 grants awarded to Moldovan CSOs, 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), relevant 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:

The reporting period was marked by continued efforts to advance the EU integration of the country. Pursuant to the European Council’ approval of the negotiating framework, the screening process was initiated in July 2024. A referendum on enshrining the EU integration in the Constitution was conducted jointly with the first round of the Presidential elections, on the 20th of October 2024. The proposal to amend the constitution with the EU integration path was supported by 50.38% of voters.

Moldova continued to face multiple crises that affected vulnerable groups. National and local authorities had to accommodate large numbers of refugees. The Moldovan Government also had to contain inflationary pressure which was prompted *inter alia* by ongoing threats to energy supplies and security. Against this background, the project continuously adjusted its interventions by mainstreaming the needs and the barriers faced by refugees in the advocacy work and on designing recommendations focused on fairer redistribution of available public resources

At local level, transparency in the decision-making process registered slight improvements.

The six district participation councils increasingly engaged in policy dialogue with district decision makers. However, local public authorities often continued the practice of organising extra-ordinary sessions to by-pass transparency requirements. This negative practice was underscored during policy dialogue events.

During the reporting period the phenomenon of disinformation significantly intensified.

Disinformation became an increasingly pressing issue, further amplified by various sources, including social media, which played a key role in the rapid spread of false and manipulative information.

Main steering implications for 2025:

As the civic infrastructure came to fruition, EEF and its partners shall consider innovative ways of maintaining it and building on achieved results. Due attention shall be paid to guiding the targeted CSO networks in the implementation of capacity development plans. Good practices in the field of social economy, youth engagement, community mobilisation, shaping policies from the perspective of inclusion, shall be widely disseminated.

The upcoming parliamentary elections in 2025 may prompt attempts by some political actors to discredit CSOs as foreign agents rather than promoters of sustainable development, social inclusion, democratic principles and human rights standards. In the event of such situations, the project partners shall be ready to provide the support to both national and local CSOs in documenting any cases of intimidation and reporting them to the institutions in charge.

The presidential elections underlined the country's and its citizens' vulnerability to disinformation. These challenges occurred amid significant foreign interference attempts and sustained attacks on democratic values and institutions. Experts identify social networks, particularly Facebook and TikTok, as the primary channels for spreading disinformation. With 2025 being another electoral year, disinformation narratives will intensify. Prioritizing media literacy initiatives is essential, as fostering critical thinking remains the most effective long-term strategy for countering malign influences, both internal and external.

The project should continue the exchange with other actors implementing development programs in targeted regions including UNDP, UN Women, Soros Moldova, IREX, GIZ. The project implementation team shall continue to actively coordinate and synergize with these programs and avoid duplication especially in targeted communities.

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 2024
Civil liberties and political rights score for Moldova (Freedom House)	60/100	Positive trend	60/100 (1 point decrease compared to 2023)

The full report on civil and political rights score for Moldova 2024 has not been published yet. **According to the available data,¹ the score for Moldova has dropped by one point in 2024 compared to the previous year (2023).** This slight regress might be explained by increasing concerns over illicit foreign interference and active disinformation efforts during the Presidential Election and Constitutional Referendum, 20 October 2024, and the Second Round of Presidential Election, 3 November 2024 expressed by independent election observation actors, including OSCE/ODIHR² and Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections.³

EEF and its partners were instrumental in advancing political rights and more inclusive public policies. EEF supported more than 249 CSOs and their networks to shape national and local public policies from the perspective of inclusion. Exploring its access to the grassroots civic infrastructure, EEF made significant strides to expand the network of community journalists that report local issues and demand greater accountability from duty bearers. The Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Election actively engaged in independent election oversight and advocacy to prevent and mitigate foreign interference threats, disinformation, use of administrative resources. In its final statement on the conduct of the Presidential Elections and Constitutional Referendum (2024), the Civic Coalition stressed that despite raised awareness about such risks, including from past experiences (such as the 2023 local elections and the Gagauz Bashkan elections) preventive measures to combat illegal financing were not timely adopted, and the interventions in the electoral campaign were insufficient in relation to the scale of the phenomenon.⁴ The detailed progress towards programme outcomes is substantiated below.

Outcome 1.1. Organised men and women influence targeted public policies

Performance indicators	Baseline (2019)	Target 2025	Achieved by 2024
CSO Advocacy Indicator <i>Right to participation in decision-making*</i>	3.1	Positive trend	5.0* (slight increase compared to 2023)

The CSO Advocacy Indicator was no longer available in 2024. In light of these circumstances EEF will use the CSO Meter as an alternative tool for measuring CSO participation in decision-making. **According to the latest report, the overall score in this area increased from 4.9 in 2023 to 5.0 in 2024, due to score improvements in both legislation and practice.** The legislation score increased from 5.3 in 2023 to 5.4 in 2024, driven by amendments to transparency legislation and local participation mechanisms.

EEF had a tangible contribution to increased CSO participation in decision-making. According to the CSO Meter 2024, despite the lack of mechanisms proposed by LPAs, at the

¹ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/moldova>

² OSCE/ODIHR (2025). *Presidential Election and Constitutional Referendum, 20 October 2024, and the Second Round of Presidential Election, 3 November 2024: ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report*, available online at https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/9/587451_0.pdf

³ Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (2024). *STATEMENT POSITION OF THE CIVIC COALITION FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLICAN REFERENDUM IN 2024*, available online at <https://alegeliber.md/en/declaratie-pozitia-coalitie-civice-pentru-alegeri-libere-si-corecte-fata-de-alegerile-prezidentiale-si-referendumul-republican-constitutional-din-2024-4145.html>

⁴ *ibid*

initiative of CSOs and with the support of international partners there is, however, an increasing positive experience of local participation formats, including the six District Participation Councils set up with EEF support.⁵

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 2024
% of CSOs recommendations accepted	~25%	35%	33%
% of recommendations accepted on gender equality	~25%	50%	50%
% of draft public policies consulted with civil society	48.3%	60%	80%

By the time of submitting the report, the official report on the observance of transparency in the decision-making process in 2024 was not published on the web site of the State Chancellery. The data for the previous year revealed that around 79% of draft laws and 81% of draft Government Decisions were subjected to public consultation. According to the same source, around 64% of CSO proposals were accepted by relevant public authorities.

During the reporting period, EEF progressively empowered CSOs representing vulnerable groups to shape public policies from the perspective of inclusion of most vulnerable women and men. With project support, over 249 local and grassroots CSOs analysed national and local public policies in six targeted districts. To date, these networks influenced around 33% of targeted policies that affect the livelihoods of vulnerable groups, including Roma, older people, persons with disabilities, women. These data reveals that the project is on track with implementation, close to the 35% policy influencing target.

Due attention was paid to gender equality mainstreaming. Exploring a strategic partnership with CPD, EEF facilitated the collection, analysis and dissemination of evidence on gender inequalities. Such research included: Gender Equality Index,⁶ Social Distance Index,⁷ Equality Gap Report “Unequal Moldova 2024”, Gender Pay Gap Report.⁸ This evidence was instrumental for galvanising gender equality changes.

15 policy recommendations to support families in Moldova: *With project support CPD analysed national legislation, as well as international practices, and influenced 15 policy recommendations, with specific legislative measures, in education, health, social protection, regional development, public administration. The recommendations aimed to improve the impact of all the measures approved in the last two years in the Republic of Moldova, but also to reduce certain barriers or gender inequalities. These proposals are based on detailed analysis of the current situation, international best practices and consultations with*

⁵ Gîscă (2024). *CSO Meter 2024: Moldova Country Report*, p. 38, available online at https://csometer.info/sites/default/files/2025-02/CSO%20Meter%20Moldova%202024_ENG.pdf

⁶ CPD, EEF (2025). *Gender Equality Index 2024*, available online at https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/CPD_IEG-2025-1.pdf

⁷ CPD, EEF (2025). *Social Distance Index 2024*, available online at https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/CPD_Distanta-sociala_2024.pdf

⁸ CPD, EEF (2025). *Gender Pay Gap in 2024*, available online at https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/CPD_Pay-gap-2025.pdf

local experts and communities. They aim to create an enabling and supportive environment in which families can thrive, helping to build a stronger, more cohesive and inclusive society.

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 2024
# of prioritised public policies influenced by NGO Platforms (with more than 30% of CSOs recommendations accepted)	29	50	20
# of prioritised public policies influenced by NGO Platforms related to gender equality	2	20	15
# of prioritised public policies influenced by the Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination	0	10	7

With project support, 11 targeted CSO platforms increasingly shaped emerging public policies from the perspective of inclusion. They conducted 174 analyses of emerging policies at national and local level from the perspective of social inclusion. During the reporting period they influenced 57 of targeted policies. The six district participation councils analysed 131 targeted policies and influenced 37 of them. The four CSO platforms representing vulnerable groups (youth, Roma, older people, persons with disabilities) influenced 21 out of 43 targeted national policies (around 47%).

Examples of policies influenced during the reporting period:

Advocacy for ensuring the right of persons with severe disabilities from the municipality of Chisinau to the social service "Personal Assistance": following the involvement and advocacy actions of the Alliance of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities (AOPD), the issue of providing highly specialized services to people with severe disabilities was officially recognized and addressed. In the context of the Restart Reform, more than 2000 children and people with disabilities faced the risk of losing personal assistance services.

Statistical data on people with disabilities collected in the 2024 Census of Population and Housing: despite the efforts made in the previous Census to obtain disaggregated data on the number of persons with disabilities, this objective was not achieved. Pursuant to AOPD policy advocacy, the National Commission for the Population and Housing Census of the Republic of Moldova included four questions from the short set of questions of the Washington Group on Functionality in the Population and Housing Census Questionnaire.

Shaping the National Human Rights Programme from the perspective of Roma and older people: Roma Voice and Active Ageing platforms were actively engaged during the design of the National Human Rights Programme 2024-2027. Roma voice successfully advocated to include policy on Roma children that are not enrolled in the educational system. HelpAge integrated the perspective of older people in the pillars focused on the right to social security, right to healthcare and right to housing.

Mainstreaming the perspective of youth in Cimişlia district: since 2023, District Participation Council in Cimişlia made consistent efforts to promote the creation of youth support programs at district level. In September 2023, at the initiation of the process of elaborating the district budget for 2024, DPC proposed the allocation of resources for a grant program for youth initiatives. A concrete progress was made at the meeting of March 26, 2024, when 30 thousand lei were allocated for youth initiatives.

Addressing the situation of NEET youth in Floresti: members of the District Participation Council in Floresti (DPC Floresti) were actively involved in the decision-making process at local level, focusing on promoting the rights and interests of NEET youth. Advocacy work resulted in policies targeting this group, approved by several localities in the Florești district, including the towns of Florești, Ghindești, Mărculești, Cuhureștii de Sus, Cuhureștii de Jos, Gura Camencii, Lunga, Domulgeni Ilciocova, Sănătăuca, Sevirova, Cîrîpcău, Ștefănești, Temeleuți, Zăluțeni and Vărvăreuca.

Equitable access to public internships: Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination, the Partnership for Development Center, and the National Youth Council of Moldova took a decisive step towards promoting equitable access to public sector internships. Recognizing the barriers that young people—particularly those with disabilities—face in securing meaningful work experience, these organizations presented to Parliament an official opinion containing proposals for Draft Law No. 429 of November 24, 2022. Accepted recommendations will enhance accessibility, inclusivity, and transparency in the recruitment of interns in public institutions.

The project enabled CPD to catalyse the design and approval of gender transformative policies. Continuous advocacy efforts resulted in the approval of three bills in the final reading: (i) Law on pay transparency and Law no. 74/2023 on preventing and combating sexual harassment, (ii) Law no. 135/2023 on supporting families with small children; (iii) The Contravention Code and the Criminal Code were amended with provisions on sexual harassment.

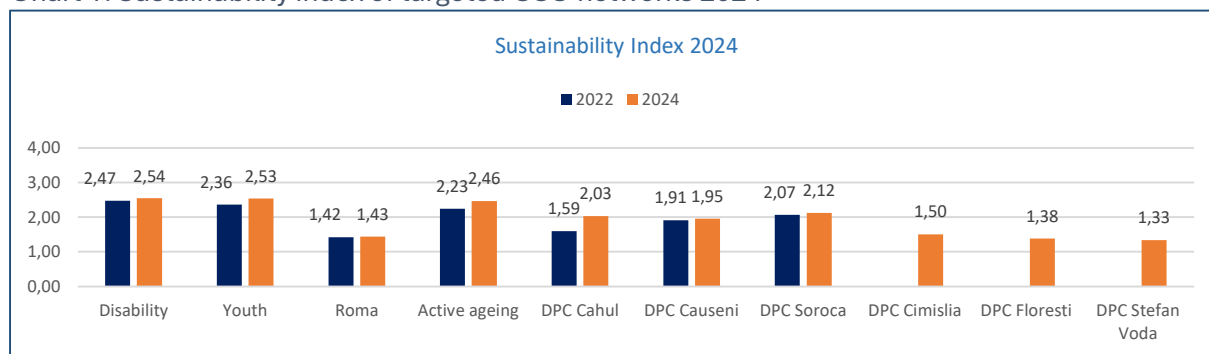
In addition, the CSO platforms paid due attention to implementation of targeted policies. During the reporting period they issued 9 monitoring reports focused on the implementation of key policy commitments on youth engagement, child protection, access to essential medicines, access to rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities, access to social services for older people, employment and education for Roma, access to community services for vulnerable women and men, protection from violence for vulnerable groups. Findings and recommendations were presented to relevant stakeholders, including national authorities, media, national human rights institutions.

Table 1. Policy monitoring efforts initiated by four CSO platforms representing roma, older people, persons with disabilities and youth:

No.	Monitored Public Policy	CSO network
1	Roma employment, Roma Support Programme 2022-2025	Roma Voice
2	Roma Education, Roma Support Programme 2022-2025	Roma Voice
3	The situation of older people regarding socio-medical care needs and barriers in the three communities: Soldănești, Florești and Strășeni towns.	Active Ageing
4	Analysis report of the Family Code and related legislation with a focus on care of older people and human rights	Active Ageing
5	National Assistance Program for the consolidation and development of the District/Municipal Youth Councils of the Ministry of Education	Youth Platform
6	Policies and activity regulations of student representation structures and promotion of significant student participation in university life	Youth Platform
7	Action Plan regarding the implementation of the National Child Protection Program for the years 2022 - 2026, specific objective 3.1	AOPD Platform
8	Government Decision no. 106/2022 on the prescription and dispensing of medicines and medical devices compensated from the compulsory healthcare insurance funds	AOPD Platform
9	Regulation on the way of recording and distributing the rehabilitation/recovery tickets granted to pensioners and beneficiaries of state social allowances	AOPD Platform

EEF paid due attention to strengthening the organisational, advocacy and oversight capacities of its CSO partners. **The most recent sustainability index, conducted by CPD revealed that capacity of targeted CSO platforms increased.** The index covers the following dimensions: (i) access to decision making process, (ii) policy analysis capacity, (iii) advocacy capacity, (iv) strategic planning, (v) fundraising capacity and (vi) team development (HR). Sustainability is measured on a scale from 0 to 4, where 0 means no sustainability, and 4 - advanced level of sustainability. According to calculations, the CSOs networks and DPCs have an average level of sustainability (intermediate). The assessment also revealed that the capacity of all targeted platforms increased during the last two years.

Chart 1. Sustainability index of targeted CSO networks 2024



In addition, during the reporting period EEF successfully launched a new project “Civic Engagement for Youth and Women Empowerment”, in partnership with Centre Partnership for Development, National Youth Council and the Regional Development Agency from Tiraspol. The initiative will achieve three inter-related objectives: (i) enabling over 100 CSOs to shape national public policies from the perspective of youth inclusion and gender equality; (ii) strengthening the policy advocacy, outreach and constituency engagement capacity of youth and women’s associations; (iii) facilitate the establishment of three regional CSO coalitions focused on youth inclusion and gender equality. The initiative is funded by the EU and is co-funded by Sweden.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2024
% of respondents who believe they have access to unbiased information (Public Opinion Barometer) <i>Disinformation resilience index: social resilience (East Centre)*</i>	42.5%	Positive trend	0.3 points increase compared to 2021*

The latest Public Opinion Barometer did not cover public perception regarding access to unbiased information. In the absence of this data, EEF considered alternative sources of information that are of relevance for measuring progress. The latest Disinformation Resilience Index (2024) revealed that Moldova registered a positive trend in respect of all three dimensions

covered by the research: (a) *societal resilience*: +0.3 points; (b) *legal and institutional resilience*: + 0.8 points; (c) *media and digital resilience*: +0.2 points.⁹

EEF and its partners made an important contribution towards greater societal resilience to disinformation. The project increasingly empowered women and men to become community journalists and report various issues emerged in their communities. Leveraged funding from SDC enabled the Centre for Independent Journalism to conduct media literacy activities for vulnerable groups and develop innovative tools to disseminate information about social inclusion. Within the same initiative, the Association of Independent Press (API) strengthened the capacity of current and prospective journalists cover topics on social inclusion, equality and non-discrimination. Media monitoring and awards for social inclusion stimulated increased media coverage of social exclusion.

The media partners made significant strides to improve media reporting on social inclusion of marginalised groups. Significant amendments were approved to the Media Code of Ethics regarding the coverage of the vulnerable and marginalized groups.¹⁰ This structural change was achieved through comprehensive assessment of the Media Code of Ethics, followed by wide consultations with media, national human rights institutions and independent experts.

To date these efforts prompted positive trends in Media reporting on social inclusion. The capacity building efforts for 85 current and prospective journalists incentivised coverage of issues related to discrimination, fairness and social exclusion. During the reporting period 17 journalists (including 5 Journalism students) and one media outlet were awarded within the third edition of the “Journalists for diversity and inclusion”. The third stage of the media monitoring on diversity and inclusion also revealed improved reporting by six media outlets: Agora.md, Tuk.md, Esp.md, Jurnal TV, Radio Moldova and TV8.

Accessibility of information for vulnerable groups progressively improved. IJC increasingly developed media literacy knowledge and skills among women, persons with disabilities and youth. Five media tools finalised during the reporting period increasingly raised awareness about the situation of vulnerable groups including the situation of Roma, women, persons with psychosocial, intellectual, physical disabilities, reaching out to over 15000 persons. Media content on inclusion reached out to over 40000 online users.

Despite this progress, significant challenges remain. During the reporting period disinformation became an increasingly pressing issue, further amplified by various sources, including social media, which played a key role in the rapid spread of false and manipulative information.

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 2024
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⁹ East Centre (2024). *Disinformation Resilience Index*, available online at https://www.amo.cz/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/DRI_2024_edition.pdf

¹⁰ The Code of Ethics with approved amendments is available online at <https://www.consiliuldepresa.md/upload/Cod-Deontologic2024-rom-web.pdf>

# of issues solved through the intervention of local authorities	0	100	11 (on track)
% of solved issues that were reported by women	0	increase	9 (target exceeded)

With project support, the strategic partners identified 522 additional prospective community journalists. In partnership with Urma Ta, new community journalists benefitted from mentorship activities. These efforts resulted in 123 new articles developed by community journalists. To date 11 community issues have been solved. The summary of issues solved in 2024 is provided below:

The Zagarancea Town Hall in Ungheni district made an agreement with the Association "Prietenii nostri" from the city of Ungheni regarding the solution to the problem of the maidans 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.

Solutions were found to reduce the problem of community dogs, after this problem was reported by community journalists.

The authorities in the town of Mihăileni, Râșcani district, took several actions to reduce the migration of villagers, after the problem was addressed 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 necessity 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 2024
# of vulnerable men and women who used the community journalists' platforms to comment public policies or report abuses	10	1000	522

To promote community journalism, the strategic partner, "URMA TA" Association, created a series of 12 video animations, focused on the concept, approaches, tools and themes of community journalism. They were disseminated via the Youtube channel with 1.72 K subscribers

and on various media platforms inclusive www.Stiripozitive.eu, www.Jurnalist.md and www.Comunicate.md.

During the reporting period, the small grants on community journalism, awarded during the previous reporting period, came to fruition. The grantees identified 522 prospective community journalists and worked to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes.

AO "Studem", Balti: over 60 young people received training in journalism fundamentals, including news reporting, interviewing, and video production. Participants engaged in monthly monitoring meetings to refine their skills and develop project materials.

AO „Alfa Beta: 25 young individuals mobilised to promote community journalism across three regions. 20 of them empowered to write about local issues.

AO „Dezvoltare prin Implicare”, Cimislia and Basarabeasca: 22 members who underwent comprehensive training, including five practical offline sessions. To date they produced 69 articles covering various community issues

AO Centrul De Dezvoltare Durabilă Și Inovare Civică, Drochia: A total of 214 young people actively participated in the 10 workshops conducted throughout the project. Most of them reported community problems in social media.

AO Est-Curier, Criuleni: 16 participants, comprising ten young individuals and six adults, expressed a keen interest in receiving information and developing skills in community journalism.

AO "Nufarul", Rezina: project conducted two training sessions on media production and journalistic challenges, with 28 and 22 participants respectively. As a result of a competitive process, 25 community journalists were awarded.

Asociația Psihologilor Tighina, Causeni: a local network of 27 young journalists has been established. The group of community journalists produced 82 media materials covering various community issues.

AO „Centrul Regional pentru Inițiative Sociale și Dezvoltare Durabilă”, Floresti: 20 young women and men were trained on digital storytelling and journalism. Participants produced 20 pieces of journalistic content, including articles and media materials, and created six podcasts highlighting local stories and voices.

Asociația Internațională a Tinerilor, Chisinau: 25 participants attended the Empowerment Academy. Each of them identified one local issue and developed journalistic materials reflecting community problems.

In 2024 EEF organised a new grant competition focused on advancing community journalism. It resulted in nine grants awarded. The grant awards are summarised below.

1. AO „Dezvoltare prin Implicare” will expand the sustainable network of competent community journalists, who will contribute to positive local change and civic engagement in Basarabeasca and Cimislia districts.

2. AO Centrul De Dezvoltare Durabilă Și Inovare Civică, Drochia will empower citizens from communities with skills, techniques and tools to practice community journalism, while ensuring the effective application of this knowledge.

3. AO “Nufarul”, Rezina will support the processes of democratic participation, to promote freedom of expression in order to improve the situation of local citizens, by using community journalism.

4. Asociația Psihologilor Tighina, Causeni will promote community journalism for young people from Căușeni r. as a method of encouraging critical thinking in communities by empowering young people from

5 communities of Căușeni r. to practice community journalism, by strengthening the skills of critical thinking, research and civic engagement of young people journalists in reflecting the realities of the communities of Căușeni r., as well as by strengthening the partnership with the local authorities in 5 localities of Căușeni r. in order to solve the problems identified by the community journalists empowered within the project..

5. AO Prospect, Rezina: The aim of the project "Community journalists - partners of the local mass media and APL in solving community problems" is to develop the critical thinking of the population through the local mass media, community journalists and local public administration.

6. Asociația Obștească „Rezina în Obiectiv” revitalized community journalism in the Rezina district, offering citizens the local media portal www.rezinainobiectiv.md to report community issues and develop critical thinking, as well as the ability to exert pressure on local authorities. By publishing a minimum of 20 press articles based on citizen reports and organizing 6 practical workshops for at least 60 people, the project will contribute to informing and actively involving the community by promoting community journalism.

7. Humanitarian Association „Filantropia Creștină”: will develop and strengthen local journalistic skills and improve civic dialogue in the Orhei district by training 12 journalists in journalism ethics and video editing techniques, and by creating and launching a community podcast addressing local issues and events.

8. A.O. Centrul Regional de Dezvoltare Comunitară: will empower young people from local communities in the Republic of Moldova to identify, document and report community issues through journalism. The project includes training, mentoring and article writing activities, as well as collaboration with local public authorities (LPAs) to resolve identified issues.

9. AO „ANIMA”: aims to contribute to the promotion of the community journalism amongst the young people from the North of the country and to the solution of the community problems through this tool.

EEF successfully organized the first Community Journalism Forum in Moldova. Held in Chisinau on December 17, 2024, the forum brought together 43 most active community journalists, including 18 men and 25 women. The forum served as a dynamic platform for dialogue and collaboration, featuring panel discussions focused on best practices in community journalism and its potential to benefit citizens and communities. Participants shared insights and experiences, exploring how community-driven reporting can promote freedom of expression and access to impartial information. The participants stressed the need to support and develop this form of journalism to ensure that diverse perspectives are heard and community needs are addressed.

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 2024
% of respondents who believe that elections were free and fair, disaggregated by sex	28.9%	Increase	42.2%

During the reporting period voter confidence in free and fair elections significantly increased. According to the Public Opinion Barometer 42% of respondents (44,4% men, 40.3% women) believe that elections were free and fair. This positive trend may be explained by collection of data was collected at a time of increased awareness about buying of votes and foreign interference in the electoral process.

EEF actively contributed to free and inclusive elections. The project enabled the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections, a network of 31 CSO to conduct democratic oversight of the

electoral process, report irregularities and formulate corrective measures. EEF also supported an innovative civic and voter education campaign that reached out to first time voters in The “Gagauz Yeri” Territorial Administrative Unit.

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 2024
# of political parties that ensured a balanced representation of women and other under-represented groups in their internal governance	0	3	Not applicable for the reporting period

Progress towards this bridging outcome was achieved during the previous reporting period. Additional efforts to promote political inclusion of women and other under-represented groups will be conducted during the upcoming parliamentary elections, due to take place in October 2025.

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 2024
% of polling stations accessible for PwD	45%	increase	no progress
Ballots are accessible for minority groups	ballots are accessible in Russian	ballots are accessible for minority groups	Ballots accessible for minority groups (in six languages)

In its final Assessment of the Presidential Elections and the Constitutional Referendum in 2024, the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections commended the authorities for implementing solutions to facilitate voting access, such as printing ballots in six languages. Nevertheless, the Coalition stressed that ongoing issues with the physical accessibility of polling stations for persons with mobility disabilities remain a significant challenge, with approximately 90% of stations being inaccessible.¹¹

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 2024
# of advocacy campaigns resulting in commitment of political parties or electoral authorities to ensure fair access to vote and representation in politics of women, Roma, PwDs	9	12	1

¹¹ <https://alegeliber.md/en/declaratie-pozitia-coalitie-civice-pentru-alegeri-libere-si-corecte-fata-de-alegerile-prezidentiale-si-referendumul-republican-constitutional-din-2024-4145.html>

During the reporting period EEF supported an innovative way of encouraging young people, including youth belonging to national minority to vote. This was achieved through a sub-grant awarded to the Association of Intellectual Games. Using the gamification approach, the grantee reached out to over 2213 first-time voters from 23 lyceums in the “Gagauz Yeri” Territorial Administrative Unit. First time voters in targeted institutions were actively engaged in intellectual games focused on democracy, the importance of voting, as well as the European integration of the country.

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 2024
Equality Gaps in the following areas: living standards, health, employment	positive trend compared to 2017	Positive trend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Positive trend</i> in 3 areas (decreased inequalities): access to communal services, participation and security - <i>No significant changes</i>: health - <i>Negative trend</i>: income and poverty

The Equality Gap Report “Unequal Moldova”, made public during the second semester,¹² revealed positive trends in specific areas, such as communal services, participation and public security. Thus, access to communal services improved, including water supply, sewage, waste management. Similarly, access to street lightning, natural gas also increased over the last decade, including for the most vulnerable groups. The participation rate of population in decision making process increased (public consultations, public gatherings, development of local strategic plans, public pressure), as well as share of people aware of their rights in decision making process. The share of people who feel safe in public spaces and at home increased while the share of people who tolerate violence has slightly decreased.

Despite this progress, the report also revealed worrying trends on access to income and lack of progress in the area of healthcare. The poverty rate increased especially amongst the most vulnerable groups in the last two years. Access to health services remains relatively unchanged, compared to the previous years. Apparently, one of the underlying causes is the lingering crises faced by the country, affecting in particular the vulnerable groups.

While social exclusion is still a significant challenge, acceptance of most vulnerable groups has slightly improved during the last two years. The social distance index decreased from 2.4 points in 2022 to 2.2 points in 2023, which means that most marginalized groups in Moldova are

¹² The report is available online at <https://eef.md/ro/moldova-inegala-analiza-celor-mai-relevante-inegalitati-din-republica-moldova-2023/341>

more and more accepted by the general population. According to the report,¹³ the underlying factors include multiple crises, influx of refugees, political polarisation, as well as low pace of combating hate speech and hate motivated crimes.

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 2024
% respondents who believe that social and economic rights are respected by local authorities	Water: 56.2% work: 34.7% health: 28.4% social protection: 27.9%	increase	Data is not available for the reporting period

The research on public perceptions regarding the observance of human rights is collected by the Ombudsman’s Office on biennial basis. Hence lack of data to measure progress at outcome level. During the reporting period EEF made significant strides to ensure that citizens are better informed about their rights and are increasingly able to shape design and implementation of decisions that affect their livelihoods. Detailed information is provided below.

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

Performance indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target 2025	Achieved in 2024
Number and % of recommendations proposed by initiative groups and accepted by authorities	17%	30%	131 analyses of local policies, 37 of them influenced (28%)
# of recommendations proposed by women’ initiative groups and accepted	30	100	30 public policies elaborated by women’s initiative groups, with 29 accepted by public authorities and institutions

During the reporting period the six district participation councils increasingly influenced the draft decisions of the local governments. Bringing together 109 grassroots CSOs (from Soroca, Floresti, Cahul, Causeni, Cimislia, Stefan-Voda), district participation councils analysed 131 local public policies that affect persons with disabilities, NEET youth, older people, and other vulnerable groups. To date they influenced 37 of them (around 28%). Examples of influenced policies are provided below.

Mainstreaming the perspective of youth in Cimişlia district: Since 2023, District Participation Council in Cimislia made consistent efforts to promote the creation of youth support programs at district level. In September 2023, at the initiation of the process of elaborating the district budget for 2024, DPC proposed the allocation of resources for a grant program for youth initiatives. A concrete progress was made at the meeting of March 26, 2024, when 30 thousand lei were allocated for youth initiatives.

¹³ Available online at https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/CPD_Distanta-sociala_2024.pdf

Addressing the situation of NEET youth in Floresti: The members of the District Participation Council in Floresti (DPC Floresti) were actively involved in the decision-making process at the local level, focusing on promoting the rights and interests of NEET youth. Advocacy work resulted in targeted policies targeting this group, approved by several localities in the Florești district, including the towns of Florești, Ghindești, Mărculești, Cuhureștii de Sus, Cuhureștii de Jos, Gura Camencii, Lunga, Domulgeni Iliciovca, Sănătăuca, Sevirova, Ciripcău, Ștefănești, Temeleuți, Zăluceni and Vărvăreuca.

Shaping the Youth Policy in Causeni: the youth strategy for 2022-2024 had expired, creating a need for continuity in addressing the needs of the local youth. The District Participation Council (DPC) of Causeni took proactive steps to ensure the next youth strategy would be developed. The DPC persistently advocated for the Rayon Council to prioritize this important task. Their advocacy paid off when the Causeni Rayon Council approved the new Youth Program for the upcoming years. This initiative ensures that the needs of Causeni's youth will continue to be addressed, empowering the next generation with the resources and support they need.

Mainstreaming transparency and inclusion in the Rayon Council's Activity Plan: In 2025, the draft Activity Program of the Causeni Rayon Council did not include important actions related to transparency, disability inclusion, or professional observance days. The DPC Causeni identified these gaps and took action by repeatedly requesting the inclusion of these actions in the Council's plan. Their efforts led to the approval of their recommendations. As a result, the Rayon Council's Activity Program for 2025 now includes measures to promote transparency in decision-making, actions for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and recognition of various professional days. Additionally, the DPC's influence extended to the Program for cultural, sports, and youth actions, where they successfully submitted seven proposals for improvement, ensuring a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to the district's activities.

Advocacy for accessible transportation for persons with disabilities: In Causeni, despite multiple requests from the local CRP (Council of Regional Partners), the local public authorities had not found a solution to implement essential transport services for people with disabilities. The district had received a donated adapted transport vehicle, but due to lack of regulations and financial constraints, it was not being utilized. The DPC Causeni did not give up and insisted on the development of the necessary operational regulations. Thanks to their efforts, the regulation was developed and approved by the South-East Territorial Agency for Social Assistance (ATAS). However, ATAS faced funding challenges, leading to the vehicle being returned to the District Council in early 2025. Undeterred, the DPC Causeni proposed six key recommendations to improve the draft regulations for the operation of adapted transport services. Their continued efforts led to the regulation's approval, ensuring that the adapted transport service would be reinstated and provide essential services to people with locomotor disabilities in the district.

EEF and its partners actively facilitated policy dialogue with national and local decision makers. At national level, a public policy dialogue event was conducted on 26 November 2024 focused on the findings and recommendations of the "Unequal Moldova" Report (2024). The dialogue event actively engaged members of the district participation councils and CSO platforms representing vulnerable groups. Policy dialogue events followed in all six targeted districts by means of Local Democracy Fora. The activities assessed the level of transparency in the decision making process as well as policy influencing results at local level.

In communities where no CSOs exist, the mentorship program run by CPD contributed to the empowerment of inclusive initiative groups. During the reporting period CPD set up 21 local initiative groups, bringing together 554 persons (333 women and 221 men), finalised the implementation of ambitious community mobilisation and participation projects. To date around 15320 people from 21 communities were informed and/or participated in community mobilization activities. To date, these groups elaborated 30 local public policies from the perspective of gender equality. In addition, these groups facilitated the introduction of 19 participatory mechanisms at local level. Examples of success stories achieved within the mentorship programme are provided below.

"Speranța" community team from Ialpujeni village, Cimislia district, organized the Transparency Week, jointly with APL, where they held public hearings on local public policy. They also conducted public debates to decide the local road to be repaired in 2025 from the resources of the Road Fund. The team will continue its work to implement new initiatives.

"Inspiră Incluziune" community team from Cuhurestii de Sus village, Floresti district, managed to mobilize both people and LPA to make Transparency Week a reality. The team involved young people in the decision-making process: it managed to encourage them to form an initiative group with a young leader. The youth group carried out an information visit to the town hall, where the mayor and public servants introduced them to the work of the commune management, how community problems are solved, how the budget is planned, what the difficulties are. The young people showed interest in being further involved in identifying and solving community problems.

"Ritm comun-succese mari" community team from Porumbrei village, Cimislia district focused on raising people's participation in public life and decision-making process. The leader encouraged citizens to attend Local Council's meetings to understand the decision-making process and get to know local decision-makers and local policies better. The community team created a public association which will be active and implement new initiatives within the community.

"Urmașii lui Traian" community team from Satul Nou village, Cimislia rayon, consisting of 30 people (17 women and 13 men), attended 5 meetings of the Local Council, mobilizing and motivating parents to get involved in the decision-making process.

During this reporting period, **"Uniți pentru schimbare" community team from Copceac village, Stefan Voda district** organized a public event aiming at finishing the repairs and stage arrangement works in the culture house. The event was attended by around 300 participants, including veterans, who were involved in the creation of these institutions. The community team mentioned the citizens' activism that allowed them to expand the training activities, the improvement of the access to the house of culture. The work of the volunteers was appreciated by the community team members. At the same time, the community team developed other projects that were accepted and successfully implemented. A relevant example is the project: "Rehabilitation and modernization of the land in front of the House of Culture", carried out within the "EU4Moldova: Local Communities".

"Împreună spre noi posibilități" community team, together with the LPA, developed a local public policy in a participatory manner. Also, they managed to develop an ambitious local plan for Gender Equality as a commitment of LPA Varvareuca.

"Partenerii Incluziunii" community team from Prajila village, Floresti district, based on the knowledge gained from the trainings provided by CPD, applied for grant, launched by the Ministry of Education and Research ("Improving the Quality of Education" project, funded by the World Bank). The team won the grant. The project runs until June 2025 and is seen as the sustainability event of the Mentoring Program.

The team leader of "Comunitatea mea" community team from Festelita village, Stefan Voda district, became a genuine leader in the community. She has been offered an executive position in the town hall and the project manager is being encouraged to run for the kindergarten management.

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 2024
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# of CSOs demonstrating active involvement of people in assessing quality of local governance and designing community development initiatives	45	90	109 CSOs members of six district participation councils in 6 targeted districts
# of Gender impact assessments conducted to draft decisions of local public authorities	0	45	21 gender equality policies entailed gender impact assessments

The project enabled 10 local CSOs to advance implementation of 10 community mobilisation sub-grants, awarded during the previous reporting period. To date, they managed to set up 26 local initiative groups, that engaged in policy dialogue with local authorities to advance participation and address needs articulated by vulnerable groups. Progress towards implementation is summarised below.

AO "Asociația Băștinașilor din satul Mărculești", Florești: to date the project identified **60 young NEET** (34 women, 26 men) and initiated capacity building activities on the right to involvement and techniques to influence the decision-making process.

AO „Mișcarea Ecologistă Ștefan Vodă”, Ștefan Vodă: a local initiative group set up with project support submitted petition to the authorities to intervene with proposals on the agenda of the City Hall and to address the problems identified in a participatory manner at the community level. In addition, 66 young people (43 women, 23 men) were capacitated in the field of social accountability tools, advocacy, civic participation. The advocacy work resulted in a participatory budgeting mechanism approved by local authorities and renovation of the sports facilities.

AO „RENAȘTEREA”, Ștefan Vodă: facilitated the establishment of **eight youth initiative groups**, bringing together 32 young people (24 women, 8 men) active in 10 targeted communities. The initiative groups were actively involved in the development of Study on the needs and interests of young people involving 1155 respondents. Five initiative groups launched advocacy initiatives covering the following areas: youth health, civic education, democracy promotion, climate change and youth employment).

AO Prezentul și viitorul tinerilor din comuna Gura Camencii, Florești: supported the creation of **two initiative groups** in Gura Camencii and Varvareuca villages, bringing together 30 older persons (15 women, 15 men). The groups managed to advocate for the design and approval of the Action Plan on active and healthy aging in Vărvăreuca commune for 2024-2027. The groups also actively advocated for creating a public space in the culture house in Gura Camencii designed to provide pharmaceutical services.

AO Pro-Democrație, Cimișlia: facilitated the establishment of an **Advisory Committee of Older People** in Satul Nou, bringing together 18 older people (12 women, 6 men). The members actively engaged with decision makers, managing to solve seven issues affecting the local community: (i) finding the money collected to repair the fence and widen the cemetery; (ii) reparation of specific roads; (iii) household garbage collection; (iv) separation of collected garbage; (v) facilitate access to specialised doctors; (vi) cultural activities for older people.

AO "Silent Generation", Foresti: mobilized 29 young people (18 women, 11 men) from the communes of Gura Căinarului and Vărvăreuca and engaged them in addressing local issues including cleaning of public spaces and volunteering activities to deliver essential food and hygiene products to 11 needy families. Their actions mobilised other 48 persons in targeted communities.

GAL „Lunca Răutului”, Floresti: The grantee established a **Youth Initiative Group** bringing together 20 young people (13 women, 7 men) from Lunca Răutului. The group initiated local policy dialogue to address youth issues.

AO „Părinți educatori ”Andrieș”, Ștefan Vodă: The grantee facilitated the creation of **six local initiative**

groups bringing together 60 persons (49 women, 11 men). Pursuant to various capacity building activities, the groups successfully designed five local initiatives addressing identified community needs: setting up a mini-park with spaces for adults and children; computer literacy initiatives for older people; reparation of the local cinema; reparation of a sanitary bloc in Ermoclia, cleaning of the local forest.

Centrul de Dezvoltare a personalității Ungherașul Fericii, Floresti: facilitated the creation of **five women's initiative groups**, bringing together 25 women, to facilitate their involvement in the decision-making process at the local level.

Asociația Obștească „Paideia”, Floresti: strengthened the capacity of seven NEET young people (5 women, 2 men) from Floresti in vlogging and in influencing decisions through media tools. Currently the group is in process of developing three podcasts reflecting various issues faced by NEET youth.

In addition, EEF made significant strides to build additional community participation mechanisms.

Pursuant to a competitive process, eight CSOs were selected and awarded community mobilisation and advocacy sub-grants. The objectives envisaged by the new sub-grants are outlined below.

AO ” ”Căușeni HUB””, Causeni: *will improve participation and involvement, increasing their rate up to 40% in the decision-making process at the local and rayonal level, by facilitating the active participation of young people from the Căușeni district in the decision-making processes at the local and district level, by developing youth consultative structures and evaluation of the degree of implementation of the District Youth Strategy. This initiative will result in improved communication and collaboration between young people and local decision-makers, and will lead to ensuring social inclusion and equal opportunities for all young people in the community.*

A.O. Centrul de Dezvoltare Durabilă și Inovare Civică, Soroca: *aims to promote equal opportunities and the inclusive participation of young people from vulnerable groups, including girls and representatives of ethnic minorities, in the decision-making process and community development. At the same time, we aim to facilitate dialogue between local decision-makers and other relevant actors to ensure more inclusive participation and effective resolution of community issues, while at the same time strengthening local mechanisms of interaction between local authorities and civil society to improve access and quality community services.*

A.O. Centrul Regional de Dezvoltare Comunitară, Crihana Veche (Cahul): *aims to create and operationalize a Resource Center for Inclusive Education in IET Crihana Veche Kindergarten "Clopotelul". The project includes the formation of a Multidisciplinary Commission, the evaluation of institutional capacities, the arrangement and equipment of the space, as well as the training and training of the staff. Continuous advocacy and community mobilization, embedded in the project, will harness support from local public authorities and community ownership.*

AO Centrul Regional pentru Inițiative Sociale și Dezvoltare Durabilă, Floresti: *will empower 25 women in Florești district for their active involvement in the local decision-making process.*

AO Dezvoltare prin implicare, Cimișlia: *will increase the awareness and involvement of citizens in solving problems in Cimișlia district. Five thematic Inclusive Local Initiative Groups (LIGs) will be supported to actively shape decisions from the perspective of inclusion.*

AO Plai Natal, Floresti: *will work to create participatory mechanisms in three communities from Floresti Rayon. The action will contribute to increased participation in decision making and greater local government accountability towards citizens.*

AO ”PRO-DEMOCRAȚIE”, Cimișlia: *will strengthen the involvement of vulnerable groups from the Satul Nou community, Cimișlia district, in local decision-making process. The project will improve the representation of these groups in the dialogue with local authorities and to increase their advocacy capacity. Expected results include better representation and participation of older people, people with*

disabilities and NEET youth in decision-making processes, increasing awareness of their rights, and developing a constant and productive dialogue between the community and local authorities.

Asociația Obștească "UNISON", Ștefan Vodă: will improve the participation and inclusion of marginalized groups in the decision-making process in the Ștefan Vodă district, ensuring that their needs and perspectives are integrated into local public policies. This project responds to the need to integrate and support marginalized groups in the Ștefan Vodă district, including young people, women, refugees from Ukraine, people with visual disabilities and people of Roma ethnicity, who often lack targeted attention in addressing group-specific issues.

Due attention was paid to strengthening the organisational and advocacy capacity of targeted CSO networks. With project support, three District Participation Councils designed and pursue to the implementation of Capacity Development Plans, including Fundraising Plans (DPC Causeni, DPC Soroca, DPC Cahul). The capacity building and fundraising plans include corresponding budgets for their implementation. At this stage, DPC Causeni requested expert support on the implementation of its Capacity Development Plan. Corresponding support was provided by the Centre Partnership for Development.

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 2024
Share of NEET young women and men in targeted communities	30.8% at national level	At least 10% decrease	24.9%

By the end of 2024, the NEET rate dropped to 24.9 compared to 30.8 in 2019. EEF interventions included Youth banks, Youth Entrepreneurship Funds (YEF), as well as social services targeting youth. The established 10 Youth Entrepreneurship Funds within the project “Local civil society contributes to inclusive and sustainable economic development of the country” funded by EU and co-funded by Sweden assisted 447 NEET Youth in developing own business, personal development. Within the project 101 NEET Young people have been awarded with small grants for creating businesses (57 businesses run by young women and 44 businesses run by young men). In total 108 jobs were created by NEET 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 2024
% of funds raised by youth banks from local authorities	81%	81%	76%
% of funds raised by youth banks from businesses	18.4%	20%	7.8%

By the end of 2024 the YouthBank Moldova network comprised 10 YouthBanks, coordinated by 172 young people from 10 localities, including Tighina in the Transnistrian region. Involvement in YouthBank offered young people experiences and responsibilities that foster lifelong community involvement.

Youth banks organized over 50 trainings for youth, involving approximate 700 young people. The teams of Youth Banks mobilized more than 2300 young people to participate at socio-cultural activities.

In addition, youth steering committee members organized more than 40 fundraising events. These efforts entailed constant dialogue with public authorities as well as targeted meeting with businesses and citizens. The representatives of Youth banks had collected 60010 euro from the following actors:

Source of raised funds	Amount of raised funds (EUR)
Public authorities	45,816.00
Private sector	4,718.00
Individuals	9,476.00

The above figures are encouraging and demonstrate the interest of local authorities to support innovative youth programmes. The data also reveals that youth steering committee increasingly interacted with local public authorities in their fundraising efforts.

The lower share of funds was raised from the private sector. External challenges, such as the impact of COVID-19 and the ongoing war of aggression in Ukraine may have affected the private sector, disrupted supply chains and prompted financial instability. Additionally, the private sector has not fully recognized its potential role in the local community, and its involvement at the local level remains limited. By increasing awareness of its capacity to engage with and support local initiatives, the business could play a more significant role in fostering growth and sustainability within the community.

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 2024
# of youth groups [youth banks] that demonstrated successful youth mobilisation and empowerment initiatives	10	10	10
# of boys and girls in targeted communities mobilised through the youth banks' initiatives	128536	200000	11000

In 2024, these 172 active youth steering committee members supported 203 youth led initiatives. Such youth driven actions included, but were not limited to creating playgrounds, improving educational conditions, creating guidance and career info points, greening spaces, conducting sanitation actions, collection funds for refugees. To date these initiatives around 11000 young boys and girls.

Radio Observatorul: the "Vocea Observatorilor" team from the "Onisifor Ghibu" theoretical high school from Orhei relaunched the school radio to make breaks more enjoyable and to promote the challenges and successes of the school community. The radio also, serves as a source of information for students regarding school and extracurricular activities that take place in the high school. The total budget of the project was 760 EUR.

Cleaning activities in Singerei: the youth initiative group "AGAPIS" from v. Pepeni, Singerei designed and implemented a project that entailed cleaning activities and instalment of 5 trash bins on the territory of "Alexandru Agape" High School, along with information sessions on waste sorting. In this endeavour, the initiative group acted in partnership with local public authorities and private agents. The amount of the grant was 575 EUR.

The local youth initiative group Forța Tinerilor submitted the project "**The Golden Boots**", valued at 27,100 lei (1400 EUR). The Youth Bank selected this project, which involved equipping the dance ensemble with shoes and boots. The amount received from the Youth Bank was 14,570 lei, while the remaining 12,530 lei was raised by the young people from the initiative group through fundraising events. The dance ensemble went on to participate in Romania's Got Talent, where they received the Golden Buzzer.

During the reporting period the youth banks faced various challenges. Limited financial resources, still represent a challenge in carrying out the planned activities and ensuring the necessary resources for the Fund. The capacity building activities for youth teams require considerable effort and qualified human resources, which is missing, to ensure effective involvement and cohesion among the project members. Lack of qualified human resources at local level for project implementation. Obtaining and maintaining the commitment and involvement of local public authorities (LPA) and private sector in the project's activities remains a challenge, requiring additional communication and advocacy efforts.

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 2024
Share of women and men who declared zero tolerance to domestic violence	tbc	increase	N/A
Share of homeless people in targeted regions	tbc	decrease	N/A
Share of inactive population in targeted districts	tbc	decrease	N/A

In 2024 EEF finalised the project "Harnessing the CSOs' potential to promote and develop the social entrepreneurship in Moldova", funded by EU and co-funded by Sweden. Major results achieved within this initiative are:

Four Regional Social Business Hubs set up, including one in the Transnistrian region, supported 162 interested social entrepreneurs to become more sustainable;

10 Social enterprises set up, including two social economy entities in the Transnistrian region.

Social enterprises created 52 jobs for vulnerable and marginalized women and men;

Social enterprises provided services to 1696 vulnerable persons, including (572 men, 1124 women).

Despite numerous systemic challenges, EEF managed to implement all the planned activities and deliver planned results. The National Commission for assigning the status of Social Enterprise was inactive for a long period, discouraging eligible entities to seek this status. The local public authorities' interest and support for social enterprises remained low during the project implementation. The legal framework is not fully aligned to good practices in this area. As yet, legal amendments on simplifying the registration procedure for social enterprises have not been approved.

Building on these results and lessons learnt, EEF designed the “Impact Space” project. The initiative aims to establish a supportive ecosystem for social enterprises, equipping them with the necessary tools, resources and networks to thrive and create meaningful social impact. The action will achieve four inter-linked outcomes: (i) enabling policy and legislation, (ii) systemic capacity development; (iii) sustainable impact funding; (iv) building an impact ecosystem. Implemented in partnership with AOPD, EcoVisio and EBA, the initiative is funded by Sweden

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 2024
% of budget allocated for services addressing needs of victims of domestic violence	tbc	at least 3 p.p. increase	N/A for the reporting period

At this stage of project implementation, progress is not registered under this bridging outcome. Preparatory work has been made, in partnership with other domestic CSOs, to launch a digital tool designed to empower survivors and persons dealing with domestic and violence against women.

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 2024
# of SMEs who reported increase of profit due to business development assistance provided with project support	531	1000	162

The four Regional Social Business Hubs continued to foster the development of social enterprises. By offering training, consultancy, and networking opportunities, these hubs played a vital role in strengthening the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. A total of 162 entrepreneurs, the majority being women, received personalized consultations and equipping with essential skills to launch and sustain their businesses.

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 2024
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# of victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence assisted with legal and psychological counselling, as well as other services	tbc	increase	N/A
# of victims who improved the socio-economic condition with project support	0	300	N/A
# of vulnerable women and men assisted through more inclusive services ¹⁴	0	Increase	N/A

The achievement of this output was contingent upon funding expected to be raised from the World Bank, within 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)”. By the end of the reporting progress was stalled.

During the reporting period EEF made significant strides to bring the Sophia Chatbot in Moldova. This is a new digital tool assisting victims of domestic and gender-based violence. EEF responded swiftly to the proposal submitted by Spring ACT, a Swiss non-profit organization which developed the tool and localized it in several countries. Considering the relevance of this initiative, budget savings and consultations with The Embassy of Sweden and the Swiss Cooperation Office in Moldova, EEF sub-contracted the organisation to make the necessary adjustments. EEF also subcontracted a domestic expert that provided information on mapping legislation and available services.

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 2024
# of Work Integration Social Enterprises created (data disaggregated by the sex of the manager of the social enterprise)	17	30	10
# of vulnerable women and men in targeted communities assisted by social enterprises	131	300	1696 (572 men, 1124 women)

In 2024 EEF supported the establishment of 10 social enterprises. These social economy entities made a tangible difference in their communities. They provided free or partially paid services to 1696 vulnerable people (572 men and 1124 women). The social enterprises also proved to be powerful drivers of employment for vulnerable populations, 52 vulnerable people (18 men and 34 women) secured jobs through these enterprises.

Supported social enterprises have significantly improved their management capacities and gained greater visibility at both the local and regional levels. This progress is attributed to the capacity-building program provided within the project, which strengthened their expertise in key areas such as legal framework, financial management, e-commerce, and digital marketing. These improvements have enhanced the operational efficiency and market presence of the social enterprises, contributing to their long-term sustainability and impact.

¹⁴ This is an additional indicator, included to better reflect the results achieved during the reporting period.

ARGO Rehabilitation, Therapy, and Health Education Center



In Florești, a transformative initiative has taken shape - the ARGO Rehabilitation, Therapy, and Health Education Center. Officially set up in January 19, 2024, the center operates as PA"PAIDEIA" and stands as a beacon of hope for **children and adults in need of specialized therapy and educational support.**

The project was made possible with the support of the European Union and co-financing from Sweden, through a grant of 37,500 euros. These funds enabled the center to be equipped with modern equipment and ensure essential services for people with disabilities.

Today, the center is a vital resource for **120 people (including 32 children) that received tailored rehabilitation services** to support their development and well-being. The ARGO Center is equipped with specialized facilities, including: a behavioral therapy room, a speech development room with a multifunctional hall, a massage and kinetotherapy room, physiotherapy room. Its core services are focused to both children and adults, offering:

- Speech development and logorhythmics (11 teenagers)
- Behavioural and occupational therapy (20 children (aged 3-9) received individual therapy);
- Physiotherapy procedures (3-5 persons per day)
- Therapeutic massage (8-9 adults benefited)

In a dedicated effort to provide free educational services, ARGO hosts behavioral therapy sessions every Friday for 3-5 children requiring extra support. Additionally, through a partnership with the Children's Creativity Center of Florești, the ARGO Youth Club was established, offering 9 teenagers a space for growth and development.

Within the ARGO Center **6 new working places have been created:** 2 educational therapists, 1 educator, 1 assistant (promotion and reception duties), 1 massage therapist, 1 medical nurse.

The ARGO Rehabilitation, Therapy, and Health Education Center is more than just a facility—it is a lifeline for children and adults seeking specialized care. Thanks to the support of international partners and the unwavering dedication of its team, ARGO continues to break barriers and create a future where health, education, and therapy are accessible to all. With continued investment and community engagement, ARGO is set to expand its reach and deepen its impact, ensuring a better quality of life for generations to come.

Federation of families for unification and peace in the world from Moldova (FFUPLM)

Federation of families for unification and peace in the world from Moldova (FFUPLM) based on experience gained within two projects funded by European Union and Sweden, opened from its own resources BLOOM Academy Child Development Center. The own investment raised up to 5000 euro.

This event took place on October 5th, 2024 at the premises of the FFUPLM headquarters where the center operates on weekends.



Available services for children 4-12 years old include painting, English language, vocal development, robotics, Romanian language and speech therapy, have affordable prices.

Likewise, BLOOM Academy has a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/bloom.academymd/>

During October-December 2024, 25 children attended different courses. Three children were accepted free of charge considering vulnerability degree.

The experience gained by the FFUPLM team during the implementation of the project "Development of digital literacy and robotics services at the development centre for children "POVESTE" in the city of Anenii Noi" during the period June 13, 2023 - December 12, 2024 was crucial for this step.

CROSS- CUTTING ACTIVITIES

EEF Program approach

EEF successfully combined operating programs with 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 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 increasingly 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. In addition, in October 2024 EEF launched a new initiative designed to empower youth and women associations (*output 1.1.1.1 above*).

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. Seizing the opportunity provided by the opening of EU accession and the approval of the EU accession Action Plan,¹⁵ in 2024 EEF and its strategic partners - the National Youth Council and Centre Partnership for Development and East Europe Foundation made strides to bring the gender equality and youth inclusion perspectives to the forefront of this process. To date the partners focused on six out of the 33 negotiation chapters, as follows: statistics (Chapter 18), social policies and employment (Chapter 20), regional policy (Chapter 22), human rights, justice and fundamental liberties (Chapters 23-24), Education and research (Chapter 26), Environment (Chapter 27).¹⁶

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. Specific results achieved to date include one youth bank in Bender, one Regional Social Business Hub, two social enterprises. In October 2024, EEF launched a new youth and women empowerment initiative that will empower at least 13 youth and women's associations from the Transnistrian region to shape local and national policies from the perspective of youth and gender equality.

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, Transnistrian region, Taraclia, Balti and other regions.

¹⁵ <https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/pna-site.pdf>

¹⁶ <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>

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2024

Program areas	Budget, EUR	%
Program 1: Civil and political rights and democratic governance		
Component 1.1: Civil Society Participation and Oversight	350.240	17,05%
Component 1.2: Community Journalism	263.436	12,83%
Component 1.3: Free, fair and inclusive elections	112.215	5,46%
Program 2: Socio-economic rights and sustainable local development		
Component 2.1: Community mobilization for responsive local governance	554.884	27,02%
Component 2.2: Youth Participation and Economic Empowerment	381.788	18,59%
Component 2.3: Social Actions and Economic Development	240.631	11,72%
Sub-Total Program budget	1.903.194	92,67%
Sub-Total Administrative budget	150.608	7,33%
Total budget	2.053.802	100,00%
Donors	Budget, EUR	%
Government of Sweden	1.084.579	52,81%
Swiss Development Cooperation Office	607.655	29,59%
European Union	348.118	16,95%
Others	13.450	0,65%
Total budget	2.053.802	100,00%