



EVALUATION BRIEF

29 MARCH 2023

FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT: “BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: ENHANCING SOCIAL COHESION IN COMMUNITIES HOSTING PEOPLE ON THE MOVE”

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the main findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluators from the Center for Development Evaluation and Social Science Research (CREDI). It is intended for key stakeholders, including internal IOM staff and external project partners. For more details, please see the full report.

Evaluation type: Final external evaluation

Evaluator(s): Nermin Oruč (Team leader), Meldina Kokorović Jukan (Senior Evaluation Specialist), Amra Beganović (M&E Assistant)

Dates of field visits: 17 February - 22 March 2023

Submission of final report: 29 March 2023

Commissioned for: IOM Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Evaluation objective: Provide an impartial view of the project in terms of achieving the results, quality of performance, and management of the project. The evaluation aims to identify lessons learned and good practices and provide actionable recommendations based on findings to improve the implementation of similar projects in the Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Evaluation Criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability

Evaluation methodology: desk review, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and online survey questionnaire

PROJECT SUMMARY

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to enhance social cohesion in communities hosting refugees and migrants and enable a response to the migration emergency that benefits people on the move and BiH citizens alike. The project addressed fears of the local population and establish a dialogue between migration management actors, local community representatives, central government stakeholders, common citizens and representatives of the migrant and refugee community, with a view to finding solutions to address the main causes of these tensions (public health and safety concerns, lack of dialogue, biased media reporting, impact on local communities' budget and services).

Under this overall objective, the project aims to achieve three intended outcomes:

- Reduce risks to public health and safety in local communities hosting a large refugee and migrant population;
- Improve citizens' perceptions and attitudes towards migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees;
- Foster a change of narrative over refugee and migrant issues in the media and public discourse.

Information about the project:

Geographic coverage: Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Project type: - Community Stabilization

Project code: - CS.II56

Gender equality marker: - Marker 2

Period project: 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2023

Donor: EU Service for Foreign Policy Instruments

Budget: 2,000,000.00 EUR

Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The project design is deeply entrenched in the community dialogues with continuous mapping exercises as an approach for identification and selection of community priorities that could potentially alleviate tensions between migrant and local population in the vicinity of TRCs.
- The synergy between activities and initiatives was achieved through coordination at several instances: at TRC level, community level, municipal level, with public health institutions and by SFA.
- A consortium of international organizations (IOM, UNHCR and DRC) cooperated in synergy with roles and targets clearly separated proving that cooperation and coordination as a key driver for achieving objectives.
- Out of 10 output level indicators, the project has successfully achieved or overachieved 9 indicators proving that most of the project activities have been realistically set and implemented.
- Social cohesion index measure demonstrated that social cohesion is declining in non-project communities, while it is increasing in project communities. Discrepancies between results of social cohesion index and item measuring sense of security suggest that multilayered approach to understanding of social cohesion is needed, against single indicator of change (security).

SUSTAINABILITY

- Infrastructure works are the most visible and tangible and the most sustainable project outputs that build on the increase of social cohesion among local residents and migrants in host communities.
- Implementing partners reported their commitment to further include social cohesion component in their future actions beyond this Project scope.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- Two major cross-cutting themes are intertwined in the project theory of change and implementation: gender equality, conflict sensitivity, human rights.
- The project's theory of change demonstrates gender mindfulness in the design phase with the addition of gender sensitive indicators.
- The project contributed also to sustainable inclusion of disabled children and inclusion of elderly retired people.

GOOD PRACTICES, LESSONS LEARNED

- Strong coordination network was the most important understructure for coherent activities in TRCs.
- Increased engagement with project activities provides beneficiaries with increased motivation, knowledge and skills, and opportunities to undergo transformation on an individual as well as on community level contributing to community transformation in terms of reducing segregation, fear of different and evident mutual understanding.
- Material benefits to the local communities in form of improvement of infrastructure proved to be efficient buyout for social cohesion enhancement as the underlying goal of the project.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Result Framework might be improved in terms of identifying adequate measurement indicators for achievement validation (such as number of actions implemented, number of participants, opinion about implemented actions and achieved changes) as well as setting more clear, realistic and achievable targets.
- More attention should be paid toward planning and better utilization of implementing partner resources (both material and human).
- Strengthening social cohesion through joint on-site activities with more visibility of the upcoming events and active engagement of individuals/users of the camps (cultural mediators originating from migrant population) to help with social cohesion activities within the camps.
- Continuation of activities related to workshops that simulate normal everyday life in TRCs with an increased variety of activities, especially focusing children which are proven to be the best mediators for social cohesion.
- Social cohesion activities should particularly target youth and women (groups with highest decline in feeling safe in community due to migrants' presence) and engage them with migrants in positive interactions.
- Increased visibility of health campaign within TRCs may boost the trust towards public health institutions and contribute to increase of social cohesion.

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