



Deaconess  
Foundation

# Equal, Inclusive and Reconciled Societies

Development Cooperation Programme  
Annual report 2022

**Cover photo: Paloma Gorvat lives in a large Roma settlement in Mukachevo, Western Ukraine. Her husband and their two children do not have any identification documents like 30 000 other Roma people in Ukraine. Because of the lack of documents, it is harder for them to find employment, use different services, and to move around in Ukraine to find opportunities for work. Gorvat and her family have been assisted by a Roma mediator working for the Deaconess Foundation's Ukrainian partner CSO, the Roma Women Fund Chiricli, and they are now waiting for their documents to be reviewed by the migration service workers. The Roma Women Fund Chiricli is collecting and analysing cases like Paloma Gorvat's and her family's to enable people to get documents through simplified procedure in a pilot initiative together with the Ukrainian Ombudsperson's Office and the Council of Europe. The work of the Roma mediators in these processes is covered from the development cooperation programme's funding.**

**Photographer: Meeri Koutaniemi**

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# 1. Overview of the Deaconess Foundation's Programme

The four-year development cooperation programme (2022–2025) of the Deaconess Foundation aims at having an impact on the realisation of equality, inclusion, and well-being among the most marginalised youth, minorities, and those affected by wars in the target countries.

In 2022, the Deaconess Foundation implemented its programme together with 17 local civil society actors through 12 projects in eight countries. The partner

organisations represent minorities, marginalised youth, women, and persons affected by conflict, and they have direct connections to the beneficiaries. The Deaconess Foundation's programme puts a specific focus on support for women, girls, and persons with disabilities. In order to create sustainable solutions, the programme does not only impact the individual level but strives to build long-term structural changes by working in cooperation with private and public sectors.

The programme's six outcomes contribute to the impact of the programme



## Priority areas

The Deaconess Foundation's programme includes three priority areas to achieve inclusive, sustainable, prosperous, equal, and reconciled societies. The three priorities are understood and implemented as inextricably intertwined. By interlinking them, we aim to decrease poverty and conflict risks under the conditions of global, national and local inequalities and crisis.

**Livelihood and skills development of the most marginalised:** We offer marginalised youth, minorities, and the displaced learning programmes, which develop their skills in personal life management and employability. Hence, to promote sustainable change we cooperate with and build the capacities of private and public sectors.

**Active and resilient civil society:** We strengthen the skills of the representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and marginalised groups in advocacy, policy influencing and networking. We also build enabling environments and structures for dialogue between civil societies and governments.

**Peace and trust in communities:** We focus on building awareness and skills of insider reconcilers and officials particularly on trauma and psychosocial support. Moreover, we interlink community-based actions in reconciliation with national peace processes.

## Geographical Focus

### Eastern Europe and Western Balkans

#### FOCUS OF THE WORK:

Realisation of the rights of the Roma as well as repatriated and refugee women and girls



#### PROJECTS:

**Empowerment and Social Justice for Roma Women**  
(Kosovo)

**Supporting socio-economic re/integration and ensuring equal participation rights of repatriated and refugee women and girls in Kosovo**

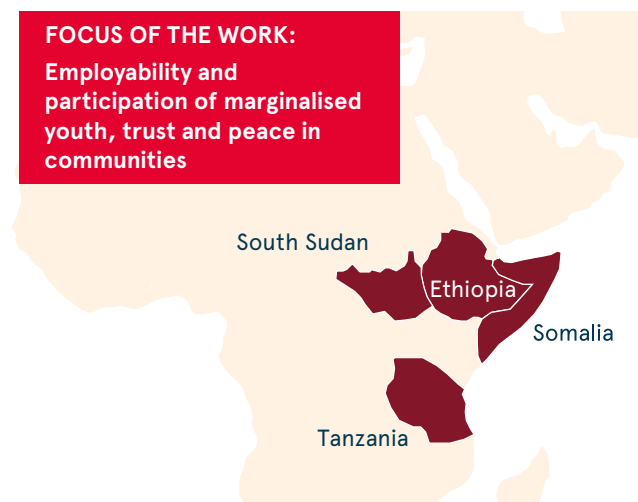
**Roma Women's Power**  
(Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine)

**Strengthening Roma minority's participation in policy and decision making in Ukraine**

### East Africa

#### FOCUS OF THE WORK:

Employability and participation of marginalised youth, trust and peace in communities



#### PROJECTS:

**Mustaqbaldoon**  
(Somalia / Somaliland)

**Youth Action for Future**  
(Ethiopia)

**Youth Agency in Mufindi**  
(Tanzania)

**#reconciliation**  
(Horn of Africa)

**Peace building from the ground**  
(South Sudan)

**Trust and Peace in communities**  
(Horn of Africa)

## 2. Executive Summary

The extensive Russian aggression against Ukraine and a worldwide economic downturn cast a shadow over the first year of the Deaconess Foundation's development cooperation programme. While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was less prominent in 2022, other social and political risks continued to affect programme implementation. These risks further translated into security and safety risks, particularly for the partners operating in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Somalia, and South Sudan.

The partners of the Deaconess Foundation demonstrated remarkable resilience in adapting to the changing conditions, mitigating risks, and adopting new approaches and ways of working. As a result, all the projects under the programme were implemented, yielding positive outcomes, and **reaching over 41 000 direct rights holders**, including **19 589 women and 344 persons with disabilities**.

The Deaconess Foundation's partner CSOs were strengthened as influential civic actors. They actively participated in policy-making processes and established strategic partnerships, resulting in **positive policy outcomes and improved access to funding and capacity-building opportunities**.

Close collaboration with and capacity-building aimed at the private sector and other duty bearers, along with skills training programmes, have played a significant role in **enhancing access to employment services for women from minority groups in Eastern Europe** and in **reducing the unemployment rate among youth and minorities in East Africa**.

Although changing the perceptions of employers and authorities of vulnerable groups has posed challenges, tangible progress has been accomplished. In East Africa, **a shift from clan-based to skills-based recruitment practices has been initiated**. Thanks to the improved capacities of service providers, the services offered to minorities have shown early signs of becoming more inclusive, functional, and of higher quality. Furthermore, there has been an **increase in the number of public policy documents that take the specific needs of these groups into account**.

In the Horn of Africa, **the capacities and roles of insider reconcilers to stabilise conflicts were strengthened** through peer exchanges and skills training in mental health and psychosocial support as well as reconciliation. The active participation of insider reconcilers in numerous peace processes, on both community and national levels, contributed to **fostering peace and stability in the region**. Furthermore, the Deaconess Foundation's programme facilitated and supported the meaningful engagement of women and youth in these processes.

Through the efforts of the Deaconess Foundation and its partners, **the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities in Eastern Europe as well as marginalised youth in East Africa have been empowered to actively engage and participate in their communities and societies**. The main forms of participation included employment, self-employment, and other forms of livelihoods as well as involvement in women or youth groups or campaigns.

In Finland, **awareness about the sustainable development goals, corporate responsibility, and human rights issues increased among businesses**. The Deaconess Foundation has also positioned itself more firmly as the main Finnish expert organisation on the issues of the marginalised Roma in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, making their voices heard in a time of a crisis.

Significant effort has been dedicated to the development of the programme's result management system, and the capacity building within the programme has been an integral part of this endeavour.

In 2022, the International Affairs Unit of the Deaconess Foundation comprised a total of 14 employees. Out of this, a cumulative total of 6.80 person-years were dedicated to working on the programme. For the first year of the programme, 2 156 097 euros were used to cover programme expenses, including both the funding from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Deaconess Foundation's own funding.

# 3. Changes and Materialised Risks in Operating Environment

During 2022, two categories of risks were most prominent in the operating environments of the two regions of the programme, namely social and political risks and security and safety risks, including risks related to climate change. Social and political risks continued to affect programme implementation and led to security and safety risks, especially for the partners operating in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Southern Somalia and South Sudan.

The effects of the war in Ukraine are evident in all our countries of operation, through inflation in prices of commodities and fuel, affecting food security of the most vulnerable, and trust and peaceful relations among ethnic groups, in Kosovo, South Sudan, and Somali region of Ethiopia in particular.

## 3.1 East Africa

The Deaconess Foundation's programme in the region covers **Ethiopia, Somalia/Somaliland, South Sudan and Tanzania**. National and cross-border disputes and challenges in the Horn of Africa deteriorated due to the increased impact of the climate change, natural disasters, and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The security situation in the region, especially in parts of Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Southern Somalia remained extremely volatile.

Somalia and the Somali Region of Ethiopia experienced the most **severe drought** in four decades leading certain parts of Somalia to the brink of famine. In the Somali Region of Ethiopia, the impact of drought was combined with **inflation fuelled by wars** in Tigray and Ukraine. The deteriorating economic conditions prompted a rise in the number of internally displaced persons seeking better livelihood opportunities. These developments did not have a direct impact on the project activities. However, as it is anticipated that the droughts and other extreme weather events related to climate change will continue, project-level mitigation measures will be updated to include, i.e., possibilities to extend food packages shared to participants in trainings and preparing to continuing Vamos life-skills trainings in Gode, where the amount of internally displaced youth arriving to the city is especially high.

South Sudan and Ethiopia experienced serious **floods**. In the case of Ethiopia, the disaster did not affect the Somali Regional State where our partner works. In South Sudan, the floods affected the accessibility of the regions of operation with flights being cancelled, causing trainings of trainers to be rescheduled.

The peace agreement signed in early November 2022 between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front opened a path out of a two-year-long conflict. The **war in Tigray and other border area clashes** did not affect project implementation in the Somali Regional State, which remained one of the most stable and peaceful regions compared to other regional states.

**The mitigation of safety risks** was an ongoing concern to the Deaconess Foundation and the partners in South Sudan and in Southern Somalia also in 2022. In Somalia, the security situation deteriorated in the summer of 2022 with the beginning of the offensive of the Somali security forces coalition and local clan militias against Al Shabaab. In South Sudan, there were many movements across borders triggered by hardship in asylum countries. The resurgence of sub-national conflicts between clans forced people into displacement. The activities of some projects were rescheduled, such as trainings of trainers until it was safe for ACRL-RfP's team to travel in South Sudan, or relocated, such as the co-creation workshop, originally planned to be held in Somalia but finally organised in Kenya.

Reconciliation practitioners in South Sudan have been mobilising local communities for reconciliation to create opportunities for internally displaced persons to come back home. In addition, to mitigate the **risk of conflict in South Sudan induced by the influx of refugees fleeing the conflict in Tigray**, the Deaconess Foundation's partner, ACRL-RfP, together with other CSOs operating in Ethiopia, participated in peace talks held in South Africa. This initiative resulted in the opening of borders between South Sudan and Ethiopia, allowing refugees from Tigray region to go back home. The Deaconess Foundation's partners Inclusive Peace and ACRL-RfP ad hoc collaboration around this issue was also essential in helping ACRL-RfP expand their focus to the refugee community from Tigray in South Sudan and supporting their return to home.

Some **new risks** were identified in the course of the year. In South Sudan, **insecurity and armed attacks** made growing crops and pastoralism challenging to communities that engage in farming, hence curtailing food production, reducing their income, and subjecting them to hunger and to negative coping mechanisms. Insider reconcilers engaged in community dialogue and advocated the government to restore law and order and work at arresting the perpetrators of such attacks.

### 3.2 East Europe and Western Balkans

The Deaconess Foundation's programme in the region covers **Belarus, Kosovo, Moldova, and Ukraine**. Russian invasion in February 2022 deteriorated the security in the region. **Russia tried to destabilise and exercise influence** especially in relation to Kosovo and Moldova by exploiting political and societal divisions and structural vulnerabilities. Belarus became more isolated in relation to the European Union (EU). The human rights situation of minorities, displaced persons, and returnees, especially women and girls, suffered in all countries. Poverty increased due to food and energy prices.

*"In the most critical situation, partners can rely on each other's help. The partnership and the network of the project played crucial role in supporting the Roma refugees in Moldova and Belarus, as well as the internally displaced Roma in Ukraine."*

*Representative of a partner CSO participating in the Roma Women's Power project*

Significant numbers of Ukrainians, including the Roma, became refugees or transited to Moldova and Belarus, or were displaced within Ukraine. All programme partners responded to the needs of displaced Roma by providing them with legal and humanitarian support. The regional approach of the programme emphasising solidarity and cooperation between CSOs in the region, proved its strength: partners in Belarus, Kosovo, and Moldova exchanged information about refugees ongoingly.

In Ukraine, the war caused security risks, displacement, homelessness, and risk of abuse and discrimination among Roma. In 2022, a significant number of the Roma returned especially from some of the neighbouring countries where they faced

discrimination and lack of access to economic means. The programme work was extended to cover all territories controlled by Ukraine, and more activities were implemented in West Ukraine targeting internally displaced persons and the local Roma affected by the **population movements**. Roma women, men, and children have needed substantial support regarding access to humanitarian support, ID and travelling documents, shelter, and income. To address these needs, the number of Roma mediators who worked on the ground was increased. The cooperation with the Ombudsperson was strengthened through monitoring visits to Roma settlements. The Ombudsperson Institution established a new team that focuses on minority rights and informed the Deaconess Foundation that they wish there was knowledge exchange in this thematic area.

Policy-wise there has been little progress regarding the National Roma Strategy 2030. However, the advocacy efforts of the civil society and international actors had some successes. In November 2022, the State Service for Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Conscience started to work on the Action Plan. **Russian propaganda communicated** a small number of **fake pieces of information** on how Ukraine oppressed Roma minority persons. The partner in Ukraine had to react by investigating and expanding the communication component of their work. Their communications towards the Ukrainian citizens and the international community through the media emphasised the role of Roma people in defending their country as enrolled soldiers and as humanitarian workers. Chiricli staff relocated for longer and shorter times to be able to function and maintain staff security. Part of the team operated from Strasbourg, France, while part of the Kiev staff relocated temporarily to Uzhgorod and Chernivtsi (Ukraine). In September of 2022, the staff who relocated temporarily to West Ukraine returned to Kiev.

The **Belarusian authorities continued to repress the freedoms** of assembly, association, and expression through changes in legislation, including amendments in the Criminal Code (Human Rights Council, 2022). To keep functioning, Deaconess Foundation's partners kept a low profile and concentrated the activity in the area of employability and skills development. The financial and administrative work, including the annual audit, were completed through a CSO based in Lithuania. The partner also limited its international travel to avoid being questioned and targeted by the regime.



**Moldova received over 150 000 Roma refugees from Ukraine.** The country does not have expertise on refugee reception and the Roma and persons with disabilities were not welcomed at reception centres. During the spring of 2022, the partner in Moldova moved some of the programme activities to the autumn because they were busy with establishing a new service: the only refugee centre in Moldova specialised on supporting Roma families and persons with disabilities. The centre has been fully functional from April 2022.

**The war in Ukraine had severe effects on stability in Kosovo.** The EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina degraded, and the security situation in North Kosovo was very tense, with ethnic incidents occurring. The Roma communities who lived in the municipalities where the Serbian parallel system operates were affected by these tensions. Yet, they continued to participate in the activities of CSO Voice of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (VoRAE). Both repatriated, refugees, and the Roma were at risk of increased poverty due to the rampant inflation. Progress on Roma inclusion decelerated because of the pandemic and the economic crisis, and **poverty levels increased**. The other project in Kosovo has a solid component on psychosocial support and economic empowerment to mitigate the risk of repatriated seeking to leave the country again. It is critical for repatriated families to reintegrate in the society to raise awareness on the risks of undocumented migration.

### 3.3 Risk management capacity and risk management plans

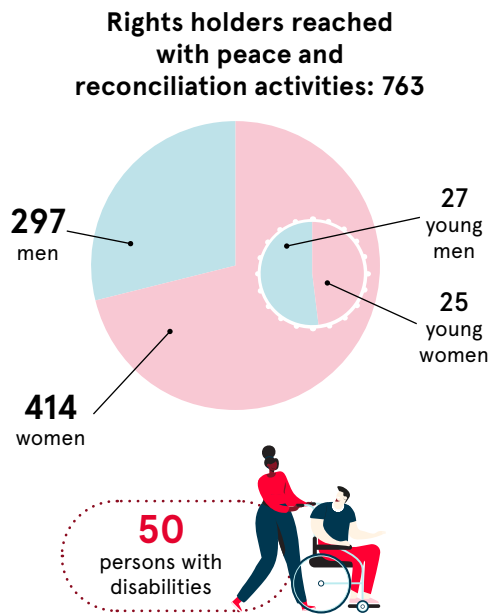
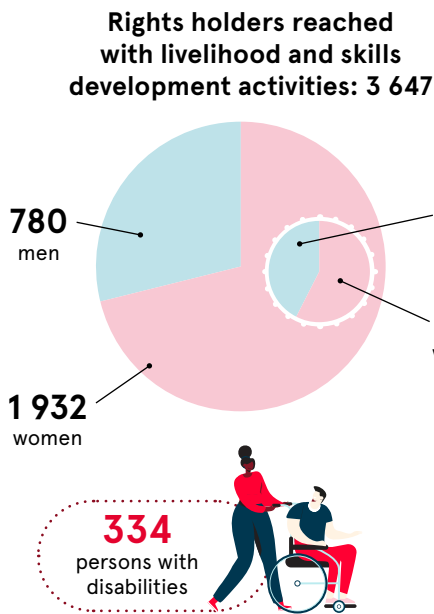
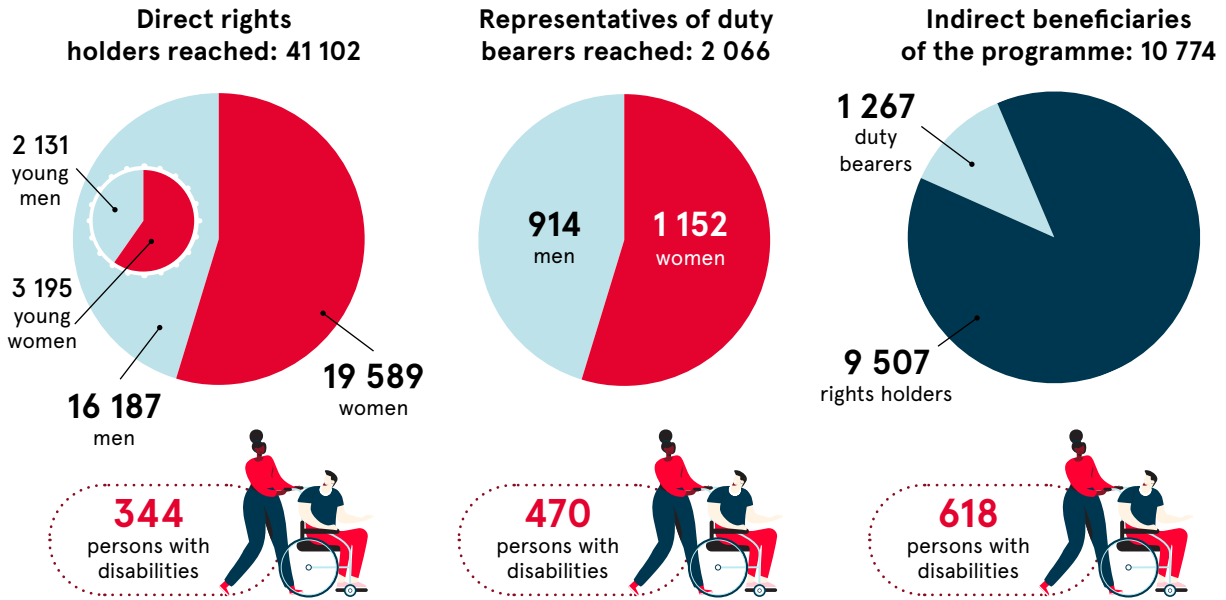
At project level, risk analyses are carried out and project-specific risks assessed and continuously monitored with the local partners. Information on anticipated risks recurrent in different projects and geographical areas directly feeds into and supports the more in-depth analysis and update of the programme level matrix, performed annually while planning the next year and ensures synchronisation between the two levels.

Partners improved their risk management capacity and risk management plans. For example, a risk management training was organised in Somaliland. In addition to the Deaconess Foundation's partner Y-PEER, other local CSOs joined the training to learn about risk management, risk response and responsible financial governance. In Ukraine, the Deaconess Foundation started to capacitate the programme

staff on integrating conflict in programming work by making use of the expertise of the Finnish organisation SaferGlobe. The process consists of building a trustful environment to reflect the interaction of the project activities in Ukraine with conflict and peace, their management and the mitigation of the risks of doing harm.

The thorough planning of the Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) mechanisms development for the programme was completed in 2022 and it will start unfolding in 2023. No cases of abuse or sexual harassment have been identified or reported to the Deaconess Foundation by partners in 2022.

# 4. Results 2022



All projects contribute to the third strategic priority "Active and resilient civil society".  
Young people are youth between the ages of 15 and 29.

In 2022, Deaconess Foundation’s programme “Equal, Inclusive and Reconciled societies” was implemented through 12 projects in eight countries of East Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia/Somaliland, South Sudan and Tanzania) and Eastern Europe (Belarus, Kosovo, Moldova and Ukraine).

The analysis of achievements against the programme’s theory of change, outcome level analyses as well as the presence of early signs of impact provide evidence that the programme is on the right path towards advancing its desired impact, i.e., the following: “Marginalised youth, minorities, and people affected by conflicts enjoy equal rights, opportunities and psychosocial well-being in communities and societies.”

High ownership of all the actors involved is the backbone of Deaconess Foundation’s programme. Trust and credibility among local communities and good relations with local authorities are essential building blocks for ensuring both ownership, transparency, and accountability of our work. Extensive advocacy efforts in Finland, in the countries of operation as well as globally are central to the programme’s achievements.

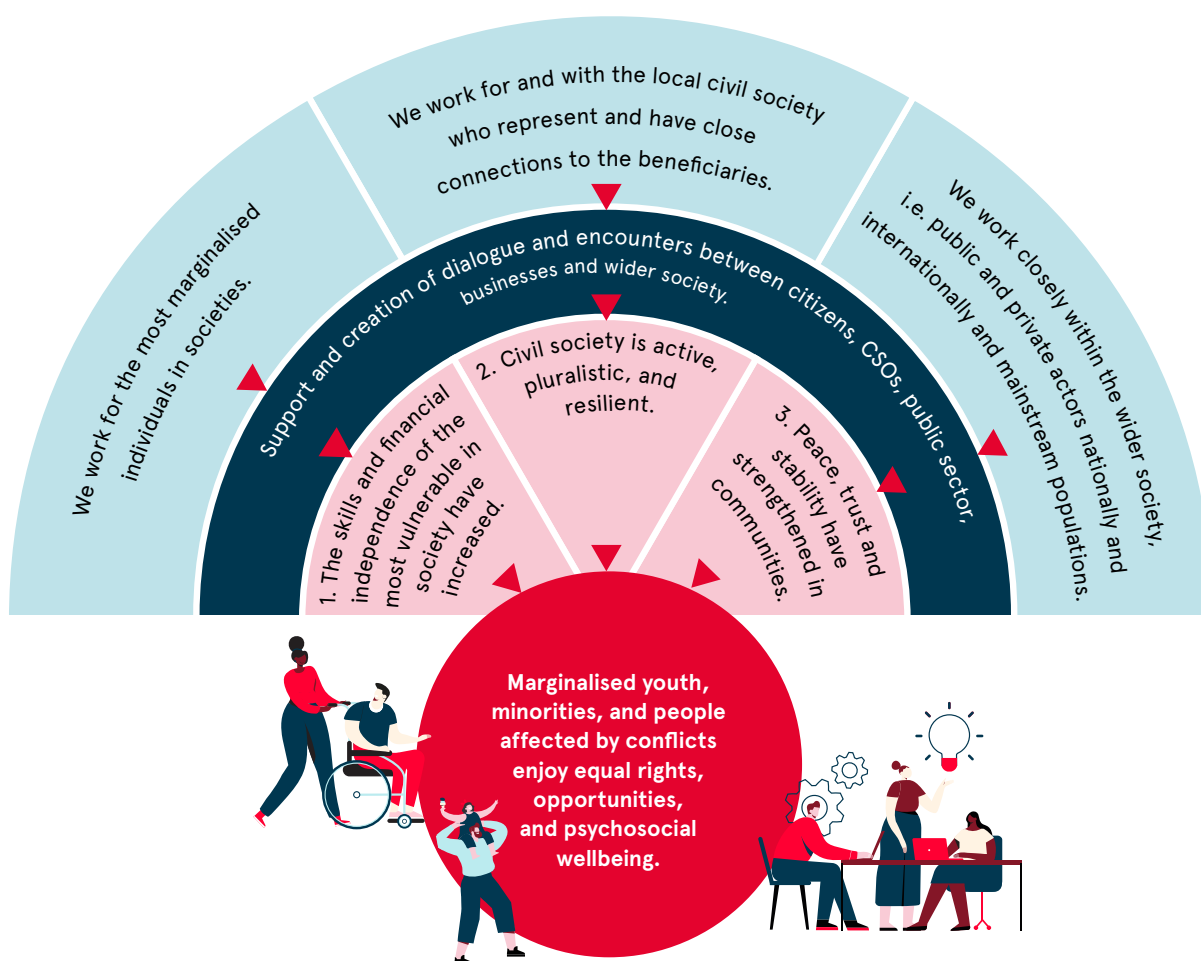
As results were collected and aggregated, it became clear that most of the programme targets for 2025 were almost achieved, achieved, or overachieved in 2022. This calls for a thorough revision of the targets and for the capacity building of the Deaconess Foundation’s partners in that area in 2023.

In February 2022, the Deaconess foundation started a humanitarian project in Ukraine and Moldova. The project is financed through private fundraising and compliments the programme work in the two countries. In Ukraine, 80 000 warm meals were served. Roma women and men received 4 000 food and hygienic

packages, 3 000 received cash to evacuate, 30 000 received advice on evacuations and 20 000 received information and psycho-social support. In Moldova, starting in April 2022 the Deaconess Foundation supported the operation of a refugee centre specialised in accommodating persons with disability and Roma women and men who were denied access to other centres in the country. In total 507 persons lived at the centre, of which 238 were Roma women and men, 198 persons with disability and 71 personal assistants.

### 4.1 Achievements in 2022 against the programme’s theory of change

The programme’s theory of change draws on the idea that an equal, inclusive and reconciled society is possible when **1) even the most marginalised members of the society have equal access and opportunities to decent livelihood, 2) civil society is active, pluralistic and resilient, and 3) there is peace and trust in communities.**



Simplified theory of change of the programme

The Deaconess Foundation's programme work, partly leaning on results achieved earlier by projects that started before the programme period, has already achieved the following:

1. The process of changing the employers' views on recruitment practices from clan-based to skills-based in East Africa and away from prejudice towards repatriated and refugee women in Kosovo is slow but ongoing. Marginalised youth in East Africa have progressed on employment and skills paths, and their employability skills and personal life management skills have strengthened. This, in turn, has increased their self-confidence and well-being (**outcome 2**). In Kosovo, the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian minorities have gained slightly better access to the employment and vocational education services, which is a crucial first step towards more decent livelihood (**outcome 3**). The Finnish people's awareness of the importance of development cooperation and promoting the rights of minorities and marginalised youth has grown (**outcome 6**).
2. Citizens and communities have better knowledge and vision of their rights as well as the possibilities and capabilities they have to create an impact. Our work has helped the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in Eastern Europe and the marginalised youth in East Africa to become more active participants in communities and societies (**outcome 5**). Progress has been made towards strengthening CSOs as influential civic actors, as most of them consolidated or expanded their skills in public policy influencing and interaction with relevant duty bearers' representatives (**outcome 1 and 3**). The resilience of CSOs has been supported with capacities increased in administration, PSEAH and disability mainstreaming. The skills of the East African partners have been increased in essential thematic areas on youth work practice (**outcome 1**). Connections and networks between CSOs, private sector actors and governmental institutions have also improved. On the wider society level, progress has been made in making public services meet better the needs of the rights holders, particularly in Ukraine and in Kosovo (**outcome 1, 2 and 3**).
3. The Deaconess Foundation's programme worked to improve the efficacy of peace and reconciliation processes through empowering insider reconcilers with resources in reconciliation process design, peer support and skills building in mental health and psychosocial support and connecting local

peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts with larger scale peace processes. As a result, insider reconciliation and peacebuilding catalysed as insider reconcilers are progressively getting better equipped to stabilise conflict in the Horn of Africa. In addition, a contribution to a paradigm shift within peace processes to foster the inclusion of trauma healing and psychosocial support has been initiated (**outcome 4**).

## 4.2 Early signs of impact

Early signs show that in its first year the programme is on the right path towards advancing the desired impact, i.e., "Marginalised youth, minorities, and people affected by conflicts enjoy equal rights, opportunities and psychosocial well-being in communities and societies." Impact level data was not collected in 2022. However, programme partners were asked to report on any indication that their project is contributing to the programme's impact. Impact data will be collected starting from 2023.

All projects have advanced multisectoral collaboration between relevant duty bearers and other stakeholders in their fields of intervention, which enhances the situation of the rights holders. For instance, to ensure the sustainable socioeconomic reintegration of repatriated and refugee women and girls in Kosovo, our partner civil society organisations closely collaborated with central and municipal institutions responsible for delivering specialised protection services to these vulnerable groups. Based on a systematic assessment, gaps or blockages in the existing system as well as capacity building needs of authorities were identified. These findings were discussed with higher authorities, and appropriate actions were taken accordingly.

The programme has contributed positively to achieving impact by improving the inclusion in society and equal access to employment and education services among marginalised youth and minorities. Particularly strong progress was made in Kosovo, where the Deaconess Foundation's partner VoRAE participated in working groups to develop the National Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali in Kosovo Society 2022–2026 and drafted in cooperation with the Office for Good Governance the "Employment mechanism for participation and inclusion of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities in the public sector. Both the National Strategy and the new mechanism were approved by Kosovo's Prime Minister in 2022. In Somaliland and Ethiopia, as a result of projects' activities, the well-being of vulnerable and marginalised communities has improved as their employment

opportunities increased. Similarly, the opportunities for marginalised youth have improved in Tanzania.

Over half of the youth that have participated in project activities in 2021–2022 have been employed, established their own businesses, or have developed other decent livelihoods.


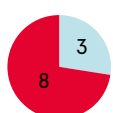
Based on statements made at the closing event of the #reconciliation project, both the Ministry of Peace in Ethiopia and the National Dialogue Commission have acknowledged the importance of mental health and psychosocial support interventions as an integral part of national reconciliation processes. The reconciliation projects in the programme have largely emphasised the role of women and youth in building peace, and they have created healing and provided opportunities for their meaningful engagement in those processes. Insider reconcilers in the Horn of Africa have experienced personal growth through the acquisition of new skills and peer sharing and are able to better handle their trauma. This is the sign of an improvement in their psychosocial well-being, and it has immediate benefit for their communities. The improved psychosocial well-being is seen resulting in improved trust and interaction between people in the communities of the Horn of Africa.

## 4.3 Outcome level results

### OUTCOME 1

**The desired outcome 1** is as follows: “The capacity of the project partners and other targeted civil society actors has been strengthened.” To ensure this, the programme supports the partners and other targeted CSOs to engage in policy processes, partnerships, and networks that influence positively their development (indicator 1), and to develop their organisational and project management performance (indicator 2). The Deaconess Foundation believes that strengthened CSOs will be able to better influence the decision-making of local and national authorities, which leads to more equal, inclusive, and reconciled societies.

Ten projects in eight countries (Belarus, Kosovo, Moldova, Ukraine and in East Africa in Tanzania, Ethiopia, Somalia/Somaliland and South Sudan) contributed to this outcome. The implementation occurred in the context of 11 months of full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine, a global recession and a weakening human rights situation. Rights holders have been in need of humanitarian support in most of the programme countries, while duty bearers had to deal with compounded crisis. Many programme partners and other CSOs reached had to redesign their work to both address emerging humanitarian and human rights issues, while continuing with previous

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	PROJECTS FEEDING	BASELINE	RESULTS 2022	TARGET 2025	PROGRESS
1. The capacity of the project partners and other targeted civil society actors has been strengthened.	1. Number and names of the policy processes, partnerships and networks in which project partners and other targeted civil society actors are involved.			Policy processes: 30 Partnerships: 94 Networks: 24	Project partners are involved in: Policy processes: 30 (average 5), Partnerships: 103 (average 17), Networks: 28 (average 1,75).	117 % # of Policy processes 150 % # of Partnerships 164% # number of networks
	2. Project partners and other targeted civil society actors organizational and project management performance have improved.		Project partners' average rate of organisational and project management performance is 3.76 (fair).	Project partners' average rate of organisational and project management performance is 3.98 (fair).	Project partners' average rate of organisational and project management performance is at least 4 (good).	92 %

initiatives. New civic initiatives and activism also emerged in some of the programme countries.

**Very good progress has been achieved in advancing outcome 1. Particularly in Kosovo and Ukraine the project partners engaged actively in policy making processes and partnerships, which were followed by desired policy results and access to funding and capacity strengthening opportunities. Good progress was achieved in increasing CSOs' capacities on PSEAH, with three partners adopting PSEAH policy and establishing focal points, and on disability mainstreaming. In East Africa, the programme partners expanded their knowledge about youth work practice.**

### Indicator 1

In total, 8 out of 11 partners were part of 35 policy processes, overachieving our 2025 target of 30 policy processes with a level of progress at 117%. The programme partners participated in and contributed to policy meetings and working groups. They made recommendation papers individually or together with other CSOs, collected, published, and communicated data to inform policy. They also organised encounters between officials responsible for policy processes and the rights holder they represent. They contributed to local, national, and international-level policy making processes.

The Kosovar CSO VoRAE's experts were part of the working group which developed the National Strategy for Inclusion of the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in Kosovo Society in 2022–2026. The Strategy was approved at the end of the year by the Prime Minister's Office. VoRAE also provided European best practices and their expert opinion to the National Human Rights Committee, as they are in the process of establishing a Commissioner on Antigypsyism in Kosovo. This result is very significant since it contributed to a progressive/transformational level of HRBD within the programme. The Ukrainian partner CSO engaged in many policy processes relevant for protecting the rights of Roma women and men. On one hand, the granting of the European Union candidate status for Ukraine enhanced the minority rights processes as the country strives to meet the criteria for membership. The CSO Chiricli provided their expertise to duty bearers that coordinate the ongoing process of developing a National Action Plan for the implementation of the Roma National Strategy. On the other hand, Chiricli contributed to new policy areas that emerged because of the war. They developed a set of recommendations for the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on policy actions needed to safeguard the rights of the internally displaced Roma, especially

those without valid ID documents. The Ombudsman of Ukraine established a new department in 2022, to focus on the rights of national minorities, political, and religious beliefs. Chiricli shared their expertise on how the new department can cooperate with the Roma civil society. They also advocated with their international partners for possibilities to share practices in the area of cooperation between human rights institutions and Roma persons and CSOs.

Both in Somaliland and Ethiopia, representatives of the local administration and line ministries are in the steering groups of the projects and provide crucial information for example regarding the current needs of the local private sector. They also provide access to vulnerable youth groups, such as internally displaced youth who take part in project activities. In Somaliland, the partner organisation Y-PEER attended quarterly National Employment Forum meetings organised by the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, which focuses on issues related to youth employment creation capacity building.

All programme partners worked with partners (155) and in networks (46) in 2022. With the 2025 targets being 103 partnerships and 28 networks, the level of progress is 50% and 164% respectively. Through the participation in partnerships and networks, the programme partners expanded their knowledge about funding opportunities, with some of them accessing funding or capacity building support. The Kosovo Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims was selected in 2022 by the United States based Center for Victims of Torture to benefit from capacity building on delivering high quality mental health and psychosocial support and on monitoring, evaluation, and learning. This will have a major impact on the organisation's process development in this area. Jesuit Refugee Service in Kosovo signed a contract of cooperation with Caritas Switzerland for the provision of integration courses for refugees in Kosovo under a larger project. This is their first cooperation with Caritas Switzerland, and Jesuit Refugee Service will benefit from capacity strengthening and new funding possibilities if it is successful.

A common online event was organised for all partners to get to know each other's area of expertise. In a training of trainers organised by the Deaconess Foundation's Vamos coaches, the Organisation for Welfare and Development in Action in Ethiopia (OWDA) and the Somaliland Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER) exchanged practices on youth work and skills training. Programme partners in Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus actively exchanged information on the situation of Roma refugees.

## Success Factors

A variety of factors contributed to these good results. In Eastern Europe and Western Balkans, Roma CSOs utilised the policy and practice examples of the EU and the Council of Europe, demanding that national policies should follow similar standards and models. As all countries in the region, except Belarus, made efforts to progress with their EU membership process, and non-discrimination and Roma inclusion are topics that they must show progress with, policy makers were interested to utilise the work and international-level expertise of the CSOs. Project work, the Finnish funding and experience in relevant policy areas were also used as arguments and examples of good practices. CSOs stated that it was important to use self-made studies or other academic references.

Regarding partnerships and networks, it was crucial that partner CSOs had received national recognition as experts in their respective fields prior to the commencement of the programme. Rights holders, duty bearers and other stakeholders knew them and trusted their skills. It was also important that the Deaconess Foundation showed encouragement when partners proposed activity changes needed to advance collaborations that they considered significant in terms of future programme results.

## Challenges

The war in Ukraine led to profound shifts in political attention in most of the programme countries in Eastern Europe, and some of the relevant policy areas have been neglected, delayed, or lost from the agenda. The work of influencing policy processes became more resource consuming. It demanded additional time and evidence to capture interest and attention as policy makers and implementers had to manage urgent crisis situations. New policy areas appeared, with which some of the CSOs had to engage, for instance the policies concerning Roma refugees in Moldova and the increased number of internally displaced Roma that lack IDs in Ukraine. The persons and communities that the programme works with in each country are deprived of many different rights. There are many different policy areas that require advocacy work, while at the same time the CSOs must prioritise their policy advocacy areas. Success often depends on finding and working with officials committed to the causes, although there is a risk that the dialogue suffers when these contact persons leave. Civil engagement is new in many countries; therefore, the influencing possibilities are rather sporadic and sometimes informal. Participating in partnership and network meetings is time consuming, and some of the forums are not able to deliver what the CSOs need or expect.

## Lessons learnt

For effective policy influencing, CSOs should preferably target policy areas in which they are recognised publicly as experts. Results regarding national-level policies are usually achieved by participating in CSO coalitions, while regarding documents and practices that guide the service provisions, it is important that CSOs build a dialogue and trust with the targeted duty bearers. Advocating the Members of Parliament is important. Some of the policies influencing opportunities were spontaneous, which required flexibility from CSOs as operations needed to be adapted.

Participation in events and conferences is essential to developing new partnerships, but it is also important to analyse which partnerships might have added value for CSOs. At the beginning of a new partnership, it is vital to identify mutual benefits and common goals and to agree on transparent communication. Partnerships and networks contribute to strengthening expertise and working practices and can sometimes also create fundraising possibilities.

## Indicator 2

The organisational and project management capacity of the 11 direct project partners was developed in 2022.

The programme capacity development plan was developed collaboratively on the basis of capacity assessment processes. A survey was developed to establish the baseline on existing capacity and capacity needs and to monitor annual progress, using a scale from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). Programme coordinators from the Deaconess Foundation also regularly assessed and discussed the capacity needs with the partners as part of monthly meetings. Eight project partners completed the baseline survey and scored an average of 3.76. For the annual monitoring survey, the average score was 3.98, which shows encouraging progress.

Three partners adopted their first PSEAH policy and appointed focal points. One of the partners in Kosovo presented their document and practices related to PSEAH to smaller, local Roma CSOs and offered to guide them if they want to adopt their own PSEAH policies. Mary Hoch Foundation adopted their Anti-Discrimination, Harassment, and Reasonable Accommodations Policy and Anti-Corruption Policy. Maandeeq developed its knowledge about the "do no harm" principle. One of the results achieved in 2022 is that on the programme level there is more knowledge about the needs and commitments of the partners to

PSEAH. Based on this, in 2023 the programme partners will receive tailored support on specific safeguarding topics, and 4 of the 11 partners who do not have a PSEAH policy will start to work on it.

The needs of the partners related to risk management were mapped, and based on this a workshop will be organised in 2023 to strengthen their practices in this area. Y-PEER in Somaliland already started to improve its practices and trained 40 people from Y-PEER and other local CSOs in 2022. Another partner trained two staff members on Climate, Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction Integration.

All partners reported that their knowledge about disability rights increased due to the training organised with Abilis Foundation in 2022 and the ongoing discussions with the Deaconess Foundation's team. As a result, the Ukraine partner analysed how to reach the Roma with disabilities and organised an awareness raising event on the topic. In Moldova, the partner started to run, with fundraising resources from the Deaconess Foundation, the only refugee centre in the country for the Roma and persons with disabilities. At least two partners started to cooperate with organisations of people with disabilities in their countries.

The partners in Ethiopia experienced that the trainings of trainers organised with experts from the Deaconess Foundation strengthened their expertise on youth work. The peer-to-peer exchange between Somaliland Y-PEER and OWDA Ethiopia enhanced the expertise of both organisations in the realm of youth work and provided valuable insights on how to grow and develop as CSOs.

The partners are more familiar with the content of the programme, its processes, and the implementing partners and stakeholders have gained knowledge in working with templates and data collection. Some of the partners identified that cooperation with colleagues inside the programme might expand their organisational knowledge. For example, partners in Ukraine wish to have exchanges with the Kosovo Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims in 2023 to learn about their work with war survivors and collecting evidence about war crimes.

Two partners significantly improved their financial processes and reporting as they started to work with suitable accounting companies. All partners estimated that the exchanges with programme coordinators in Helsinki contribute to accurate financial reporting.

## **Success factors**

The programme partners see that continuous learning is crucial for CSOs as they operate in complex and challenging environments. Programme coordinators at the Deaconess Foundation managed to build trust and successful cooperation with local project coordinators and experts, and together they were able to identify the organisational capacity building needs. Combining tailored support with common training for all partners was appreciated as a good method. Hiring external experts to strengthen and develop the programme processes was important, especially regarding results collection and reporting, safeguarding, and travel safety. Study visits served as good practices, as the partners learnt about the Deaconess Foundation's organisational and administrative processes and the work of different departments.

## **Challenges**

While the partner CSOs are committed to developing their performance, they sometimes find it challenging to allocate time and resources for the staff to participate in the trainings. The capacity building Plan covered many capacity areas as this was the first time when the partners worked under a Finnish funded development cooperation programme. Several trainings were conducted in the second part of the year since the programme began during the spring. Based on this year's experiences, a capacity building annual clock will be developed for 2023 to ensure the smooth implementation of the important annual capacity building activities. Programme partners have funding from different donors and must learn and operate with various results frameworks and reporting templates. The programme partners are heterogeneous CSOs, with unique expertise in their area of work, and they work with different capacities and systems regarding operational and project management. This is why tailored one-to-one support is necessary.

## **Meaning of the achievement and benefits for the future**

Most of the CSOs consolidated or expanded their policy influencing knowledge and interaction with relevant duty bearers' representatives. This is an important factor towards strengthening the CSOs as influential civic actors. A number of the partnerships already benefited the outcome-level results while some of them will most probably influence the outcome-level progress in the coming years. The capacity needs of the partners as well as the preferred forms of capacity activities were identified. This will make the implementation of the



Capacity Building Plan smoother in the next years. The partners also know better what kind of support they can receive and will most likely be able to utilise it better.

### **Contribution of output level to the achievement of outcome results**

The assumptions for outcome 1 and its outputs were mostly correct. The partner CSOs have shown strong interest in cooperating with each other as well as with other institutions and engaging in advocacy activities. The transition to programme modality created some challenges, particularly with partners that had earlier been accustomed to working only on a project-by-project basis. We advocated to our partners the benefits of the programme approach and working more closely with other in-country partners, for example in Kosovo.

All output indicators are exceeding the 2025 targets. For instance, we had a total of 349 attendees from partner organisations' staff taking part in trainings and benefiting from other forms of support. It is important to note that some individuals attended multiple events, resulting in the cumulative count. This figure surpasses the target of 61 attendees by 2025. This is because more trainings were organised than originally planned and more participants took part in both face-to-face and online learning events than expected. The partners also produced more documents (indicator target achieved 116%) and conducted more actions in cooperation with other CSOs (indicator target achieved 160%) than anticipated. This can mostly be explained by the fact that the partners did better than they expected when they were planning for 2022.



**The Deaconess Foundation offers different trainings and support to its development cooperation programme partners both individually and on the level of the whole programme or its region. During partners' representatives' trips to Finland visits are organised to relevant units of the Deaconess Foundation as well as other Finnish actors to support mutual learning. Members of the staff of the Kosovar CSO Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians visited Finland in October 2022 together with a delegation from the Kosovar employment agency. They noticed that in Kosovo minorities are sometimes better integrated in the labour legislation than in Finland, but in Finland the cooperation between the national institutions, the municipalities and the CSOs functions better in providing services to minorities. "Cooperation with the Deaconess Foundation, an organisation with more than a hundred years of experience, has raised the level of professionalism of VoRAE as well as our human capacities to contribute to the well-being of the marginalised groups in Kosovo," says Vesa Batalli, program manager of VoRAE. Photo: Deaconess Foundation**

## OUTCOME 2

The desired outcome 2 is the following: “Businesses operate more sustainably and businesses and other employers employ more inclusively.” To ensure this, the programme includes measures, such as multi-stakeholder fora, to encourage local businesses to employ marginalised youth and minorities as well as trainings and other events to advance SDG incorporation to business strategies and operations. Close cooperation with local businesses and labour markets leads to a private sector committed to inclusive employment thus decreasing the high unemployment rate amongst marginalised youth and minorities.

The results for this outcome have been collected in Tanzania, Somaliland, and Ethiopia, with additional contributions from the global education project (VGK) Kymppi 2.0 implemented in Finland. Although the project did not directly feed into indicators 1 or 2 in numerical terms, it made a valuable contribution to the overall outcome. The results for the Mustaqbaldoon project (Somaliland) are only included in the narrative, not in the table below. This is due to the fact that it did not have a baseline nor targets available for 2025 because it started prior to the programme period and ended in 2022.

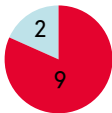

**The outcome implementation is on track, with good progress achieved in 2022, particularly in East Africa, where the number of employers employing marginalised and minority youth has already exceeded the 2025 target. In East Europe, the first results are expected during 2023.**

## Indicator 1

In total 32 employers employed marginalised and minority youth in three countries (Ethiopia, Tanzania and Somalia/Somaliland). The employers included government institutions as well as local businesses, such as beauty salons, restaurants, schools, hospitals and water administration offices. The youth have been employed after they have acquired the required skills and expertise through skills and/or life-skills trainings offered in our projects. The youth included young single mothers, internally displaced persons, youth from minority groups and youth living with none or only one parent. Some of the youth have been employed by the same businesses where they received their skills training or did their apprenticeship. In Kosovo, the target is to have 20 companies to employ repatriated and refugee women by the end of 2025. During 2022, three contracts were signed between the future employers (fashion and tailoring companies) and the Jesuit Refugee Service. However, the employments have not yet started.

## Challenges

In the target countries, youth unemployment is a major issue, and despite skills employment is often difficult to find, especially for youth and women coming from marginalised and minority backgrounds as well as for persons with disabilities. In Tanzania and Somaliland, the youth received skills trainings by local companies both through apprenticeship and short-skills training programme. However, most of the youth were not offered employment in these companies after the

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	PROJECTS FEEDING	BASELINE	RESULTS 2022	TARGET 2025	PROGRESS
2. Businesses operate more sustainably and businesses and other employers employ more inclusively.	1. Number and types of employers who have employed marginalized youth and minorities in target countries.		0	22 public and private sector employees	19	116 %
	2. Number of businesses who have increased knowledge of applying SDGs to businesses.		0	Not available (first results will come 2023)	50	0 %

trainings ended. In Tanzania, discussions will be carried out with the current and/or potential apprenticeship trainers to ensure continuation of employment after trainings. In Somaliland, future skills trainings will be conducted in technical and vocational institutions managed by local authorities to enable the youth to receive higher quality training and formal diplomas. In Ethiopia's Somali Region, the number of the businesses is low and business owners tend to employ youth from their respective clans despite the level of their skills. As a result, there are less opportunities for marginalised youth. To tackle this challenge, more effort is put to support self-employment through cooperatives.

In Kosovo, some of the employers, especially bigger ones, were resistant to the idea of employing marginalised women because of prejudice against repatriated and refugee women. To address this challenge, the project is using a step-by-step process with employers, focusing at first on informal meetings with businesses and then moving towards the official activities in the project.

### Success factors

In Somaliland and Ethiopia, the marginalised youth and youth from minority clans were employed by twelve companies despite the above-mentioned challenges. The employers were convinced of the quality of the skills of the youth and were willing to give them a chance to prove their commitment and competence. The employers included a wide range of organisations from private companies to public institutions. In Somaliland, one of the former Vamos participants has established a photo studio (already in 2021) which now employs six other youth, one of them also a Vamos alumni. In Kosovo, meetings organised between beneficiaries and businesses made it possible for beneficiaries to see that it is easier than they think to take a step towards employment. For the employers, it is a way to get to know the marginalised women as potential employees and to change their mindset. These meetings enabled a change in attitudes on both sides. For instance, one of the beneficiaries shared that she was really surprised when meeting a successful businesswoman who was so open to support other women in pastry making. On the other hand, the businesswoman shared that she is not doing this only because she loves supporting women but also because there is a need for employees.

### Lessons learnt

There were multiple project-level lessons learnt that can be utilised on the programme level. In Kosovo,

it was observed that it is necessary to have informal meetings in the beginning of the employment process to create relationships and trust between the local CSOs and potential private sector partners. The importance of creating good relations between different kinds of stakeholders, especially between the CSOs and private sector actors to enable active and sustainable collaboration, was also noticed in Kymppi 2.0 and projects in Eastern Africa. Discussions between the project staff and businesses must be continuous to ensure that all parties are constantly in agreement. Employers' prejudices towards vulnerable groups can be undertaken with positive examples, such as highlighting fruitful experiences from employers who have already employed from these groups. However, the change is slow and requires multiple project cycles.

### Indicator 2

In 2022, a total of 264 public, private and CSO representatives participated in four events organised by the Kymppi 2.0 project. From these, 147 were representing mainly small and medium size businesses. The events focused on deepening the knowledge of specific corporate responsibility related questions, including communications on corporate social responsibility and the relationship between climate change and human rights. The country days on Nepal and Tanzania gathered most participants. The purpose of these events was to introduce the contexts to Finnish businesses and to enable and encourage collaboration between businesses and CSOs, and to include responsibility as a cross-cutting issue to companies' operations. The SDGs that these four events especially highlighted were SDG8, Decent work and economic growth; SDG10, Reduced inequalities; SDG13, Climate action; SDG15, Life on land and SDG17, Partnerships for the goals.

The Kymppi 2.0 project also participated in the Solve the SDGs hackathon, a hybrid event organised by Aalto University and Aalto Ventures Program. Although the 224 participants were students, many of them were start-up oriented and possible future entrepreneurs. Through the event, the project managed to deliver its message to the business-owners or employees of the future.

A solution to the challenge presented by the project won the whole event.

### Challenges

As the Kymppi 2.0 project was based on organising events and advocating the importance and insights of SDGs through them, measuring the long-term impact

was challenging. In a final project evaluation, it was indicated as a challenge that the participation in the Kymppi 2.0 events raised the interest to establish partnerships with other companies and also with CSOs, but more concrete hands-on-support would have been needed to realise it. The evaluation also showed that activating corporate responsibility in an organisation is a long process and needs to be supported with risk management skills, which are not always available in the small and medium-sized enterprises.

### Success factors

According to the Kymppi 2.0 project evaluation, the project achieved its objective on raising awareness on SDGs, social responsibility and human rights issues. This was accomplished especially well through multi-stakeholder country days, which focused on special contexts and gathered public, private and civil society actors in one place. In addition, cooperation with Finnpartnership enhanced reaching the target group (Finnish small and medium-sized enterprises)



**24-years-old Sahnoon Abdillahi Adan was not able to continue education after finishing secondary school because his family could not afford to pay the school fees. He was also unable to find employment. In 2022, he attended a training organised by the Mustaqbaldoon project in cooperation with Taran Aluminium and Gypsum company in Hargeisa. The training was very practical and included, for example, fixing doors, installing windows as well as grinding gypsum. Sahnoon found the training very interesting and did so well in the practical work that company decided to hire him after the training period ended together with some other trainees. Sahnoon continues to work at Taran and hopes to be able to later study engineering at the local faculty. Photo: Y-PEER Somaliland**

and delivering the message. As one concrete result, the evaluation indicated that a meeting between a stakeholder from the private sector and a CSO during a country day led to a collaboration in the form of provision of internships for students in vocational education.

### **Lessons learnt**

In Kymppi 2.0, it was noticed that especially when organising online events, it is difficult to measure how many participants are actively engaging in the event. This is one of the reasons why measuring the indicator 2 was difficult, as mere participation cannot be directly translated into increased knowledge of applying SDGs to businesses. In the next project focusing on corporate responsibility, either the indicator or monitoring mechanisms need to be developed further.

### **Meaning of the achievement and benefits for the future**

The results of this outcome contribute positively both to the individual situation of an employed person and to the whole society by encouraging other businesses through positive examples. In societies where the discrimination of marginalised groups and minorities is widespread, when companies hire people from these groups, other businesses gradually acknowledge the change and will be encouraged to act similarly. In addition, the vulnerable persons gain more self-confidence and are empowered to seek employment more confidently. In Tanzania, a RLabs training has contributed to changing the youths' mindset. The youths are now more willing to accept work even from further away or work that is not their core interest in order to earn money to start their own businesses. In Ethiopia, representatives from local businesses have participated in activities, such as a youth forums. In these events, the youth and businesses have been able to meet and the businesses were introduced to

the project targets and possibilities to employ skilled but vulnerable youth. The process of changing the employers' views on recruitment practices from clan-based to skills-based is slow but ongoing.

### **Contribution of output level to the achievement of outcome results**

The assumptions for outcome 2 focus on the employers' willingness to employ skilled youth from vulnerable and minority backgrounds and on their interest in gaining more knowledge about SDGs and take appropriate action. Employers have expressed reluctance to employ more inclusively demonstrating prejudices against youth from vulnerable and minority backgrounds. Our partners have engaged in dialogues with them and succeeded in overcoming the negative attitudes. Private sector actors are increasingly interested in gaining knowledge and growing their expertise in corporate social responsibility. There are signs that both private and public sector actors understand the benefits of increasing mutual cooperation.

Out of five output indicators, the indicator about the number and types of feasibility studies conducted achieved 25% of our 2025 target (one study conducted). The rest, related to events to increase employers' awareness in inclusive employment and responsible business and to the recognition of the benefits of multistakeholder cooperation, are a little over the target (from 40% to 77%) or significantly over (range 192%–480%). Activities have been implemented as intended and with more beneficiaries than originally planned, due to a huge demand and because partners did better than they themselves expected when they were planning for 2022. Mostly projects launched before 2022 are feeding to this outcome. In those projects, the role and engagement of private sector has been increasingly emphasised along the years, resulting in higher numbers of participants.

### OUTCOME 3



The desired outcome 3 is as follows: “Services provided by local authorities and other service providers to marginalised youth and minorities are more inclusive, functional and of good quality.” To achieve the goal, our implementing partners monitor and analyse the gaps in existing services and their delivery. Based on this, they provide capacity building to local authorities to ensure the provision of improved services to vulnerable groups. They also make recommendations and advocate to guarantee the needs of vulnerable groups are addressed in essential strategic documents on the local and national level. The results for this outcome have been collected in Belarus, Kosovo, Moldova, Ukraine, and Tanzania.

**Very good progress has been achieved in advancing outcome 3. As a result of the service providers’ strengthened capacities, the services provided to minorities are already more inclusive, functional and of better quality and the number of public policy documents which consider the specific needs of these categories has increased.**

### Indicator 1:

The progress of this indicator is assessed yearly through a questionnaire. In 2022, the questionnaire was conducted only in Tanzania, where the results increased from 2.56 to 2.59 (1 - very poor, 5 - very good). Even through the results for the “Empowerment and social justice for Roma women” (Kosovo) and “Strengthening Roma minority’s participation in policy and decision-making in Ukraine” projects are only included in the narrative, not in the table above, it is important to highlight their substantial contribution to the overall outcome. No results data were collected in Kosovo, as the time was too short from the moment the baseline data was collected (after mid-2022). Data collection was not possible in Ukraine during the year 2022 due to the prevailing political situation.

In Kosovo, the employment and vocational education services provided by the employment offices slightly increased their level of accessibility and relevance in relation to the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian minorities. Employment officers have gained knowledge about why the Roma have difficulties to fully benefit from

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	PROJECTS FEEDING	BASELINE	RESULTS 2022	TARGET 2025	PROGRESS
3. Services provided by local authorities and other service providers to marginalised youth and minorities are more inclusive, functional and of good quality.	1. Improved quality, inclusiveness and functionality of services provided by local authorities and other service providers to marginalised youth and minorities.		Average of improved quality, inclusiveness and functionality of services provided by local authorities and other service providers to marginalised youth and minorities is 3.4 (fair) in Kosovo and 2.56 (poor) in Tanzania.	Average of improved quality, inclusiveness and functionality of services provided by local authorities and other service providers to marginalised youth and minorities is 2.89 (poor) in Tanzania.	Average of improved quality, inclusiveness and functionality of services provided by local authorities and other service providers to marginalised youth and minorities is 4.2 (good) in Kosovo and 3 (fair) in Tanzania.	75 % (Tanzania)
	2. Number and names of documents which include specific needs of minorities are developed or revised by local authorities and other service providers.		0	2 documents developed	5 documents developed or revised	40 %

employment measures and services provided by the offices, and about the circumstances and forms of discrimination that hinder their access to the labour market. Together with the CSO representatives, they analysed which measures and services serve the circumstances of the Roma women and men the best.

In Tanzania, the common planning of project activities together with stakeholders has promoted the communication between the district authorities and the project as well as the participation of district authorities in the project activities. The authorities have now more information about the current situation and the needs of vulnerable youth as well as children with disabilities in the area. They have also more knowledge about how these issues could be addressed as they have participated in the trainings organised by the project. The challenge that the



**Xhevahire Dervishi Rexhepi works as a Coordinator for sustainable return at the Municipal Office for Communities and Return in Ferizaj, Kosovo. As a part of the development cooperation programme, the Deaconess Foundation and its partners promote the rights of the repatriated and refugee women and girls in Kosovo. An integral part of this work is the training of the staff of the Municipal Offices for Communities and Return who are responsible for the reintegration of the repatriated persons in the municipalities. The officials will receive a training on psychosocial support and develop their skills that are needed to provide essential social protection services to support the successful reintegration of repatriated persons into society. This will lead to improved quality and functionality of the services provided to the repatriated persons who are often in a very vulnerable position. Photo: Adnan Beqiri**

district authorities face is, however, that they have very little resources to provide services to the youth in general, including the marginalised youth. In Ukraine, the programme contributed to making the municipal humanitarian services, such as the distribution of humanitarian aid and evacuations, more accessible and inclusive in relation to the Roma. This was achieved by informing Roma women and men about the services, by monitoring the services as the Roma accessed them and by having discussions with the staff and those in charge for organising the services, whenever the Roma could not access or were denied the service. Two reports were produced and presented to relevant authorities about the needs of the internally displaced Roma and Roma with disabilities. Relevant duty bearers have access to knowledge about the needs of these groups and the form of support needed. The monitoring work done by the institution of the Ombudsman among the Roma improved its quality as Chiricli, with its expertise and contacts among the Roma people on the ground, participated in monitoring trips and provided data received from local staff.

### **Success factors**

The partners are established actors in their area of expertise, known and trusted by the authorities. They know how to approach duty bearers and provide adequate trainings. Previous cooperations and established contacts played a significant role in making capacity building activities possible in 2022.

### **Challenges**

Especially regional and municipal institutions have limited services to offer because of the lack of state and local funds. The scarcity of resources, including lack of time, negatively affects the motivation to develop the services. Including CSOs in the processes of planning and developing services is a new way of thinking for duty bearers.

### **Lessons learnt**

Previously established contacts and trust with the national-level authorities made it possible to influence the services at the local and regional level. Sharing the findings regarding the quality and the lack of services at the municipal level with state-level duty bearers and politicians can support the local level to get improved access to resources for capacity building. As municipal-level civil servants have low salaries, it is important that the trainings are free of charge for the participants. In some of our programme countries, civil servants are obliged to do

continuous training. In this case the accreditation of training is crucial and needs to be ensured.

## Indicator 2

Results for the Roma Women's Power project (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova) are exclusively presented in the narrative and not included in the table below. The reason for this is that the project did not have a baseline nor targets 2025 available as it was initiated before the start of the programme period and ended in 2022. The programme partners in Ukraine and Kosovo contributed to four documents. The partner in Ukraine provided recommendations on how the human rights of the Roma should be addressed in the Ukraine's National Recovery Plan 2022–2032, in the National Human Rights Strategy and its Action Plan (in the planning stage in 2022), and on how the needs of internally displaced Roma should be addressed in the Strategy of State Policy on Internal Displacement for the period until 2025. About 50% of the recommendations were included in the documents mentioned and the responsible duty bearers started small processes towards their implementation. VoRAE in Kosovo made sure that the different needs of Roma women and men are included in the Strategy for the Advancement of the Rights of the Roma and Ashkali Communities in Kosovo 2022–2026 and the Action Plan 2022–2024.

The partner in Kosovo conducted a study to establish if school textbooks used discriminatory words or stereotypes when representing the Roma. The results showed that this was not the case, but the history and culture of the Roma in Kosovo was missing from the books. Therefore, the partner advocated with the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation to revise the books and include the Roma. If in the future the textbooks in Kosovo include information about minorities, it will support ethnic relations and peaceful dialogue, and all citizens will have more equal opportunities, also the Roma.

## Challenges

When countries have a National Roma Strategy, duty bearers argue that there is no need to mainstream measures for Roma inclusion in other National or Municipal Strategies and Plans. This is the case even when at the European level there is evidence that governments should combine targeted measures (Roma policies) and mainstreaming across policies for Roma inclusion.

## Lessons learnt

Cooperation with human rights institutions and the European Union institutions is very important to convince national duty bearers to include the needs of minorities in policy documents.

## Meaning of the achievement and benefits for the future

The base for progress towards inclusive services for minorities and marginalised youth is that service providers become aware of their needs, as well as of the societal stereotypes which negatively affect the service provision and hamper trust building between the minorities and marginalised youth and the authorities. The programme has made important steps towards creating awareness among targeted authorities and supporting fruitful encounters between them and the service users. The programme partners have established contacts and forms of collaboration with relevant institutions. Some minorities and marginalised youth started to use targeted public services accompanied and supported by CSOs. The collaboration processes put in place during 2022 with the relevant duty bearers will support outcome progress during the next years. Furthermore, there is political and institutional interest among the decision-makers to advance the rights of the Roma, even though more advocacy work is needed to convince of the importance of mainstreaming Roma inclusion across policies.

## Contribution of output level to the achievement of outcome results

The memorandums of understanding that are in place with the local authorities have been instrumental in the provision of more inclusive services and in developing/revising strategic documents. As a matter of fact, local authorities have been so interested in providing more inclusive services that they have readily allowed their staff to participate in the trainings and have even sent more staff for trainings than originally anticipated.

Very good progress has been made in achieving targets under the two indicators related to authorities' capacity and knowledge strengthening (over 80%). The indicator related to the mapping of the needs of minorities and marginalised youth needs is still at 0 as the project feeding to it is starting only in 2023 while the indicator on number of multistakeholder events is at 13%.



## OUTCOME 4

The desired outcome 4 is the following: “The roles and capacities of insider reconcilers to stabilise conflicts and the roles and capacities of officials to provide specialised psychosocial services are strengthened.” This is achieved through supporting reconciliation and service process design, strengthening knowledge and skills of insider reconcilers in peace and reconciliation processes and through increased awareness and skills on mental health and psychosocial support. To ensure this, the programme provides trainings, a variety of spaces for peer exchanges as well as mentoring.



The results for this outcome have been collected in Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan. The results for the #reconciliation project, although not listed in the table below, significantly contributed to the overall outcome. Due to the project’s initiation taking place before the programme period, which resulted in the unavailability of the baseline and 2025 targets, they were included solely in the narrative.

**Very good progress has been achieved in a limited time in advancing outcome 4, considering that the Trust and Peace projects’ implementation commenced only**

after April 2022. In particular, notable headway has been made in strengthening the roles and capacities of insider reconcilers to stabilise conflict, while enhancing multi-track, inclusive and locally led reconciliation efforts in the Horn of Africa. Insider reconcilers are individuals who belong to a group or community currently experiencing violent conflict and who are actively working to transform this conflict. These can be community leaders, faith leaders, women leaders, youth leaders or leaders of minorities.

### Indicator 1

A total of 155 insider reconcilers (including 71 women among which 12 youths and four persons with disabilities; and 84 men among which 20 youths and six persons with disabilities) from Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan have been using new skills and knowledge after participating in trainings and other peer learning events in reconciliation work in 2022 under the Trust and Peace projects. This number represents 37% of the target of 2025, which is a considerable achievement. In addition, the skills acquired are applied in a variety of ways, from trauma healing sermons in prison to national frameworks for mental health and psychosocial support in peacebuilding. Furthermore,

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	PROJECTS FEEDING	BASELINE	RESULTS 2022	TARGET 2025	PROGRESS
4. Roles and capacities of insider reconcilers to stabilize conflicts, and of officials to provide specialised psychosocial services are strengthened.	1. Number and percentage of insider reconcilers and officials who, after the trainings, use new skills and knowledge in reconciliation work and specialised services for refugees or repatriated. Ways of applying the new skills.		0	155 (51%) Ways of applying skills: See examples in narrative below and in results framework	414 (82%) of the trained insider reconcilers or officials use new skills and knowledge.	37 %
	2. Number of insider reconcilers participating in peace and reconciliation processes. Number and types of processes.		41 insider reconcilers participating in 9 types of peace and reconciliation processes (see list of processes in programme results framework).	316 insider reconcilers participating in 20 processes Types of processes: see examples in narrative below and in results framework		79 %

these skills are utilised in coordinating efforts across disciplines (i.e., mental health clinicians and peacebuilders) and country boundaries (Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya) on common reconciliation issues.

Among the insider reconcilers applying new skills are the leadership of the South Sudanese association of people living with disabilities, who became empowered to speak out on behalf of reconciliation at community functions such as funerals, weddings, and public rallies. Youth insider reconcilers involved in football tournaments have also started to engage their players in peace talks during the games' recess time.

### Success factors

Peer exchange and skilful facilitation have been critical in creating trust and offer safe spaces for participants to share their stories and speak about trauma. The regional peer-learning-focused co-creation workshop on mental health and psychosocial support and peacebuilding in the Horn of Africa was particularly successful. The workshop was co-organised by Maandeeq Mental Health, Kenya's National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and Mary Hoch Foundation in Kenya in November 2022, and brought together 40 participants. It offered them a space to learn from one another and their respective countries and provided them with skills on mental health and psychosocial support. This event was described as unique by those involved in similar gatherings in the past. The collective impact will be increased by the work after the workshop, namely translating lessons and insights from the experiences of insider reconcilers into policy briefs and materials, and highlighting their roles and needs.

The choice of a model for the training of trainers in the Trust and Peace project implemented in South Sudan country-wide is another success factor. Six master trainers from the three historical regions of South Sudan were first trained. Later on, they cascaded the training made as simple as possible to an additional 20 insider reconcilers from each region, spreading knowledge and skills. Afterwards, insider reconcilers shared that deeper self-awareness has helped them to know their abilities and limits. In addition, they stated that the listening skills acquired from the training have helped them to get a deeper understanding of community issues. As a result, there is an increasing number of community members who are eager to engage with them.

Another success factor is the interconnectedness of our three reconciliation projects. The complementarity of the peer learning activities carried out within the projects, and the connections and spaces they

create for the different partners for sharing actions conducted and planning new ones together, allow for more impactful coordinated efforts in the nexus of reconciliation and mental health and psychosocial support in the Horn of Africa.

### Challenges

Security threats and floods led to the rescheduling of the trainings of trainers in South Sudan. The volatile security situation with the insurrection the clans against Al-Shabab led to the decision to relocate the co-creation workshop from Somalia to Kenya. National security policies in South Sudan imposing the presence of police officers at events made it difficult for participants to feel comfortable discussing their traumas. The project, however, learnt to cooperate with deployed security and encouraged them to keep a reasonable distance from the class in the interest of preserving free space for discussion. The need to invest in election violence prevention in Kenya shifted attention from developing and implementing a healing-centred cohesion and integration programme for the NCIC (postponed to 2023) to piloting local healing circles in Kenya in the autumn of 2022. A training programme for the capacity strengthening of municipal and central-level authorities in psychosocial support and trauma awareness was designed during the autumn as part of our project supporting socioeconomic re/integration of repatriated and refugee women and girls in Kosovo. However, the training programme could not be delivered in 2022 as intended due to the Deaconess Foundation's psychotraumatology expert and trainer having to leave the project. It was thus postponed to March 2023 to give us time to find a replacement. Therefore, there are no results to report from this project under outcome 4 in 2022.

### Lessons Learnt

Across the Trust and Peace projects, the importance of keeping trainings simple, reducing the number of lectures as well as increasing sharing and group work to ensure success has been an important lesson. Another lesson learnt is the necessity to connect with insider reconcilers across contexts to learn their insights and support needs and create and cultivate peer to peer support networks and events. Resources such as the virtual learning hub on the ConnexUs platform created in the #reconciliation project play a vital role in connecting reconciliation practitioners across regions beyond events and gatherings, and in sustaining a Community of Practice. Informing the international community and policy makers regarding how they can support the role of insider reconcilers and psychosocial services is also a way to support the work of insider reconcilers

in stabilising conflicts in the Horn of Africa at large. In cultivating peer support networks, it is also important to identify essential actors who can sustain the meetings and the learning over the long term.

### Indicator 2

338 insider reconcilers (including 211 women among which 30 youths and 45 persons with disabilities; and 227 men among which 40 youths and 30 persons with disabilities), representing 88% of the target of 2025, have participated in seven different types of peace and reconciliation processes and in 25 different processes altogether. The processes involved covered a wide range of actions from community reconciliation to plans for internal reconciliation of political leaders in Ethiopia and South Sudan. Both Trust and Peace projects as well as the #reconciliation project contributed to these results.

The support provided by our reconciliation projects has allowed a growing number of insider reconcilers to get empowered to participate in an increased number of peace and reconciliation processes, not only on the community level but also on the national level. A good

number of South Sudanese insider reconcilers (who are mainly priests and imams) have continuously been mobilising their local communities for reconciliation through their sermons to open up opportunities for internally displaced persons to come back home. Thanks to these efforts, internally displaced persons have, for example, slowly returned from the camps in Aweil to their homes. The #reconciliation project successfully provided peace and reconciliation process support to a range of stakeholders (largely but not exclusively from civil society) in and around the Ethiopian National Dialogue. In addition, regional peer exchange gatherings have strengthened the capacities of insider reconcilers to take action on the national level. The co-creation workshop mentioned earlier supported insider reconcilers in their roles and involvement in reconciliation processes through country action planning, which was focused on advocating and implementing the integration of mental health and psychosocial support in peacebuilding in their home countries and communities. Maandeeq Mental Health signed a memorandum of understanding with the Galmudug Minister of Interior & Reconciliation Affairs to develop a trauma healing framework in line



**In November 2022, a unique co-creation workshop on reconciliation, trauma healing, and mental health and psychosocial support was organised in Kenya. The workshop brought together 40 insider reconcilers and other peace and reconciliation practitioners, mostly from the Horn of Africa. In addition to the exchange of experiences and the mutual learning the workshop provided, it also led to the creation of policy briefs and other materials that will promote the inclusion of mental health and psychosocial support in the peace processes in the area. Photo: Mary Hoch Foundation**

with the National Reconciliation Framework in Somalia. The Peace talks in South Africa, in which ACRL-RfP participated through networking with other civil society organisations operating in Ethiopia, have resulted in the opening of borders between South Sudan and Ethiopia. In turn, refugees from Tigray region were supported in their return to home.

### **Success factors**

One of the success factors has been the on-going mentorship of insider reconcilers following the trainings and other learning events. As part of the Trust and Peace project implemented in South Sudan, experienced peace builders and experts on psychosocial support have provided mentorship through both online platforms and field visits. Peer exchange and support events have played a crucial role in harvesting the best practices and establishing peer support networks, empowering insider reconcilers to actively participate in peace and reconciliation processes. Furthermore, peer learning has facilitated the identification of opportunities to connect local and national-level peace and reconciliation initiatives.

### **Challenges**

Security challenges and procedures for getting permission to conduct peace processions in South Sudan explain why there was no peace celebration reported as type of peace process under the indicator. ACRL-RfP made the decision to organise the trainings of trainers in South Sudan earlier than first planned. The reason for this was to equip insider reconcilers with the skills that would allow them to engage without delay with the South Sudanese Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, which was set up in early 2022. However, a lack of political goodwill in relation to reconciliation processes at national level led to the paralysis of the Commission. In addition, technical challenges occurred during the processes online. Nevertheless, it may also have been beneficial for the programme at times as participants sitting in the same space waiting for the connection to return were able to have very fruitful interactions.

### **Lessons learnt**

Key lessons include the importance of adaptive programming that can respond to the changing needs of the context of work and continuing to prioritise both needs assessments through interviewing and peer network development as an important avenue for sustainable support. Insider reconcilers highlighted the need for peacebuilding organisations to prioritise accessible, long-term, flexible funding that can support

and sustain the natural evolution of reconciliation processes.

### **Meaning of the achievement and benefits for the future**


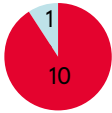

Insider reconcilers have experienced personal growth through the acquisition of new skills as well as through peer exchange and they are able to handle their trauma better. There is a sign of an improvement in their well-being, which is a starting point for an improvement of psychosocial well-being of local communities as a whole. They are now also able to process the early signs of conflicts and are better equipped to intervene early to prevent conflicts from happening. They are already using their newly acquired skills for the benefit of their communities in different ways. In addition, they are participating in a number of peace processes on different levels, fostering peace and stability in the Horn of Africa region.

### **Contribution of output level to the achievement of outcome results**

Under this outcome, insider reconcilers have found the support meaningful as part of the reconciliation efforts. They have expressed interest in participating in trainings and remained willing to be identified in relation to their peacebuilding work and disability status. The availability of skilled experts to support and develop reconciliation and service process mechanisms has been good and no major blockages have been experienced. It is evident that local actors are willing to share stories and experiences that can be used to shape efforts for increasing the impact of reconciliation processes in the coming years.

The output indicator values for learning events and stories or the production of documentaries are 27% and 33%, respectively, thus on track for the first of the programme. However, there is a significantly higher number of participants than initially planned. For the rest of the indicators related to support and mechanisms development for reconciliation and service process design, and increased awareness and skills on trauma and psychosocial support, values vary between 57% and 233%, indicating very good to overachievement of the targets of 2025. High achievement rates can partly be explained by the fact that the #reconciliation project is contributing to the results but was not included in the targets. The Trust and Peace: Peacebuilding from the Ground project intended to reach a total number of 66 people but finally reached 116 participants, thanks to an ad hoc collaboration with the National Association of People Living with Disability in South Sudan.

## OUTCOME 5

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	PROJECTS FEEDING	BASELINE	RESULTS 2022	TARGET 2025	PROGRESS
5. Participation and agency of the minorities, marginalised youth and people affected by conflicts is increased in local communities and societies.	1. Increased participation of minorities, marginalised youth and people affected by conflicts in local communities and societies. Ways of participation.		<p><i>East Europe:</i> 28 % attend education; 22 % are employed or self-employed; 33 % participate in local communities and societies.</p> <p><i>East Africa:</i> 0 % attend education; 2 % are employed or self-employed. 1 % participate in local communities and societies.</p>	<p><i>East Europe:</i> 32 % attend education; 18 % are employed or self-employed; 32 % participate in local communities.</p> <p><i>East Africa:</i> 0 % attend education; 47 % are employed or self-employed; 18 % participate in a women or youth group in local community and society.</p>	<p><i>East Europe:</i> 45 % attend in education. 35 % are employed or self-employed. 55 % participate in local communities and societies.</p> <p><i>East Africa:</i> 51 % attend informal education; 45 % are employed or self-employed 48 % participate in women or youth groups or in mentoring networks in local community and society.</p>	<p>30 %</p> <p>27 %</p> <p>Eastern Europe</p> <p>32% East Africa</p>
	2. Number and types of civic actions, initiatives, campaigns and policy dialogues implemented by minorities, marginalised youth and people affected by conflicts.		0	Data will be available from 2023 onwards	<p><i>East Europe:</i> 100 actions, multicultural festivals and other public events</p> <p><i>East Africa:</i> 4 actions community actions</p>	
	3. Number and percentage of minorities, marginalised youth or people affected by conflicts who are employed, have established an own business, or have developed other decent livelihood after the trainings.		0	<p><i>East Europe:</i> Employed: 32; Established own business: 3; Percentage: 18%</p> <p><i>East Africa:</i> Employed: 81; Established own business: 42; Developed other decent livelihood: 30; Percentage: 69%</p>	<p><i>East Europe + East Africa:</i> 60 % of trained minorities and marginalised youth are employed, have established an own business or have developed other decent livelihood</p>	73 %

**The desired outcome 5** is the following: *“Participation and agency of the minorities, marginalised youth and people affected by conflicts is increased in local communities and societies.”* This is achieved through strengthening the employability skills of the marginalised youth and minorities as well as improving their knowledge of human rights, participating in the society and developing positive life strategies. Furthermore, this is accomplished through the provision of legal aid to marginalised youth and minorities and support to children with disabilities.

The results for this outcome have been collected in Kosovo, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Ethiopia, Somaliland, and Tanzania. While the results of the Roma Women Power (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova) and Mustaqbaldoon projects (Somaliland) results are not presented in the table below, their significant

contribution to the overall outcome should not be overlooked. It is important to note that they were initiated before the start of the programme period. For this reason, they did not collect baseline in the beginning of the programme period or set targets for 2025, hence the exclusion from the table. However, the narrative provides valuable insights to the projects’ achievements during their implementation period.

**Good progress has been achieved in advancing outcome 5. In Eastern Europe, the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women’s participation in various types of trainings increased in Kosovo. In East Africa, both in Ethiopia and Tanzania, participation through employment significantly increased. Altogether 69% of the trained minorities and marginalised youth were employed, established their own business or developed other decent livelihoods.**



**Agneza Qeli was always passionate about sewing. As a child, she used to sew clothes for her dolls. Later, when she started sewing clothes for her children, she started to think that it might be a good way to earn a living as well. Qeli participated in courses organised by the Deaconess Foundation’s Kosovar partner CSO, Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (VoRAE) to develop her sewing skills. First she worked from home with an old sewing machine, but then she applied for a grant from VoRAE to buy a better sewing machine and an overlocker. She got the grant with the condition that she will find herself a proper space to set up her workshop. She now has a lot of customers and earns her living independently. “My life is now totally different. Now I am someone, I feel valuable,” Qeli says.**

## Indicator 1

In *Eastern Europe*, there was a 4% increase in less than six months in participation through education compared to the baseline collected in the early autumn of 2022. The percentages in employment and participation in communities have decreased compared to the baseline simply because they were collected from one project (the Empowerment of Roma Women project), whereas the baseline was collected out of two projects (also including our project Supporting socio-economic reintegration of repatriated and refugee women and girls).

As part of the Empowerment of Roma Women project in Kosovo, 200 youth participated in soft skills training and 72 women got certified in vocational trainings in 2022. Close collaboration with private and public sector, internship programmes, and job mediation resulted in 60 girls participating successfully in internships programmes, and eight youth getting employed at the end of an internship programme and job mediation. Thanks to the project support, a total of 32 women got employed, and three women managed to establish their own business in 2022. As to the participation of women in local communities and societies, the most common ways of participation were being representatives in committees such as the committees of youth, parents, farmers and villages or in community-based organisations. Out of 160 women interviewed, six mentioned they were members of a political party. In the regional Roma Women Power project, a total of 142 Roma women received vocational and entrepreneurship training in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine.

In East Africa, there has been a significant increase in the participation of minority groups, marginalised youth, and individuals affected by conflicts in terms of employment and community involvement. In Somaliland, among the youth who took part in trainings and other activities, 30% are currently attending education, 25% are employed or self-employed, and 45% participate in local communities and societies. Throughout 2022, the Youth Action for Future project in Ethiopia focused on enhancing youth employability, addressing job-skill mismatch in the Somali Region labour market, and promoting apprenticeships and lifelong learning. The positive change in attitude and behaviour among participants is a significant result. Most of them have become proactive in seeking job opportunities and pursuing further studies. Overall, the project has fostered a shift from pessimism to optimism among the youth, equipping them with valuable knowledge to better navigate their daily lives.

In Somaliland and Ethiopia, eight project trainees actively and voluntarily participated in events and campaigns, including the constitution dialogue organised by the Ministry of Constitution and the University of Hargeisa, a clean city campaign as well as the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence and other similar events. These engagements promoted youth volunteerism, particularly in the areas of civic education, environmental consciousness, and addressing gender-based violence. Their participation in awareness raising events on gender-based violence increased their understanding on the issue and the status of gender-related matters in their country.

## Success factors

One of the success factors in *Eastern Europe (Kosovo)* was the effort made to challenge the existing patriarchal social norms among marginalised communities through the organisation of social meetings. In these meetings, the importance of women's economic empowerment was discussed with both men and women, emphasising its impact on the entire family's well-being, and its role in breaking the stigma and prejudice against Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities.

In *East Africa*, the participation of the minority and marginalised youth in the local communities increased thanks to improved knowledge, skills, and confidence gained from the trainings, apprenticeship programmes, and talent competitions provided by the projects. An important success factor in the Mustaqbaldoon project was the focus on social inclusion in connection with skill development and the change in attitude and behaviour of the youth that resulted from their participation in the trainings.

## Challenges

In *Eastern Europe (Kosovo)*, the social scheme is one of the major obstacles for women from the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian to sign regular employment contracts. In order to tackle this issue, VoRAE engaged in advocacy work towards public institutions pleading for a reform of the social scheme. However, the process takes longer than anticipated in spite of direct contacts and dialogue with the public officials.

In *East Africa*, one of the challenges the Mustaqbaldoon project faced was the lack of willingness from the private sector to invest in and/or support technical and vocational schools in Somaliland. Other challenges included gender disparity in both access to skills development and the choice of skills, shortage of

female technical professions, and limited time for technical and vocational trainings hindering optimal learning outcomes.

### Lessons learnt

In *East Africa*, a vital lesson learnt is that the risks of irregular migration, substance abuse and various forms of criminal behaviour can be effectively mitigated by providing employment-oriented education, including vocational skills training, entrepreneurship support, and start-up capital to vulnerable youth, especially those suffering trauma, with disabilities, or from internally displaced populations. Moving forward, vocational skills education will be designed in closer collaboration with potential employers to foster knowledge exchange and identify highly marketable skills.

### Indicator 2

The projects that were initially supposed to contribute to this indicator will have data available from 2023 onwards.

In Ethiopia, the youth who had participated in Vamos trainings wanted to contribute to the society and voluntarily organised Vamos style life-skills support groups to the local youth in the city of Deghabur.

### Indicator 3

Significant progress has been made under this indicator, achieving 73% of the target set for 2025.

In *Eastern Europe*, as a result of support by our projects Empowerment and social justice for Roma women (Kosovo) and Roma Women's Power (Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova), a total of 213 women were employed, and seven successfully established their own businesses. These businesses, in turn, created new job opportunities for nine other Roma women. The support included collaboration with the private and public sectors, internships, job placement, employment platforms, and various training programs to enhance employability. In Kosovo, three startup founders received grants, and thirty-one women were supported in drafting their business plans.

In East Africa, the Youth Agency in Mufindi and Youth Action for Future projects have been instrumental in supporting youth, with an impressive result of 69% of trained youth securing employment, establishing their own businesses, or achieving other sustainable livelihoods. This surpasses the 2025 target of 60%.

Specifically, 53 marginalised and minority youth found employment, 42 successfully launched their own businesses, and 23 attained other viable means of earning a decent livelihood. The youth found employment opportunities in both the private and public sectors, such as at the municipality, and also established their own businesses, including areas like tailoring, beauty services, plumbing, and plant-nursing.

### Success factors

In the projects in *Eastern Europe*, the main success factor has been the high motivation among the majority of Roma women in finding employment or having possibility to establish their own business. The more the women learnt about various vocational and entrepreneurship skills, the more they became enthusiastic about possibilities to use such skills. In addition, the Roma Women's Power project promoted the employability of Roma women by negotiating directly with potential employers and visiting different job fairs. In Belarus alone, the project managed to meet with 431 companies and visit 45 job fairs in 2022.

In *East Africa*, in Tanzania, one of the success factors is the focus on providing training on lower level skills that are faster to learn. In addition, special efforts have been made to change the mindset of the trained youth, so that they would be more willing to accept work even from further away or outside their direct core interest, with the idea that this flexibility would allow them to earn money to start their own business. In Ethiopia, the establishment of youth business cooperatives was instrumental in reducing the proportion of unemployed marginalised youth and youth with disabilities. In Somaliland and Ethiopia, the provision of soft skills has played an important role in empowering youth to deal effectively with the demands of everyday life, to set goals and targets, and act to achieve them. As such, life-management skills are an essential complement to increase the effectiveness of vocational skills and other capacity building.

### Challenges

The Russian attack on Ukraine posed the most significant challenge in Eastern Europe impacting also neighbouring countries such as Moldova and Belarus with the influx of Roma refugees. In addition, the issue of digital illiteracy among the majority of Roma women presented a practical barrier to employment, as job databases and procedures primarily rely on digital



platforms. Consequently, digital skills were integrated into all training programs, including vocational and entrepreneurship skills, in Kosovo. A major challenge is the stigma and prejudice against Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, particularly in relation to Roma women's economic empowerment and participation in labour market in Kosovo.

In East Africa, there is a prevalent challenge in the disparity between the job demand and supply within the labour market, where there is often a mismatch between the skills possessed by youth and the available job vacancies. Hence, it is essential to align the needs of the youth, the demands of the labour market, and the project targets to ensure a harmonious match.

### **Lessons learnt**

In *Eastern Europe*, an important lesson learnt is that changing the attitudes and mentality of the majority community towards minority communities requires time and consistent efforts. However, in 2022 it was already possible to see how private companies became gradually more open, after trainings and negotiations, to cooperate with the projects, agree on internship arrangements and employ the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian women.

In *East Africa*, in the Youth Agency in Mufindi project, it was noticed that in the future the project should support the youth interested in launching their own businesses in creating business plans. This would make it easier for them to apply for the loans provided by the district for this purpose.

### **Meaning of the achievement and benefits for the future**

Achieving outcome 5 means an immediate improvement in the quality of life for the minorities, marginalised youth and people affected by conflicts who found employment, managed to establish their own businesses, or developed another decent livelihood. It is also essential in terms of benefits for the future that by attending trainings and gaining various skills, the mindset of the minorities and marginalised youth has been changed: most of the participants become more proactive in terms of looking for job opportunities, proceeding to further studies, and/or actively participating in the development of their communities. In general, it can be seen that many attitudes have changed from a pessimistic outlook on life to more optimistic thinking – seeing hope and opportunities in the future.

### **Contribution of output level to the achievement of outcome results**

The minorities and youth have proven to be very motivated to gain knowledge on how to participate in campaigns and become involved in decision-making. Both marginalised youth and minorities see the importance of different types of trainings (skills) and programmes (human rights).

The output indicator values for the number of youth and minorities trained in vocational skills or entrepreneurship, for the number of marginalised youth and minorities receiving legal aid and support, and the number of children with disabilities supported are on track (oscillating between 15% and 28%). For the indicator on the number of marginalised youth and minorities participating in life-skills trainings targets have been well achieved already during the first year (54% and 43%), with high participation in the Youth Agency for Future and Mustaqbaldoon projects. The indicator for the number of youth and minorities participating in human rights awareness activities is at 0%. This is partly because activities feeding into it will start in 2023 as per projects' activity plans and partly because some data has been missing.

## OUTCOME 6

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	BASELINE 2021	RESULTS 2022	TARGET 2025	PROGRESS
6. Awareness in Finland has increased on development cooperation; issues of marginalised youth, minorities, and reconciliation, as well as of the business potentials in Africa.	Number of persons reached through webpages of international cooperation (without duplication):	2 018	3 404	4 000	85 %
	Number of views of social media posts related to the Deaconess Foundation's development cooperation:	48 798	150 180	75 000	200 %
	Number of persons attended events related to the Deaconess Foundation's development cooperation:	219	250	300	83 %
	Number of individual views of articles and blogs related to the Deaconess Foundation's development cooperation activities:	1 577	2 789	2 500	112 %

The desired outcome 6 is as follows: "Awareness in Finland has increased on development cooperation, the issues of marginalised youth, minorities, and reconciliation, as well as of the business potentials in Africa." This is achieved through organising events and sharing information on the Deaconess Foundation web pages, social media channels, intra, and Yammer as well as contacting media representatives through media releases and individually to try to draw their interest to the themes the Deaconess Foundation works with. The results for this outcome have been collected in Finland.

### Very good progress has been achieved in advancing outcome 6.

In addition to the communications and advocacy efforts in the programme countries, the Deaconess Foundation's development cooperation programme also includes communications, advocacy, and global citizenship education in Finland. In 2022, the Deaconess Foundation published content related to development cooperation on the organisation's web page, social media, and other channels, organised events, and was actively in contact with media to try to make reporters interested about the themes related to its work.

The main communication themes in the programme are 1) bringing forth the voices and views of the rights holders the programme supports, 2) disseminating information about the results and challenges of the Deaconess Foundation's development cooperation,

and 3) highlighting the importance and the ways of respecting and protecting human dignity and human rights. In 2022, communications focused heavily on human rights, partly because of the many articles and posts related to the situation of Roma in Ukraine, partly because they form the basis of all the programme activities. Still, the yearly targets for outputs were met in all the three categories.

Four events were organised in 2022 that were linked with the development cooperation programme. Two of the events were about the work of the Deaconess Foundation and its partner, Roma Women Fund Chiricli, for the rights of the Roma in Ukraine as well as the humanitarian aid that was channelled through Chiricli to marginalised groups in the country. One of the events was targeted at everyone interested, and the other one, organised specially to reach the Finnish Roma, was implemented in cooperation with the Finnish National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs. An important event of the programme in 2022 was the Webinar on the Roma Human Rights Defenders, where the representatives of the Deaconess Foundation's Roma partner organisations discussed the human rights situation in their countries as well as the successes and challenges related to their work. This event reached particularly the staff of other CSOs as well as authorities and other stakeholders both in Finland and in other parts of the European Union. Additionally, the Deaconess Foundation took part in the World Village Festival organised by Fingo.

In addition to the Deaconess Foundation's own direct communication activities, eight articles were published by media related to the Deaconess Foundation's development cooperation ranging from Yle to Iso Numero and from Kehitys-magazine to Kirkko and Kaupunki. These articles are estimated to have reached tens of thousands of readers.

In the Kymppi 2.0 project, representatives from 118 businesses participated in events promoting the potential of conducting sustainable business in the Global South. The majority of these businesses were Finnish, with some of them being from the South. During the year, the Kymppi website with news and recordings from the events as well as a link to a corporate social responsibility course gained over 550 visits from different users.

### Success factors

The target outcome for raising awareness in Finland for the whole programme period was already reached

and exceeded regarding two indicators and for two indicators it was almost reached already in 2022. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, when the 2025 targets were set in 2021, the communication expert's position had just been established in the International Affairs' team at the Deaconess Foundation and the new expert had just started. Hence, some of the data had not been collected previously at all and some of the targets had to be set based on an educated guess. On the other hand, the investment in the communication activities changed drastically in the same moment the targets were set, which also made it difficult to estimate what kind of targets could be reached in the future.

Secondly, Russia's attack on Ukraine, the huge interest of Finnish people in issues related to helping Ukrainians, and the Deaconess Foundation's emergency aid to Ukraine contributed to an exceptionally large number of people viewing social media posts and articles related to the Deaconess Foundation's work in Ukraine as well as attending events related to minorities' situation in Ukraine. As this attention will probably decrease in the



The Deaconess Foundation took part in the World Village Festival 2022 together with the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission and the #reconciliation programme. Together we organised a living library where the festival visitors could borrow real people for a discussion and hence broaden their own viewpoints. Photo: Tytti Rintamäki

future, the possible increase of targets related to awareness raising will have to be carefully considered.

## Challenges

Reconciliation is an area where the Deaconess Foundation's communication still needs to grow deeper roots. Additionally, in 2022 young people were not reached particularly well. The planning of a campaign targeting young people involving young TikTok influencers started in 2022, but it will be implemented later. Another challenge in the programme's communication activities was that the Deaconess Foundation was lacking good quality photos of the activities and rights holders in the target countries. This problem was tackled during 2022 with hiring professional photographers. In Tanzania, a local photographer joined a monitoring visit to document the project work. As to Roma work, the Deaconess Foundation started to cooperate with the Finnish photographer Meeri Koutaniemi to document the work of our partners in Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

## Lessons Learnt

The year 2022 demonstrated that when the programme's own communication content is connected with the current issues in the society in general, very good results can be reached. The activities in 2022 also showed that cooperation with other Finnish stakeholders in communication often promotes advocacy goals as well.

## Meaning of the achievement and benefits for the future

All in all, during the year 2022 the Deaconess Foundation has positioned itself more firmly as the main Finnish expert organisation on the issues of marginalised Roma in Eastern Europe and the Balkans and made the voices of Eastern European Roma and their organisations heard in Finland in a time of a crisis. Cooperation was strengthened with the Finnish Deputy Chancellor of Justice, the Finnish Human Rights Centre, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Unit for Human Rights Policy, the Embassy of Finland in Kyiv, the Ukrainian Ombudsman's office, and the Finnish National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, for instance. Activities raising awareness were carried out in cooperation with many of these organisations in 2022.

## Contribution of output level to the achievement of outcome results

The high numbers of views of social media posts related to our development cooperation confirm that the Finnish public is interested in reading about issues related to development cooperation. Businesses and their representatives have shown interest in doing business in Africa and the global south.

The output indicator values for the number of publications on social media giving voice to rights holders is on track with 25%. The values for the indicators on numbers of publications on social media, webpage visitors and events focusing on communicating the results of our work and on the protection of human rights are respectively 44% (well achieved) and 95% (almost achieved). In addition, 118 Finnish companies were interested in conducting business in the Global South received information through events and the project website.

## 4.4 Results in Advocacy

In 2022, we advocated in Finland, in the countries where we work in, and at the EU level for **minorities rights to participate in the society and to have equal access to employment, education, and the services provided by duty bearers.**

The programme partners in Kosovo and Ukraine regularly updated the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and other relevant European Commission departments about the human rights situations of the Roma in their countries. They made recommendations on the national and European Commission level on how to improve the human rights of the Roma. For example, in Ukraine the programme advocated for a National Roma Action Plan. The Government started to work on developing the Plan, also as a result of the advocacy work done.

One of the most significant achievements in Ukraine has been highlighting the human rights situation of the Roma in the context of the war in Ukraine, especially with regards to internally displaced and refugees in Moldova, Belarus and other European countries. The programme partners in Ukraine organised events and published materials to draw the focus of international institutions and donors, humanitarian organisations and Ukrainian and Moldovan authorities to the most vulnerable and to ensure that they can access

assistance. We also advocated for the recognition of the work and role of the Roma women rights defenders in advancing democracy in Eastern Europe and Western Balkans to gain international support and protection in relation to the work they do by organising an event and publishing articles on the topic.

As a member of the European Network Eurodiaconia, the Deaconess Foundation contributed to the publication “Addressing Barriers for Roma to Access Employment” (Eurodiaconia, 2022), which analyses the ongoing challenges in implementing successful projects to assist the Roma to access quality training and employment, outlines best practice examples, and offers concrete recommendations for EU and Member State policies.

As a part of the Eurodiaconia network, the Deaconess Foundation’s experts also contributed to the assessment of the European Commission’s National Roma Strategic Frameworks. Likewise, they took part in the Commission’s consultation on the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways, an EU initiative to help low-skilled adults develop new skills through learning opportunities.

The Deaconess Foundation’s experts participated in the meeting of the working group of the European Commission’s Unit on Anti-Racism on planning the EU Anti-Racism Summit.

In the area of peace building, we advocated for **the recognition of the role of insider reconcilers in building sustainable, community owned peace processes** through studies and sharing of best practices, as well as **the inclusion of mental health and psychosocial support in peace building**.

The #reconciliation project published a report on reconciliation practices to improve alignment between policy frameworks, programmatic interventions, and social processes related to reconciliation and to promote the role of the insider reconcilers in peace processes. The authors of the report are in the process of compiling a list of recommendations from their publications. Government representatives were present at the co-creation workshop organised in Kenya, where the importance of integrating mental health and psychosocial support into peacebuilding processes was discussed, and respective draft national action plans were developed.

Mandeeq Mental Health, Think Peace Learning and Support Hub and the Mary Hoch Center for Reconciliation held a Virtual Regional Hub meeting in

August 2022. The hub brought together peacebuilders from Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, DR Congo, Sudan, South Sudan, and globally to speak about the intersections of trauma-healing, mental health and psychosocial support, and social healing with their peacebuilding work.

In the current programme, the Deaconess Foundation had not set any concrete targets for the advocacy work in Finland. However, the development of more ambitious and systematic advocacy work started already in 2022.

## 4.5 Ownership of results

The ownership of the results is high among all actors involved in the programme, among partners, other stakeholders as well as rights holders and duty bearers.

The programme partners and other stakeholders consist of civil society organisations, universities and other education organisations, private companies, and public sector authorities. The partners do not work only towards achieving the objectives of the programme, but also to build sustainable solutions and empowering networks in our target regions and to promote learning from best practices internationally. Our local civil society partners represent minorities, marginalised youth, and organisations of women and marginalised groups. They are the rights holders’ own organisations and thus have a direct connection to the beneficiaries, meaning they have a strong ownership of results. For example, the #reconciliation project was anchored in the institutional framework of existing mechanisms for the peacebuilding process of local partners in Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Somalia. The selection of the local partners took into consideration their ability to mobilise and engage the beneficiaries, irrespective of religious affiliation, and was inclusive with the engagement of the government and CSO organisations. This is the case with all our projects and partners.

All our partners engage the rights holders in planning and implementing activities. For instance, the Jesuit Refugee Service in Kosovo working with repatriated refugee women has a practice of maintaining regular communication with them using a variety of means (phone calls, Viber or WhatsApp messages, meetings in person). This approach has worked well and is expected to be helpful in empowering the women further and linking them with potential employers. In Ethiopia, OWDA organised events to engage rights holders. Youth, private sector business owners and other potential employers participated to jointly discuss issues related

to challenges and opportunities for the youth, and to create a platform where youth in search of jobs and employers in search of workers met. The youth forum also provided a strategic opportunity to ensure that the voices of youth remain at the centre of the regional development agenda. The forums are an excellent opportunity for both rights holders and duty bearers to interact. Similarly, in Somaliland rights holders are part of planning and organising project activities such as training, to ensure not only their participation but also their ownership of the project. This inclusion also plays a central role in the sustainability of the project.

In Ukraine, active cooperation with duty bearers, such as the Ombudsman Office, the State Service of Ukraine on Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Conscience, the Ministry of Education and Science and with other essential actors, has been instrumental in improving the morale and increasing the motivation of the Roma community to understand policy making processes and participating in the processes at the local level.

#### **4.6 Accountability and transparency**

Our work for outcome 1, “The capacity of the project partners and other targeted civil society actors has been strengthened,” directly addresses accountability and transparency of our actions. The aim is to reinforce the professional, operational and good

governance skills of the partners. All partners made progress for this outcome in 2022. For example, our partners in Somalia and Kosovo improved their financial management processes and in Tanzania their project management processes. The partners in Kosovo, South Sudan, Tanzania and Ukraine were able to develop new strategic partnerships which are important also to the long-term sustainability of their organisations. The project in Ukraine developed a handbook to enhance the participation of Roma women and despite the ongoing war was able to extend the project area to cover 11 regions. Several partners were able to enhance their skills and approaches in disability mainstreaming, for example in South Sudan and Kosovo. In Tanzania, cooperation with local stakeholders improved as they became more involved in project activities and were able to see how the project benefits the youth in the area. Transparency is increased in Tanzania where local government participates in and closely monitors implementation of project activities. Trust and credibility among local communities and good relations with local authorities are essential building blocks for ensuring both ownership, transparency and accountability of our work.

Zero tolerance for corruption is applied by all our partners. The partners have their internal anti-corruption or anti-fraud policies to prevent corruption in all work streams.

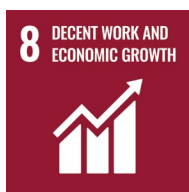
# 5. Contribution of programme results to achieving the sustainable development goals and the linkages to the Finnish development policy targets



## and Finland's Goal on Education

5 200 marginalised youth and minority women and men were provided with skills and vocational education (Outcome 2, 3 & 5). Relevant duty bearers were advocated to make education more accessible for the communities supported for the programme.

**Highlights:** In Eastern Europe, an educational platform, GetCourse, was created for Roma women, which provides knowledge on entrepreneurship, job seeking, women in working life. Youth with disabilities participated in psychosocial and skills training in East Africa.



## and Finland's Goal on Sustainable Economy and Decent Work

The programme has a baseline for the Eastern European and Western Balkans of 28% attendance of education, 32% were achieved in 2023. In Africa, from a 2% baseline on entering employment or self-employment, 47% was achieved. The baseline for employment or self-employment in Eastern Europe and Western Balkans is 33%, and 18% was achieved in 2023 (Outcome 5).

**Highlights:** In Ethiopia, minority and internally displaced youth were offered skills trainings and start-up grants to support cooperatives founded by the youth after

trainings. Youth unemployment is high, and employers rarely hire youth from minority clans. Previously unemployed youth are now working and earning livelihoods in tailoring, plumbing, beautification and plant nursery cooperatives. In Mufindi, Tanzania, more than 50% of the first 180 vulnerable youth that completed their training by the end of 2022 were employed, established their own businesses or had another decent livelihood in January 2023. These orphans, young single mothers and youth from very poor families now have a means to earn income and provide for themselves and their families.



## and Finland's Goal on the Rights and status of women and girls

Roma women and girls were provided with skills and opportunities to participate in civic activities, community- and municipal-level participation. 950 women and girls had the opportunity to use digital tools to expand their economic and societal empowerment (Outcome 5). 27 returnee and refugee women received psychosocial support and legal counselling.

**Highlights:** In Kosovo, we advocated for the importance of policy and service gender mainstreaming when dealing with returnee and refugee women.



**and Finland's  
Goal on Peaceful  
and democratic  
societies**

We have advocated and worked for policies and legislation that promote equality and inclusion for Roma minorities, persons with disabilities, refugees and women in Kosovo, Moldova and Ukraine. Furthermore, we promoted services and practices that ensure equal access and inclusivity for the groups mentioned. In Ukraine, the programme contributed to legal identity registration through legal counselling for those in need and by advocating for the simplification of the registration procedure with the authorities in charge (Outcome 1 and 3).

Our peace and reconciliation projects fostered connections and support among insider reconcilers, individuals who are native to a given conflict context and are working toward reconciliation and social healing. The Deaconess Foundation's programme worked to improve the efficacy of peace and reconciliation processes through empowering insider reconcilers with resources, peer support, and skills-building in mental health and psychosocial support and connecting local peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts with larger scale peace processes. As a result, insider reconcilers are progressively getting better equipped to build and sustain peace within themselves, their institutions, and their societies (outcome 4).

**Highlights:** As a result of the cooperation between the programme partner in Ukraine and the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, the quality of human rights monitoring by the Commissioner among Roma communities improved. Through the cooperation with Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo, the Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo strengthened its knowledge on forms of antiziganism and discrimination against the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo and on European models of combating discrimination against the Roma.



The programme supported cooperation and knowledge sharing between all programme partners, especially the regional partners in East Africa and in East Europe. It also supported the best practice sharing among civil servants and CSOs working for the integration, employment policies and services of refugees and returnees in Kosovo and Finland.

**Highlights:** In the Kymppi 2.0 project, connections were built between the Finnish businesses and CSOs working in development cooperation. In addition, educational institutes and private sector representatives from developing countries were brought to discussions. Networks and partnerships were created between the actors and, most importantly, seeds for future cooperation were planted.



**In Ethiopia, internally displaced young women and women from minority clans have received training in applying henna and other cosmetic treatments.**

**Some of them have established beauty salon cooperatives with the support of the Deaconess Foundation's development programme.**

**Photo: Deaconess Foundation**



### **Private sector collaboration**

As a 155-year-old social foundation group, the Deaconess Foundation is committed in building a more responsible and fair society by using the profits of its operations to promote its social mission. In 2022, the Deaconess Foundation had 3200 employees and it used 3,9 million Euros of foundation's own funds to its non-profit operations in Finland and globally.

This background is enabling the Deaconess Foundation to advance private sector collaboration and responsibility in different levels. Through Kymppi projects, impactful bridgebuilding has been done between the Finnish companies and CSOs working for development cooperation. In 2022, 118 businesses participated in multi-stakeholder events gathering participants from different sectors to explore possibilities of collaboration and responsible business in developing countries. The fruitful cooperation established with Finnpartnership, Fingo and other CSOs continues within the new corporate responsibility project from 2023 onwards.

In East Africa and East Europe, local businesses have been successfully encouraged to employ marginalised youth and minorities and the cooperation has already decreased unemployment rates. In Ethiopia, the youth from marginalised backgrounds have been supported to be self-employed through cooperatives they have established. In Somaliland, collaboration has continued with a Finnish company Solar Land Africa, which has provided skills and entrepreneurship training as well as employment to the local youth.

# 6. Evaluations and Assessments

**We have not conducted programme-level evaluations in 2022**, which was the first year of the programme period.

**External project evaluations** were conducted in the end of 2022 and early 2023 for the four projects that ended in 2022:

## #reconciliation

According to the evaluation report, the project contributed immensely to the reconciliation and peace-building process in Ethiopia, South Sudan and Somalia in all outcome areas. The design was relevant to the needs of the communities and the governments. The focus on reconciliation and peacebuilding addressed the internal conflicts while integrating trauma healing put into focus, addressing the long-term effect of human conscience. The evaluator, for instance, recommended that future programme planning and formulation better ensure the inclusion of local partners in the planned activities to support the local mechanism and the beneficiaries' needs. Another recommendation was for the project to adopt a specific risk mitigation strategy for engagement with the political groups, governments and donors.

## Roma Women's Power

The evaluation report concluded that the project activities have made tangible impacts on the lives of Roma women by improving their level of skills and training, on public authorities by improving their capacities to mainstream Roma rights in local or national strategies and employers by increasing their knowledge and anti-discrimination policies. Among the important lessons learnt is the importance of cooperating with public authorities, which has a great potential for amplifying the impact of the intervention. A number of practical recommendations were made for the new project phase. For example, a proposal to include additional networking activities among the partners' organisations and to improve visibility of the project by investing more resources in the communication and dissemination of project results, and also providing training for Roma men and boys. Identified lessons learnt and recommendations have been taken forward into the design of the new phase of the project.

## Kymppi 2.0

The Kymppi 2.0 has increased the awareness on the SDGs, human rights issues, and the potential of the CSO and business partnership among the targeted organisations. The evaluation report recommended, among other things, that the voice of the Southern partners be strengthened in the project events and that the implementing organisations define strategically what their approach to private sector partnership is. Recommendations will be considered as part of the planning of our new project Partnering for Change, starting in 2023.

## Mustaqbaldoon

The project was successful in many fronts, including collaborative partnership with the relevant government agencies, private sector stakeholders, and local civil society actors, and provided the right skills in coordination with the actors. The evaluation is convinced that this project will completely change the creation of pathways for youth employment and economic empowerment. The design and implementation of Mustaqbaldoon II should borrow the best practices of this project and expand it to other emerging and vibrant urban centres with the potential to provide opportunities for youths and other vulnerable groups. The evaluator also recommended that the project should provide the beneficiaries with grants to enable them to start small business in addition to start up tools and continue to explore the possibility of forming a cooperative for the technically trained beneficiaries to maximise diverse knowledge and market opportunities. In addition, the project should continue to strengthen collaboration with local government, CSOs, and technical and vocational institutions.

In addition, **project self-assessments** were conducted in the end of 2022 and early 2023 for most projects. They were organised as online sessions, during which the Deaconess Foundation programme staff together with the staffs of partner organisations reflected on each of the project's achievements, challenges, lessons learnt, and needs for adjustments in project activities and approaches to reach the targets. Based on the discussion, possible changes to the activity plan of the upcoming year were considered. Self-assessments also play a vital role in supporting the annual project report writing.

The discussions as part of the self-assessments exposed aspects of the project's implementation which would otherwise have remained undiscovered and which helped gain better understanding of the ways our local partners are working. They also revealed important additional results from projects that are not necessarily captured by the results network of our programme. Besides, they were an opportunity for the partners to train themselves in results analysis and thus increase their capacities in that area.

Self-assessments require the availability of outcome-level data as one of the main purposes of the exercise is to discuss and analyse outcome-level data against yearly targets. This posed challenges in 2022 in some cases, as the outcome data was not yet available

at the time when the self-assessment was to be held. Instead, the session was used to discuss data collection challenges and other issues related to planning, management and evaluation, and further increase the capacities of partners in these issues. These challenges primarily concerned old projects (hanketuki). We expect that these processes will be smoother in 2023, as both the Deaconess Foundation staff and partners have a better understanding of the purpose and functioning of the self-assessment.

Each of our projects is also monitored through project **steering committee meetings**, engaging experts and partners once or twice a year. The steering committee evaluates the progress of the project, and possible challenges in implementation are discussed and solutions proposed.

# 7. Programme development in 2022

## 7.1 Results Management System Development

Because 2022 was the first year of the Deaconess Foundation's development cooperation programme, developing the results management system was one of the most central tasks.

The baseline data was successfully collected from the project level and aggregated to the programme level. The progress achieved during 2022 has been monitored with the help of comparative data on the situation in June and at the end of the year. Various tools were developed to collect baseline data, such as questionnaires and an Excel spreadsheet. The questionnaire developed for monitoring partner capacity strengthening was particularly successful.

A new activity plan format was developed to support the annual planning of the projects, which guides the planning of activities specifically based on the planned outputs and results.

The format used for the quarterly monitoring of the projects was renewed in order to comply with the structure of the programme result framework and to enable the collection of output-level data. An annual report format for the projects was also created. The new format emphasises the analysis of results, risk management, the monitoring of the programme's operating environment, and of the strengthening of civil society, taking sustainability into account in projects and learning.

To support the analysis of the programme's annual results data and to promote internal learning, a self-assessment process was developed, in which the projects systematically evaluate the progress of each outcome area, as well as the challenges and successes that affected them, and consider what kind of changes should be made to the implementation plan.

The Deaconess Foundation also developed an Excel tool that can be used to automatically aggregate the data provided by the projects to the programme level. All this development work helps to ensure the effectiveness of the programme. The formats and

processes will be reviewed and adjusted as needed during the autumn 2023, based on the learnings from the 2022 annual reporting process.

A particular challenge in the initial phase of the programme has been the transition from project support to programme support. Aligning the old project's own logical frameworks with the new programme's results framework proved to be a complex issue, and therefore some of the results of the old projects were left outside the programme's result framework, especially regarding projects that ended in 2022. This challenge will, however, ease as we advance further into the programme period and as the number of old projects within the programme decreases.

The programme work provided many more opportunities comparing to the project work for the joint competence development for the Deaconess Foundation and its partners in the areas of results collection and analysis, disability rights, and safeguarding. In Finland, as a programme organisation the Deaconess Foundation had better opportunities to network with Finnish experienced development work CSOs and accessed more information about Finnish development work practices and processes.

## 7.2 Capacity building on programme planning, monitoring, and evaluation and on cross cutting objectives

The capacity of the Deaconess Foundation staff and the partners in programme planning, monitoring, and evaluation has been built through a series of sessions and workshops facilitated by an external consultant on self-assessments and reporting. The consultant also provided needs based ad hoc support to programme coordinators throughout 2022.

The programme staff in Finland and in the programme countries received introductory training on disability rights in the programme work. Altogether 45 persons participated in the training provided by experts from Abilis Foundation. The programme staff in Finland received training from KIOS Foundation on how

to apply the human rights-based approach in the programme work. We learnt that it is important that the trainers are organisations that have thematic expertise but also are familiar with development cooperation work through programme and project work. This enables us to analyse how to achieve

the objectives through and within the programme work. The training provided opportunities to learn about each other's programme work and possible cooperation. As a result, we agreed on country-level cooperation in Tanzania, for example, where Abilis has long term expertise.

# 8. Management

## 8.1 Organisation and general management

The Deaconess Foundation is a social foundation group. Together with Rinnekodit services operator, the foundation provides social welfare and health services. The foundation's operations are divided into profit making and non-profit making. The Diaconia and Social Responsibility department represents non-profit activities of the Deaconess Foundation. The self-financing of the branch's project-based operations is covered by the income from the profits from the Rinnekodit services operator and return on capital, as well as by the income from fundraising carried out by the foundation. Of the funding of Diaconia and Social Responsibility branch, 66% is estimated to be covered by project financing, 29% by the Foundation's operating income and return on capital, and 5% by other fundraising income.

The Deaconess Foundation's administrative bodies are the Board of Directors and the Managing Director. It also has a Delegation which is responsible for appointing board members. The Board of Directors and the Managing Director are responsible for issuing the financial statements and for presenting truthful and adequate information in accordance with auditing standards in force in Finland and for ensuring that they fulfil all statutory requirements. The Board of Directors and the Managing Director are also responsible for the level of internal control they consider necessary to draw up financial statements that do not contain any material inaccuracy deriving from malpractice or falsehoods. In Finland, the MFA programme is administrated, coordinated and implemented by the International Affairs Unit, which functions under the Diaconia and Social Responsibility department.

## 8.2 Programme management and the team

The International Affairs Unit had 12 employees in 2022. Eight employees belonged to the MFA programme team in Finland. The team worked with both new programme support projects and old projects with funding received pre-programme. The total number of person years for the programme in 2022 was 6.80. As part of the organisational changes at the Deaconess Foundation, there were staff changes in the programme in 2022. The

leadership of the programme shifted to the new Head of International Affairs and the work was divided so that the Head takes care of the administrative management of the programme and acts as the supervisor to the programme team, whereas the new Senior Programme Coordinator manages the practical work of the programme. The other programme team members in Finland included Programme Coordinators, Senior Expert on Civil Society and Human Rights, Senior Expert on Reconciliation, Expert on Corporate Responsibility and Private Sector Cooperation, Expert on Communications, and Controller. The team in Finland worked closely with partners in the programme countries and in other partner countries. The programme team had a regular weekly meeting related to the programme as well as a weekly meeting for the team of International Affairs. Furthermore, the programme team had several other programme-related meetings and capacity-building events during the year.

During the first year, special emphasis was placed on mapping and developing processes and practices required for the transition phase from project support to programme support. For this, cooperation with various actors in the Deaconess Foundation, MFA, other MFA programme support organisations and consultants took place. Practices and the team members' skills related to, e.g., travel safety (especially to high-risk areas), partner reporting, NAV financial management system, Granite and HaiPro risk systems, safeguarding and whistleblowing system were developed. To promote the efficiency of the work and the well-being of the personnel, regular one-to-one meetings between the Head of International Affairs and Senior Programme Coordinator and Programme Coordinators took place. The team members participated in a strategy day, developing day and recreation day as well as various work-related thematic courses such as restorative mediator training, communication training and financial training. The team members also attended several events related to development cooperation and programme-related themes organised by, for example the MFA and CSOs.

The programme and the programme team in Finland benefitted from the knowledge and work in other international projects implemented at the Deaconess Foundation such as the humanitarian aid project in Ukraine and Moldova and several Roma projects funded by the EU and the Deaconess Foundation. In addition, the work in the programme supported and was

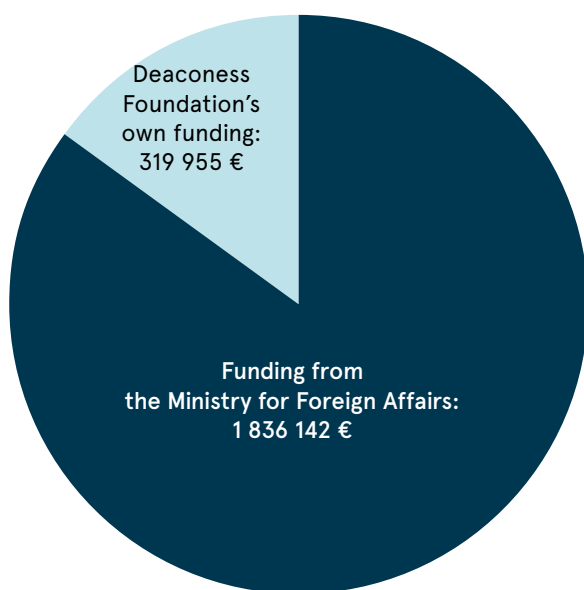
supported by the work of the Deaconess Foundation in Finland among youth, civil society, refugees and other groups in vulnerable circumstances. The various policies of the Deaconess Foundation were followed in the programme (e.g., Code of Conduct).

### 8.3 Financial management

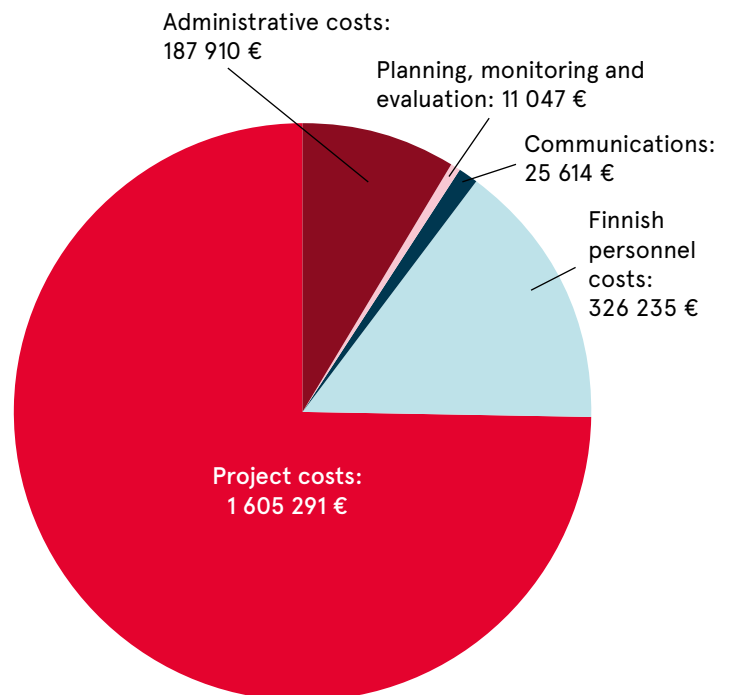
For the first year of the programme, 2 156 097 euros were used, this including both the funding from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Deaconess Foundation's own funding. The percentage of self-funding was 15% except in the Kymppi project, which had a 10% self-funding. In the #reconciliation project, the self-funding was divided 50%-50% by the Lutheran Church in Helsinki and the Deaconess Foundation.

The practical day-to-day financial management was performed by Programme Coordinators in Helsinki and Financial and Project staff in the programme countries. A Controller working with a 50% working time for the MFA programme team supported the Helsinki-based team as well as partners in programme countries in financial issues. In addition, the Financial Unit at the Deaconess Foundation supported the programme work related to finances.

The budget covered five budget categories: 1) project costs, which explained the budget used for the implementation of activities in the programme countries, 2) planning, monitoring and evaluation costs, 3) communications and advocacy costs, 5) administration costs and 5) personnel costs in Finland.



Funding



Distribution of costs

The budget also included the unallocated budget. The bookkeeping took place both locally in the partner countries and in Helsinki. All locally accrued expenses were entered in the Deaconess Foundation's bookkeeping on a monthly or quarterly basis based on financial documents. The double-entry bookkeeping system was used in all projects and expenses were registered when they accrued. The financial situation of each project was closely monitored, and project figures were then entered into the programme budget frame. The Deaconess Foundation's financial department

provided the framework for accounting procedures in Helsinki: each project had its own cost centre and project number, and costs were reported using expenditure categories both locally and in Finland.

Locally, a separate bank account was opened, or a cost centre created in the bookkeeping programme for the projects' finances. The local bookkeepers carried out day-to-day bookkeeping and provided the Deaconess Foundation with monthly financial reports approved by the local coordinators. The project finances were

audited by auditors of the target countries using the guidelines provided by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. A copy of the field audit reports was sent to the Deaconess Foundation and attached to the annual report delivered to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Deaconess Foundation's bookkeeping covered

both the costs accrued in Finland and in the programme countries. Expenses were recorded to bookkeeping as they occurred, salaries and administrative costs monthly, and field costs monthly or quarterly. The programme finances in Finland are audited annually.

ABBREVIATION	DESCRIPTION
ACRL-RfP	African Council of Religious Leaders – Religions for Peace
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EU	The European Union
MFA	The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
OWDA	The Organisation for Welfare Development in Action
PSEAH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
VoRAE	Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians
Y-PEER	The Somaliland Youth Peer Education Network



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working for  
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