Final External Evaluation

PROJECT TITLE:

"Promoting Healthier Lifestyles among Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Challenging Gender Stereotypes – Young Men Initiative Project II (YMI)"

Evaluation period: December 2017 – November 2020

Implemented by:

CARE International Balkans

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## Contents

**Executive Summary** ........................................................................................................................................................................... 3

I. **Introduction** ......................................................................................................................................................................................... 5
   a. **Project Background** ............................................................................................................................................................................. 5
   b. **Purpose and Methodology of the Evaluation** .................................................................................................................................. 6

II. **Analysis** .................................................................................................................................................................................................. 7
   a. **Relevance** .................................................................................................................................................................................................. 7
   b. **Effectiveness** .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 11
   c. **Efficiency** .................................................................................................................................................................................................. 14
   d. **Impact** .................................................................................................................................................................................................. 15
   e. **Sustainability** ....................................................................................................................................................................................... 21

III. **Key Findings and Conclusions** ......................................................................................................................................................... 25

IV. **Recommendations** .................................................................................................................................................................................. 29

**ANNEX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED AS PART OF THE PRIMARY SOURCE DATA COLLECTION PHASE** ................................................................................................................................. 30

**ANNEX 2: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT RESULTS** .................................................................................................................. 31

**ANNEX 3: TERMS OF REFERENCE** ......................................................................................................................................................... 31
Executive Summary

Young Men Initiative – “Promoting Healthier Lifestyles among Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) by Challenging Gender Stereotypes II project’s overall goal is to increase the uptake of healthy, nonviolent and gender equitable lifestyles among young men and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Young Men Initiative II (YMI II) project builds upon CARE’s comprehensive and programmatic effort to fight interpersonal and gender based violence (GBV) as well as to improve gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina and address preventative issues related to youth extremism and violence. This project aims at scaling up and mainstreaming earlier achievements related to the implementation of the Gender Transformative Life Skills program, or short Program Y, via targeted advocacy and a close cooperation with relevant stakeholder through the support of movement/coalition building through the development of new alliances that engage parents and citizens in supporting gender equality focused life skills education program.

Through a comprehensive analysis both of the project documentation and the information provided the individual interviews with over 20 project participants, this evaluation drew a set of conclusions, both from the perspective of best practices and key challenges, which consequently led to a set of recommendations for CARE International Balkans on how to continue making this important social change.

Overall, taking into consideration the quantitative data obtained at the beginning and at the end of the project implementation period through the School Baseline and Endline Assessments, it can be concluded that one of the central problems in the life of a young person are traditional norms. Stereotype roles are manifested through unequal gender attitudes, violent behaviors and behaviors that represent a risk to the health and that include the use of alcohol or some narcotics. Therefore, although the impact has been achieved to a certain degree, it is important to continue working on reducing these phenomena, especially as it leads to other problems, such as violence.

Having this in mind, there is no doubt that this project represents a positive model on how to work with youth in a spontaneous, creative and unobtrusive way and its interventions should continue in the context of making social changes that will influence the youth to become responsible adults with pro-social behavior and mutual respect.

With regards to specific aspects of evaluation, the project appears to be extremely relevant for the context in which it has been placed, for reasons of prevalence of gender-based violence in BiH and peer violence in schools with a particular focus on general misconceptions about psychological violence, often wrongly interpreted in society as „teasing“, and particularly low results of PISA test in BiH that indicate the need for interactive engagement with students in schools. The project interventions also proved to be very relevant, particularly when it comes to identifying grassroots youth organizations and using their potential in the local communities, relevance of the topics covered by the project for the age group covered by the project, the design of the interventions in close consultations with relevant institutions and other stakeholders in the community, etc.

Quantitative analysis, in accordance with the logframe, indicate a very high level of achievement, in some cases overachievement of the project activities, which indicates a high level of project effectiveness. The methodology, procedures and actors in the implementation of the project
activities proved to be very effective, including ensuring close coordination among all relevant institutions and other actors, integration of project goals into relevant public policies and peer-to-peer education.

With regards to efficiency of the project interventions, all the project activities were implemented in accordance with the plans, with the exception of some activities that had to be postponed or altered due to the COVID-19 circumstances, the project was supplied with adequate resources, and the project management showed a high level of flexibility in procurement throughout the project implementation period in order to respond to ad hoc needs related to the project activities. The impact of the project interventions is visible in various levels, from changing attitudes and behavior of youth to making systemic changes at the level of the relevant public institutions. Such large impact is particularly important to highlight within the context of making any social change that has to be understood as a long term process that requires engagement from many actors over a long period of time, especially if such social change requires tackling deeply rooted traditional norms which is the case with this project. Some of the areas where a particular impact has been noted include: significant progress in the area of gender relations and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, decrease in perpetrated physical violence, group violence and gender based violence. The most important segment of every evaluation represents the extent to which the project results are likely to remain in place beyond the project implementation period. This is why all the above sections are in a way connected to the section on sustainability and as such should be examined comprehensively in this regard. Some of the sustainable results of the project that could be highlighted include results on the civil society level: increased capacities of youth associations, which now independently seek sources of funding and take on healthy lifestyles, gender equality and violence prevention as leading topics in the community, results on the individual level: changing the awareness of young people about healthy lifestyles, violence prevention and gender equality and results on the systemic level: through different models and approaches, relevant ministries and other educational institutions integrate the programs into the educational system.

With regards to lessons learnt from the project implementation period covered in this evaluation, the following specific recommendations were drawn in view of maximizing the project results in the future:

- Standardization of training for teaching staff in order to more effectively measure their impact, which in turn helps improve the capacity building of this target group,
- More consistent adherence to the communication strategy as well as other policy documents of CARE in order to achieve maximum project results. For example, synchronization and synergy during public campaigns,
- Continue with the methodology of peer education as undeniably the most effective method of making changes in the behavior and attitudes of young people,
- Consider the alteration of project objectives in the next project phase: instead of “accreditation” which is difficult to fit into the existing formal legal framework in the local context, consider the formulation of “recognition” of the program by the relevant education authorities.
- Intend to work on standardization / methodology of work of peer educators in order to secure recognition of the program by the relevant ministries. Frequent fluctuations of peer educators tend to create concerns in the ministries because there are no clear guarantees, standards and competencies for educators to work with youth in schools. In that sense, it is recommended to standardize competencies in the form of certification of peer educators and educators from the ranks of teaching staff and pedagogues.
• Expand the program to more schools,
• Extend a customized program to elementary schools,
• Examine the possibility of working with pedagogical faculties in order to change the curriculum and program as one model of creating systemic changes.

I. Introduction

a. Project Background
Young Men Initiative – “Promoting Healthier Lifestyles among Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) by Challenging Gender Stereotypes II or Young Men Initiative II (YMI II)” project builds upon CARE’s comprehensive and programmatic effort to combat interpersonal and gender-based violence (GBV) as well as to improve gender equality in BiH and address preventative issues related to youth extremism and violence. The YMI II project is implemented in BiH: in both Entities and Brcko District. This project has aimed to continue building on the success of the first phase and to contribute to bringing about positive changes in attitudes and behaviors with young people of high school age group that relate directly to health, violence, extremism and gender equality. The overall objective of the project is to increase the uptake of healthy, nonviolent, and gender equitable lifestyles among young men and women in BiH. The project objective intends to address harmful lifestyles that affect both young men and women. In addition, the intention in this phase is impacting social movements and citizen coalitions in the order to encourage government to actively promote/address gender equality, prevent gender-based violence, life skills and health education in schools.

The project includes four outcomes and 14 corresponding outputs, as follows:

Outcome 1 - At least ten youth NGOs use their capacities and resources to support Program Y implementation and work of BMCs in their communities and use Program Y+ and Program Y++ with focus on marginalized and out of school young men and women;

Outcome 2 - At least two additional cantons use Program Y as mandatory in extra-curricular school program with its upgraded versions Y+ and Y++ being tested with out-of-school young men and women and elementary school students;

Outcome 3 - Young men and women have increased awareness and improved attitudes related to health, violence and gender equality through participation in group education and youth-led campaigns, on healthy lifestyles, violence prevention and gender equality at the local and national level;

Outcome 4 - Social movements/citizen coalitions are active in encouraging governments to actively promote gender equality, prevent gender-based violence, and promote life skills and health education in schools.

The target group of the project includes the entity and cantonal ministries responsible for youth, education and health; educational professionals/teachers; youth aged 13-26 with an emphasis on boys and men and girls and young women in vocational high schools and elementary schools, marginalized and out of school youth, parents, university students and NGO partners who are
developing as national resource centers related to this work and Youth NGOs from smaller BiH communities.

The project partners during the implementation of this project are: Association XY Sarajevo, Perpetuum Mobile – Institute for Youth and Community Development Banja Luka and Youth Power Mostar.

During the project implementation period, youth associations from project locations, and in relation to Outcome 1 of the project, were engaged through the project partners to support the project partners in the implementation of the project activities.

b. Purpose and Methodology of the Evaluation

At the end of the implementation of the project “Promoting Healthier Lifestyles among Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Challenging Gender Stereotypes – Young Men Initiative Project II (YMI)” CARE International Balkans commissioned the final external project evaluation, with the main purpose to contribute to the comprehensive understanding of attitudes amongst various target groups, primarily boys and men and girls and women as well as their parents, but also key school staff, Ministries of Education and Pedagogical Institutes at the Cantonal and Entity levels towards gender-based violence, gender equity and healthy life-styles covered by the project.

The overall objective of the final evaluation is to assess the results achieved based on OECD evaluation criteria. The evaluation addresses the first 33 months of project implementation. The specific objectives of this evaluation are to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and (the road to) impact of the project in relation to the stated objectives and expected results, taking into consideration target groups/partners, beneficiaries and other affected parties.

Regarding the methodology, the evaluation encompassed several steps:

- Comprehensive desk review, including review and analysis of the available project documentation, with a particular focus on the project proposal set of documents and the subsequent narrative reports and the School Baseline and Endline Assessment Reports;
- Inception report: during this step, the evaluator synthesized key information from the desk review and, due to COVID-19 restrictions, proposed the primary data collection phase to include individual online interviews with key stakeholders, whereas it was mutually agreed that participatory observations in the target localities were not feasible.
- Primary data collection phase, comprising of individual online (Skype, Zoom and phone) interviews with all the relevant actors. During this phase, the evaluator first conducted interviews with CARE project manager and the project managers of the three key partner organisations, following interviews with youth associations and public stakeholders involved in the project from all the project locations (Banja Luka, Brcko, Gorazde, Jablanica, Mostar, Sarajevo, Tuzla and Zenica). The full list of interviewees can be found in the Annex of this report. Throughout the interviews, the evaluator used the guiding questions defined in the ToR, trying to understand, among others, the level of understanding of gender sensitive approaches by responsible government representatives regarding work with youth and generally in the context of the educational system and schools, the level of improvement of the organizational capacities for self-sustainable functioning as well as lobbying and advocacy capacities of the project partners and their visibility work in their local
communities and nationally, level of cooperation among partners and the extent to which the project adapted to Covid-19 pandemic.

✓ **Analysis of the findings:** during this phase, all the information collected through the interviews was placed in contrast with the information synthesized through desk research, particularly in the context of findings from the School Baseline and Endline Assessments and the OECD evaluation criteria, which served as the foundation for the production of this report.

**II. Analysis**

**a. Relevance**

- To what extent have the project purpose responded to the needs of the local communities and the relevant sectoral policies of the target countries and proven to be feasible?
- Have the activities implemented been relevant for achieving the project purpose and the expected results defined by the project?
- Have the planning process and the intervention reflect/address the views of the beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved?

As defined in the project proposal, the overall objective of the project is to contribute to bringing about positive changes in attitudes and behaviors with young people of high school age group that relate directly to health, violence, extremism and gender equality. In other words, the project aims at increasing the uptake of healthy, nonviolent, and gender equitable lifestyles among young men and women in BiH. If this purpose is taken into account, it is important to first address the topics covered by the project in the context of relevance. Association XY made an interesting distinction among the different topics, however pointed out the equal importance of them. For example, XY highlighted several international and local reports related to the prevalence of GBV in BiH indicating the need to engage in prevention from the early age; the misconception of psychological bullying as "teasing" among teachers, parents and youth indicating the need to break that misconception and stress the effects of this type of abuse on the mental health of youth, as well as their motivation to study; and a harmful abuse of alcohol, cigarettes and drugs, because it appears that they know it all in theory but still do it in practice. It is also worth mentioning that data collected through the school baseline assessment on the topics covered by the project is now used on regular basis for other purposes in the HNC Ministry for Education, Science, Culture and Sport, according to the representative of this Ministry interviewed as part of this evaluation.

On a more general note, this project is active in BiH for many years, and as such, leans on the results of the previous interventions. Therefore, the assumption based on the positive feedback from previous project phases is that the needs of the community are taken into consideration in this project period as well. Analyzing further the implementation reports from the project implementers, it is obvious that the design of all the interventions have been done in close cooperation and consultations with the relevant stakeholders on the ground. Furthermore, the project activities run in separate directions depending on the target group defined in different outcomes aimed at reaching the above overall project objective. The relevance of the activities will therefore be analysed through the lens of different project outcomes.
Firstly, the relevance in engaging with local youth associations (Outcome 1) was identified by the project implementer based on several aspects: on the one hand, it was necessary to involve the grassroots organisations who are more knowledgeable and active in a particular community; on the other hand, it was necessary to engage those organisations in the topics covered by the project, combined with the need to achieve the long term impact by increasing the capacities of those associations for them to raise their own funds and continue engaging in these important issues independently in the future. For example, according to Association XY, the youth associations they selected as their local partners have increased their capacities through the project interventions in various aspects. Firstly, before they engaged in this project, they virtually had not worked on this issue in their communities, whereas now they have been recognized by the community as leaders in prevention of harmful behaviors and practices in youth. Secondly, they now conduct their own fundraising to increase their resources to work on these topics beyond this project and thirdly, the schools have adopted their methodology and invite them proactively to continue engaging in schools. More on such results will be elaborated on in the section on impact below, but it was important to mention it here as the evidence of relevance of this project outcome and its activities in relation to achieving the project purpose and its expected results.

Secondly, apart from the school baseline assessment conducted among the target group and the project beneficiaries, the planning process also involved initial meetings with the key stakeholders. In order to analyse the relevance of the project interventions related to Outcome 2, it is necessary to describe the context in which the project was placed. As one of the most illustrative examples, prior to the project interventions, the HNC Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport had already developed the Inter-Institutional Protocol on Dealing with Cases of Violence within the Education Institutions (2013) and the subsequent Program for Prevention of Violence. According to Youth Power, the local partner from Mostar, not much had been done in the area of prevention in practice since the adoption of this policy document. Therefore, being aware of their obligation and need to work more on prevention, the key public stakeholders, starting from the HNC Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, recognized the relevance of this project and ways in which it could match their gaps in the implementation of the existing policies. At the more practical level, the pedagogues also expressed their enthusiasm when they learnt about the project, because they immediately understood that the project interventions aimed at prevention of violence among youth would help them do their job more comprehensively. According to the representative of the Mostar Pedagogical Institute, Ms. Haznadarevic, the project partner constantly asked for input related to their needs as the professionals from the education sector when designing their interventions. Ms. Haznadarevic stressed the particular importance of this participatory approach since formal education should include both education and upbringing of youth, whereas at the moment, the upbringing part is missing, therefore this project in a way fills this gap in high schools. Similar point of view resonated throughout the interview with the Association XY. For example, they pointed out the appalling results of PISA test in BiH, which indicate exactly the need for interactive engagement with youth, because the current “one-way” lectures by teachers result in lack of motivation and eventually lack of meaningful acquiring of knowledge and skills in youth. Additionally, according to Mr. Mehmedovic from Association XY, the project responded to meet the needs of teachers who got trained through this project and realized how more efficient their lectures of formal education could be if they make them more interactive with students.

Relevance of the project interventions related to Outcome 2 can be seen in many examples where some schools invite the project partners to also get active in their schools to help them deal with challenging young women and men. Such example was seen last year in Banja Luka where the local partner Perpetuum Mobile was invited by the High tourist School’s pedagogue, with the request to
include students from their school into the BMC. Having heard about the project activities, the pedagogue realised that such activities could indeed be very relevant for the challenges they face in their day to day work with some students from their school. Similar practice was noted in the communities covered by Association XY, where initially the BMC was envisaged for youth from selected schools, but due to the increasing interest of different schools and students themselves promoting the BMC among their friends. As a result, BMC has become open for all youth of the age covered by the project regardless of whether the school they attend is officially part of the project or not. Similarly, although the primary focus of the project are high schools, Perpetuum Mobile got invited by one of the local elementary schools to implement their activities with their students.

With regards to the concrete trainings of pedagogues as part of the project interventions in schools, Youth Power Mostar reports that the pedagogues themselves were giving ongoing input into the development of the training programs for them, so the program itself was very relevant to their needs in the schools. At the same time, in Banja Luka, Perpetuum Mobile participated in the development of the 2016-2020 Youth Policy of Republic of Srpska, where they advocated and succeeded in integrating "healthy lifestyles" into the Policy as one of its five programmatic areas.

Finally, although the accreditation has not yet been achieved in all the project target areas, the fact that the ministries of education allowed the project implementers to enter schools and implement their activities with students shows to a certain extent that they recognize the relevance of this project for young men and women. More information on the process of accreditation will be elaborated below in the section of impact, but it is important to mention here that this evaluation has not found a direct link between the accreditation process and relevance of the project interventions.

One point of concern was mentioned by the representative of the RS Ministry of Education, Ms. Danijela Stanisic, regarding the peer-to-peer education standards. It is very important to standardize this education, because it is difficult for school management to accept that an uncertified person spends time with their students without knowing what criteria, content and standards are being applied when working with students.

Data on relevance of raising awareness of youth and improvement of their attitudes related to health, prevention of violence and promotion of gender equality (Outcome 3) through a wide range of project interventions was collected indirectly from the project implementers who work directly with young men and women. Firstly, several interviewees highlighted the relevant needs of youth who crave for an opportunity to brainstorm and express themselves, particularly in the topics covered by the project that are very relevant to them. Although young people were at first very shy and introvert about the idea of joining the events where they would talk about for them controversial topics, very soon they realized that this in fact represents an advantage for them, because they can speak freely about topics that interest them without being judged because the events were being moderated by their peers.

Additionally, according to the Director of the local Youth Association Pod istim suncem Jablanica, the project interventions proved to be very relevant for the youth of Jablanica, because youth in small communities are not offered many entertaining activities and opportunities for personal development, so the idea of establishing a club where they can come and speak freely about themselves was very much welcomed among youth. Furthermore, peer educators took their role very seriously. Trainings for peer educators and running the BMC provided them with an opportunity to exercise their leadership skills which means indirectly they see themselves as future leaders in their communities in any topic that will emerge in the future, because they learnt leadership skills through...
this project. They otherwise would not have had an opportunity to acquire these skills. Additionally, according to the adviser from the HNC Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, the most relevant aspect of this project is indeed the peer education, because normally, most activities planned for youth place them in a passive role of recipients of information.

Finally, the project proved to be very relevant for the regional context. The partner organisations continuously achieve a synergy effect at the regional level through joint activities and events that contribute to the common goals. The most illustrative example is the achievement of a regional visual identity of the Be a Man Club, through which the partners from different countries support each other in raising the profile of the movement and in this way achieve goals more effectively. Furthermore, the regional relevance can be seen also in the fact that partners from different countries form their own partnerships in the implementation of other projects outside the CARE project.

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**Project Relevance Summary**

The above information represents a pool of valuable data indicating a high relevance of this project to the BiH context. Relevance of the project interventions can be seen in two different aspects: general relevance of such initiatives in relation to the context in which the project is placed, and specific relevance, i.e. why this project is particularly relevant in the given context.

**Project Relevance: General**

- Prevalence of GBV in BiH;
- Prevalence of peer violence in schools with a particular focus on general misconceptions about psychological violence, often wrongly interpreted in society as „teasing“;
- Particularly low results of PISA test in BiH indicate the need for interactive engagement with youth in schools.
- The partner organisations continuously achieve a synergy effect at the regional level through joint activities and events that contribute to the common goals.

**Project Relevance: Project-Specific:**

- Relevance of identifying grassroots youth organizations and using their potential in the local communities was proved to be very beneficial for achieving the project results, taking into account the fact that "buy-in" of project interventions in local communities is always easier for a grassroots organisation that is already recognised in the community than for an external actor (Outcome 1);
- Data from the School Baseline assessment indicated the relevance of working with high school students on topics covered by the project (Outcome 3);
Relevance of project interventions was intentionally achieved by the project partners because the interventions were designed in close consultations with relevant institutions and other stakeholders in the community;

In the context of public policies related to peer violence, according to the public stakeholders, the least attention in their implementation is paid to prevention. The project interventions filled this gap thus showing its relevance to the context;

Relevance is particularly visible in several examples where schools not initially involved in the project invited the project partners to work with their students;

Relevance of peer-to-peer educators, with a strong recommendation to standardize it.

b. Effectiveness

Quantitative analysis of project indicators was the main source of data for analyzing the effectiveness of the project, particularly in answering Question 1. The analysis of findings necessary to answer the remaining questions was made based both on the project reports and interviews, particularly interviews with the key project partners.

- To what extent have the project purpose and all the three expected results (outcomes) been achieved (see log frame matrix)?
- What factors hindered the achievement of project purpose and the expected results?

Through conducting a quantitative analysis of the achieved results, it was concluded that three out of four outcomes have been fully achieved (75%). Given the fact that the achievement of expected results is measured by project (in this case outcome) indicators, particular challenge in this regard was noticed in Outcome 4. This Outcome in the context of timeframe was envisaged to be implemented in a way that the first part of the project implementation period serves as the creation of preconditions for creation and activation of social movements and citizens’ coalitions, whereas the last year of implementation was planned to see these movements in action. Despite the fact that the COVID-19 crisis affected all aspects of life and this project in particular, its hindering effect is most visible in Outcome 4 if the achievement of this outcome is seen strictly through its definition. However, having in mind that the project implementation period is not finished yet, this is not of particular concern.

The breakdown of achievement per output, in relation to outcome indicators, is as follows:

**Total: 14 Outputs**

- Three outputs (21,42%) overachieved (Output 2, 9, 10),
- Six outputs (42,85%) achieved (Output 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11),
- Three outputs (21,42%) partially achieved (Output 7, 13 and 14),
- Two outputs (14,28%) not reported fully yet (Output 6 and 12).

Furthermore, the breakdown of achievement per output, in relation to output indicators, is as follows:

**Total output indicators: 32:**

- Nine output indicators (28,12%) overachieved,
- 15 output indicators (46.87%) achieved,
- Four output indicators (12.5%) partially achieved,
- Two output indicators (6.25%) not fully reported yet.

From this quantitative analysis, it can be concluded that through the achieved outcomes and output indicators (with the exception of Outcome 4 and the COVID-19 implications) all the expected outcomes have been achieved and the project purpose has been met by these achievements.

The details on the quantitative analysis can be found in Annex 2 of this report.

- **What actors/procedures/implementation methods were crucial for achieving the project purpose and the expected results?**

All the project partners reported that the needs assessment at the beginning of the project had a major impact on the achievement of the project results. In other words, if the project starts by asking the stakeholders about their needs in the context of the project definition and purpose, the results are inevitable in the sense of the implementation of the project activities because this participatory approach ensures the endorsement and support of the public stakeholders.

Additionally, the adequate coordination among the key stakeholders proved to be a very effective method to achieve the project results. The examples of such comprehensive coordination and cooperation were given by all the project partners. As an example, Youth Power made sure there was an ongoing communication among the Ministry of Education, the Pedagogical Institute, school management and the pedagogues in schools. Perpetuum Mobile reported a similar positive pattern, where they worked closely together with the City of Banja Luka, consequently all the 16 high schools from Banja Luka but also with the Center for Social Welfare Banja Luka.

Furthermore, all the efforts to integrate the project into the existing public policies proved to be a very effective implementation method. For example, Perpetuum Mobile proudly reported on the inclusion of “healthy lifestyles” as one of the programmatic areas into the 2018-2022 Youth Policy of the City of Banja Luka.

Finally, all the interviewees, including both the partners and the stakeholders as “recipients” of the project results stated that the peer-to-peer approach is the most effective method of making an impact on youth. As a result, not only that the peer educators influence other peers during the project activities, but also participants of the project activities, for example members of BMC, influence other young people to join the club.

- **Has the project time framework been sufficient for achieving outcomes and the intervention impacts?**

Generally speaking, and in view of the above high achievement, the timeframe has been sufficient to achieve the expected results. Moreover, according to all the interviews with all the project partners, time framework has been sufficient to achieve the desired outcomes.

However, two unexpected aspects have to be highlighted in this regard.
Firstly, COVID-19 and its implications on the implementation of the planned activities certainly affected the timeframe of some of the planned intervention impacts. This of course could not have been planned at the beginning of the project implementation, and it cannot be taken as an “error” in planning. It is now crucial to make a detailed strategy on how to adapt the remaining unimplemented activities to the new circumstances and make sure the desired impact gets achieved accordingly.

Secondly, Outcome 2, i.e. its part related to the accreditation of Program Y and its integration in the mandatory or extra-curricular school programs needs to be analysed through the lens of the project indicators in order to determine whether the timeframe was sufficient. For example, the indicator of Output 5 to achieve this outcome is “MoU signed for implementation in participating schools”, or the indicators for output 4 “Program Y content and methodology recognized as relevant valuable by the respective government representatives” and “Topics decisions/agreements reached for with the relevant government representatives” were undoubtedly achieved, as well as the remaining indicators related to this part of outcome 2, which means the timeframe to achieve this outcome according to its output indicators was sufficient. At the same time, the accreditation itself has not occurred in its full formal sense in all the project locations, which means that the timeframe in this regard might have to be extended.

This suggestion is particularly relevant if the gradual impact throughout the implementation timeframe of this outcome is taken into account. The accreditation was first achieved first in HNC, then it was followed by BPK which took over the “HNC model”, and then followed by the Brcko District Department of Education (equivalent to a ministry of education in Brcko District). This indicates the domino effect which according to the Program Manager of CARE took place at the Steering Group meetings, where the stakeholders who accredited the program served as an example to other stakeholders and in a way made a “peer pressure”. It is important to note that the Steering Group meetings were defined as one of the output indicators of this outcome, which means that the project implementers did everything that was in their power to achieve this outcome, but it is precisely because of this domino effect that the timeframe for this outcome needs to be extended. At the same time, the Program Manager of CARE participated in the development of the RS Strategy for Preschool, Elementary and High School education, where he used the opportunity for advocating for Program Y, which means that some other additional steps were made towards the RS Ministry of Education and Culture in the sense of accelerating the accreditation process of Program Y in the RS.

- Has the monitoring system been appropriate to gain comprehensive qualitative and quantitative evidence about outputs/outcomes and impact of the Project?

Regarding the monitoring system, there are several aspects to it. Firstly, the evaluator used the indicators and project reports as the main source of information for this evaluation and is of the opinion that it is appropriate to gain comprehensive qualitative and quantitative evidence about outputs/outcomes and impact of the project. Secondly, all the project partners clearly stated during the interviews that they find the current monitoring system very useful and clear. And thirdly, indirectly related to this question, it is important to mention that the HNC Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport is using the data collected through this project for other purposes in the work of their Ministry.
Project Effectiveness Summary:

✓ Quantitative analysis, in accordance with the logframe, indicate a very high level of achievement, in some cases overachievement of the project activities.
✓ The methodology, procedures and actors in the implementation of the project activities proved to be very effective. Some of them include:
  o Identification of needs in close consultations with the public stakeholders and other relevant actors at the very beginning of the project implementation period;
  o Ensuring close coordination among all relevant institutions and other actors throughout the project implementation period;
  o Integration of project goals into relevant public policies
  o Peer-to-peer education.

c. Efficiency

- Has the relationship between the devoted resources and results been appropriate and justifiable?
- Are items purchased under this project used as planned?

Although the financial audit was not part of this evaluation and the evaluator did not go into the analysis of the project budget, some aspects of the project implementation are inevitably part of this evaluation particularly in its qualitative sense.

Firstly, as the quantitative analysis indicated, the project activities have been implemented as planned, and this could not have been achieved without adequate resources. Secondly, although the project partners, i.e. youth associations report heavy administrative procedures and reporting system, none of them stated that they were missing any items necessary for the implementation of the project activities. On the contrary, although they indicate that the budgetary procedures and requirements are very time consuming, they also generally believe that such procedures are necessary in order to ensure proper financial expenditures. Finally, all the project partners highlighted one very important fact in this context: no major equipment purchase was planned at the beginning of the project, but more importantly, every time there was a need to purchase some items in the middle of the project implementation period, the project management showed an outstanding flexibility and enabled the purchase of items necessary for adequate implementation of the project activities.

It is also worth highlighting that the partners showed a very high level of resilience, flexibility and creativity in moving to an online *modus operandi* as soon as the COVID-19- related lockdown was imposed in the country. This creativity was visible not only during lockdown, but also more importantly at the beginning of the school year (September), because the circumstances did not allow any external actors to enter schools and work with youth.

Project Efficiency Summary:

✓ All project activities were implemented as planned, with the exception of some activities that had to be postponed or altered due to the COVID-19 circumstances;
The partners showed a very high level of resilience, flexibility and creativity in moving to an online *modus operandi* caused by COVID-19, both during lockdown and at the beginning of the school year;

- Adequate resources;
- The project management showed a high level of flexibility in procurement throughout the project implementation period in order to respond to *ad hoc* needs related to the project activities, in accordance with the relevant SDC and CARE Procurement Guidelines.

### d. Impact

The evaluation analysed the impact of the project in many aspects, based, wherever feasible, on the quantitative school end line assessment, but also based on the subjective views of the interviewees (both the project partners as the implementers and the stakeholders as the recipients). The list of questions as defined in the ToR was used as guidance to evaluate the impact, and as such was divided in two sections: questions where the answers can be found in the *quantitative* results of the school baseline and endline assessments and questions that are more of a *qualitative* nature, where the answers, apart from the quantitative results of the school baseline and endline assessments were also found through interviews with the participants of the project.

#### Quantitative impact

- *To what extent and in what way have the lives of project participants improved?*
- *What are the views of young men and girls regarding gender roles and attitudes?*
- *What are young men’s and young women’s health behaviors, including alcohol consumption, smoking and substance abuse?*
- *What is the experience of young men and young women with violence, including experienced and perpetrated violence?*
- *What are young men’s and young women’s experiences with romantic relationships, sexuality, contraception and violence in a relationship?*
- *To which extent campaigns and/or programs implemented by the project have increased awareness of key target groups about violence, homophobia and sexual and reproductive health, promoting peaceful masculinities, gender equality and addressing hate speech and intolerance?*
- *To which extent are there any other mediating factors (e.g., social support networks, family social-economic status, etc.) that also influence the attitudes and behaviors of young men and women?*

#### Quantitative Results: School Baseline and Endline Assessments

In line with the set project's overall goal the School *Baseline assessment* was produced in order to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of attitudes amongst young men and women regarding GBV, gender equity and healthy lifestyles. The School Baseline assessment included the sample of 1816 young men and women between 15-17 years of age were surveyed from 11 cities from both entities. The School *Endline assessment* was carried out towards the end of the project.
implementation period with a purpose to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the overall project progress as well as the change in knowledge, attitudes and behavior related to gender based violence, gender equity and healthy lifestyles amongst young men and young women from BiH who are participating in the program. Finally, the School Endline Assessment was conducted as on-line online survey due to epidemiology crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It included 1260 project participants (560 young men and 626 young women).

Self-administered surveys were used in order to get valuable inputs, and the questionnaire covered the following topics:

- views of young men and young women regarding gender roles and attitudes,
- situation with young men and young women related to health, including use of alcohol, smoking, substance abuse, sexuality, reproductive health,
- experience of young men and women is with suffered and committed violence, violence in a relationship,
- other mediating factors (e.g. family's social-economic status, etc.) that also influence attitudes and behaviours of young men and young women.

This is why the results of the two assessments represent the most feasible tool to measure in quantitative terms differences in attitudes, knowledge and behaviors of young men and women when comparing the period before and after the project activities.

**Gender relations:** the school baseline survey has shown that around 50% of young men have stereotype attitudes on gender roles of men and women, whereas progress in the endline survey is 5%-24%, and it is statistically significant in all the cities. When it comes to young women, compared to the school baseline survey where in majority of the cities, around 20%-30% of young women showed gender-unequitable attitudes, the endline survey showed 5%-16% progress. Regarding gender norms, around 20%-40% of young men expressed gender unequal norms in the school baseline survey, while the progress was seen in the endline survey by 7%-17%.

**Homophobia** was quite present in the school baseline phase, where over 80% of young men stated that they would not like to have friends homosexuals while attitudes of young women are more open (42%-65%). Progress, in comparison to the school baseline survey, is 5%-23% for men and up to 21% for women. In conclusion, although the progress is visible, index of gender equality is still not so high and work with young men in this respect should continue. As stated in the Endline assessment, these results are compatible with some previous research results conducted by CARE, so the results of these assessments once again confirmed that this program indeed contributes to gender equality amongst young people.

“I am strongly convinced that society can only prosper if women and men, boys and girls are treated equally and with mutual respect. The participants in the Program Y have not only changed their perceptions, they have become open and positive members of society.”

Barbara Dätwyler Scheuer, Director of Cooperation at the Swiss Embassy in BiH
With regards to **health**, Endline survey results show that a higher percent of young men and women in all cities **drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes and marijuana**. For example, in the baseline phase, between 15%-45% of young men and 4%-27% of young women stated that they drink alcohol, whereas in the endline phase, the range among young men is between 12%-57% and young women between 5%-28%. When it comes to **mental health**, comparing baseline and endline data, significant changes were not seen. For example, state of happiness indicated 67%-86% among young men and among 56%-77% young women in the baseline phase, whereas 64%-82% among young men and 63%-86% among young women in the endline phase. However, interesting data can be brought into the context of impact to peer-to-peer approach of the project, because most young women and men stated that if they have a problem, they first turn to their friends (peers). Finally, regarding their knowledge about **sexual and reproductive health**, it is improved in the endline phase by 5%-15% on average. These results undoubtedly indicate positive impact and value of the implemented program. Among youngsters who had intercourse, greater percentage is of those who used contraceptives. As concluded in the endline assessment, it is still necessary to implement educational campaigns on the importance of contraception in the future, because despite the improvements, generally the knowledge of young men and young women about sexual and reproductive health, sexually transmittable infections and contraceptives is at a very low level.

Regarding **violence**, significant percentage of young men (21%-33%) and young women (9%-22%) do not perceive verbal and **psychological violence** as a form of violence. However, an improvement can be seen in the perception on meaning and forms of violence, because the data indicates that the perception is more developed in the endline phase. Baseline and endline data do not indicate any consistent differences when it comes to percentages of young women and young men who perpetrated verbal and psychological violence. Furthermore, in the endline phase, perpetrated **physical violence** was confirmed by 15%-29 % of young men and by 5%-14% of young women, while in the baseline phase, it was significantly higher: 25%-48% of young men and 14%-29% of young women, so the progress is evident.

Generally, **physical violence** in most of the cities is less expressed in the endline research: progress, in comparison to the school baseline survey, is 8%-25% of young men, and 5%-20% of young women. Results show that other types of violence (group violence, cyber violence, etc.) are also less present in the endline research than in the baseline. **Verbal or physical violence towards persons perceived as homosexuals** was confirmed by 2%-16% of young men and by 0%-16% of young women. Violence against gay people is lower in the endline phase.

Overall, the results in all the cities indicate that the program had a positive effect on reducing violent behavior. Another positive data from the school endline survey is that a greater percentage of youth indicated that they would not be passive but rather try to prevent violence if they see it occurring. Index of negative attitudes towards gender based violence in the endline survey, in all the cities, ranges between 68% and 78% (among young men) and 75%-88% (among young women), which means that most young women and men condemn a gender based violent behavior. Still, percentage of 12%-32% of young men and women who, in a more implicit or explicit way, support this type of violence is worrying. Progress in comparison to the school baseline survey, in most of the cases, is 5%-15%.

When it comes to **violence in a relationship**, psychological violence is present with 12%-19% of young men and 5%-18% of young women. This type of violence is more expressed than physical and
sexual violence. Physical violence is differently represented. It varies between 4% and 9% with young men, and 3%-17% with young women. Percentage of those who shared they had been victims of violence in a relationship goes up to 3%. If the results between baseline and endline phase are compared, a positive note is that in majority of cases, the experience with psychological and physical violence in an intimate relationship is less presented in the endline phase. Physical violence particularly decreased, usually lower for about 10%. Additionally, in the endline research, majority of young men and women (52%-91%) feel capable and ready to prevent possible violent behavior in an intimate relationship. In the endline research, participants declared themselves more ready and empowered: the percentage is higher for 5%-15%.

To conclude, according to the school endline survey, in all the cities covered by the project, significant progress has been achieved in the area of gender relations and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health. Perpetrated physical violence, group violence and gender-based violence had decreased in most of the cities. Likewise, majority of participants in all the cities aim to constructively act and resolve conflict if it appears. Progress or consistent changes in the field of mental health could not be seen. The only weaker result is related to the use of different psychoactive substances (alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana), which, as concluded in the school endline assessment, could be brought in relation to the period of growing up, as well as with some traditional and cultural customs.

- To which extent the available quantitative/qualitative evidences suggest that the project has had a considerable impact upon the lives of the beneficiaries?

Overall, progress in developing gender equality attitudes had been made in all the cities. However, gender stereotypes and homophobia are still evident in all the cities and they should be addressed further in the future. Endline results indicate increase of percentage of those using alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana in all the cities. Knowledge of young women and young men about sexual and reproductive health was on average level in all the cities in the baseline phase and it improved in the endline phase. Furthermore, in the school endline survey, perpetrated physical violence and gender-based violence decreased in most cities. Likewise, majority of participants in all the cities aim to constructively act and resolve conflict if it appears.

Generally speaking, the comparative analysis of the school baseline and endline assessments proves the purposefulness of this project. Young men and young women in BiH express numerous personal and social problems, but it is obvious that majority of those problems could be solved through adequate, interactive and youth-friendly work with youth. Furthermore, the results indicate the need for relevant public educational institutions and schools to work more actively on the establishment of regular school curricula that would lead to improvement in the lifestyle of young people, which also indicates the need for this project to continue supporting the education authorities in achieving this goal.
Qualitative impact

- Has the long-term impact as defined by the overall objective been feasible? To which extent have all stakeholders/target groups as defined gained new knowledge and changed their behavior already? To which extent has the project contributed to the decrease of interpersonal violence in the particular municipalities?

As described in the quantitative analysis above, the overall objective appears to be achieving impact gradually for the most part. According to all the interviewees, feasibility of the overall objective is not questionable. However, it is necessary to understand, as pointed out by several interviewees, that a social change is a long term process, and as such, it cannot be expected from one project to achieve it within a strict timeframe. Therefore, the best way to assess the feasibility of the overall objective is to look back at the relevance of its project interventions and the effectiveness of its methods and procedures.

During this evaluation, 10 employees from public institutions were interviewed, and all 10 have pointed out the direct impact of this project on the overall positive change in attitudes of young women and men. As an illustrative example, one of the school employees stated that since the project started in their school, no disciplinary measure against students was used as a standard school tool to improve students' behavior. The interviewee was clear that such positive change was not a coincidence, but a direct impact of the project interventions. The interviewee further noted that the project activities have a direct impact on the project participants, but they also have an indirect impact on students who do not participate directly in the project activities but get influenced positively by their peers who participate in the project activities and then represent a positive example and while serving as role models for other students, they exercise a certain positive peer pressure on them.

There is an important aspect of Outcome 2 that has to be particularly stressed in the context of impact: the concept of “accreditation” is a challenging one to achieve according to Danijela Stanisic, representative of the RS Ministry of Education and Culture in the YMI, because of a very strict formal and legislative framework. Instead, the Ministry accepted the Manual for Program Y that was developed as part of the project and recommended it, along with the Program Y itself, to all the schools in the RS to implement it should they see it fit. In other words, although the strictly formal accreditation as defined by the project has not been achieved in the RS, Program Y has been accepted by the Ministry.

Additionally, the RS Youth Development Policy contains healthy lifestyles as one of its strategic directions, which is also a direct result of the project interventions. Since healthy lifestyles have been incorporated into this strategic document, according to Ms. Stanisic, Program Y represents a very feasible program to integrate into the school programs, because Program Y represents a final
product, i.e. it contains a Manual and a full methodology on its implementation. Finally, the Ministry is currently developing a new curriculum for Head teacher classes in high schools in the RS, and healthy lifestyles are encompassed in it. Ms. Stanisic sees this as a direct result of this project.

- Are there any positive/negative unintended results of the intervention?

Two things emerged as positive unintended results of the project interventions.

Firstly, the programs implemented with youth through this project have in the core of their methodology an interactive engagement with youth, a direct result that perhaps was not planned as such is the fact that young women and men speak freely about topics of their concern. It is expected that adolescence brings about questions related to sexuality, relationships and substance abuse, to name a few. At the same time, it is a well-known fact that they live in a rather conservative society full of taboos and stereotypes. Unfortunately, the formal education system represents an integral part of such conservative society, and as a result, young women and men do not have an opportunity to ask such questions and try to understand the implications of this emerging world of adulthood on them. In contrast, the project activities for them represent the unique place where not only that they find answers to these questions, but they get to speak freely about topics that normally represent taboos in society. Needless to say that peer-to-peer approach represents the cornerstone of such result. Therefore, having in mind this specificity of the context, the freedom to speak openly about the topics of their key concern in this age group offered to young women and men through the project activities represents an unintended result of the project.

Secondly, although the topics of the project are of concern to most adolescents globally, in the BiH context the project activities contributed unexpectedly to another very important process in the country: peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is a complex process that requires a specific and multi-layered approach, and as such perhaps should not be underestimated. However, several project partners highlighted the importance of events organized throughout the project for project participants from all over the country in the context of inter-ethnic encounters among young women and men coming from different parts of the country. Without intentionally trying to achieve it, the project partners report that after such events (for example summer camps), young women and men would conclude that their peers coming from different parts of the country and belonging to a different ethnic group actually listen to the same music as them and experience similar adolescence-related problems.

**Project Impact Summary:**

- Significant progress has been achieved in the area of gender relations and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health.
- Perpetrated physical violence, group violence and gender-based violence had decreased in most of the cities. Majority of participants in all the cities aim to constructively act and resolve conflict if it appears.
- Progress or consistent changes in the field of mental health could not be seen.
- The only weaker result is related to the use of different psychoactive substances (alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana), which, as concluded in the school endline assessment, could be
brought in relation to the period of growing up, as well as with some traditional and cultural customs.

- The comparative analysis of the school baseline and endline assessments proves the purposefulness of this project.
- The results indicate the need for relevant public educational institutions and schools to work more actively on the establishment of regular school curricula that would lead to improvement in the lifestyle of young people, which also indicates the need for this project to continue supporting the education authorities in achieving this goal.
- Unintended result of the project: traditional taboos broken among young women and men, so they can speak freely about topics of their concern during the project activities.
- Unintended result of the project: peacebuilding. Without intentionally trying to achieve it, the project partners report that after some project activities/events (for example summer camps), young women and men would conclude that their peers coming from different parts of the country and belonging to a different ethnic group actually listen to the same music as them and experience similar adolescence-related problems.

**e. Sustainability**

Probably the most important segment of every evaluation represents the extent to which the project results are likely to remain in place beyond the project implementation period. This is why all the above sections are in a way connected to the section on sustainability and as such should be examined comprehensively in this regard.

- **What actions/results can be maintained after this intervention ended?**

Regarding Outcome 1, the project partners generally believe that the capacities built in youth associations will remain after the intervention ends. The results in this regard are already visible, because they are now recognized in their communities as leading actors when it comes to promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing GBV among youth. Additionally, they now seek their own sources of funding to continue working on these topics by applying for grants independently.

If the sustainability is analysed in the context of Outcome 3, the results of the endline assessment indicate that the awareness of youth is constantly changing when it comes to their attitudes and behaviors related to healthy lifestyles, gender equality and prevention of violence. However, awareness raising as such generally is very difficult to measure, therefore this Outcome can be seen as an ongoing process in the society as a whole, to which this project has contributed, as the endline assessment showed, but it is very difficult to evaluate to what extent these results will remain unless they are continued and seen as an ongoing process.

- **To which extent is the Gender Transformative Life Skills programs (Program Y, Program Y+ and Program Y+++) licensing/accreditation ensuring long year sustainability?**

According to the information provided by all the public stakeholder interviewees that work with youth, including both the school management, pedagogues and social workers, the formal accreditation makes a big difference when it comes to full commitment to these programs in schools. In other words, no matter to what extent schools endorsed and are committed to the use of the Programs, sustainability can be fully ensured through the formal accreditation by the relevant
Ministries. The reason for such a vocal statement by multiple interviewees lies in the fact that the education sector in BiH is still very conservative and formalistic where very little space is left for innovations. In practice, it means that there are a lot of open minded teachers, pedagogues and even school directors who understand the need for educational reform in approach to students, but in contrast, there are also those who believe strictly in the conservative formalistic one-way communication between students and teachers and as such they will not be welcoming towards these programs unless it becomes part of the official program. This is why it is important to ensure the accreditation of the programs through the relevant ministries of education, because it is only through such systemic approach that the sustainability of the programs will not depend on individuals but rather on the system.

- **Who are the actors that carry ownership for creating this future strategies and commitments?**
- **To which extent are current strategies of the project partners for continuing the current actions after the termination of the project feasible?**
- **Please assess the strategies and procedure for continuing the current actions in the different entities/cantons, after the project ended?**

Another important aspect of this project in the context of sustainability is the fact that the project structure left a certain degree of freedom to the project partners on the methodology of the implementation of the programs. In practice, this means that in some locations, the project partners insist on intensifying trainings of school staff in order to ensure the sustainability of the Program Y in schools by ensuring that the school itself will be able to implement those programs even one day when this project ceases to exist. At the same time, in other project locations, the partners have always envisaged the implementation of the programs (often through their youth associations) themselves, where the role of the school is to enable this to happen and to “recognize” their program in the official annual school program through the Head teacher classes. This freedom of approach is understandable and welcoming if the different contexts in each project location are taken into account, however sustainability has to be differentiated and assessed in such contexts as well. This is where the importance of inter-connectedness of the project outcomes comes in, and different scenarios/models in the context of sustainability emerge.

**Model 1** is the accreditation in which case sustainability is already ensured by the acceptance of Program Y into the ordinary school programs and curricula. In this case, the role of the project partners would be envisaged as the resource for capacity building of schools to set up the methodology and course of action to self-implement the program. Such example is the role of Youth Power in HNC.

**Model 2** is, in absence of the accreditation by the relevant ministries of education, that the project partners ensure the commitment of school management to the Program Y and the other programs and its integration into the ordinary school programs through the Head teacher classes (because schools have a certain percentage of classes that they can alter from the official curriculum, particularly when it comes to the Head teacher classes). In this scenario, the sustainability can be ensured by the project partners serving as the resource for capacity building of schools to set up the methodology and course of action to self-implement the program.

**Model 3** is that the accreditation does not take place in some project locations, the schools are committed to the Program Y and the other programs but they lack willingness and/or capacities to implement the programs themselves, in which case the project partners can ensure sustainability by
continuing to invest all their efforts into building capacities of the youth grassroots organisations that can be long term partners if not extended arm of schools and as such implement the programs in schools. At the moment, such example is Association Forum teatar Istocno Sarajevo.

To conclude, all the above three models can ensure sustainability, but it is very important to assign the tasks to the project partners in a way that they ensure sustainability in the described way on an ongoing basis.

Furthermore, regarding the sustainability of the project results, despite the clear need to allow the project partners to fit into the context in which they are operating, it is highly recommended to standardize at least some things that can be standardized and that do not depend on the local contexts. For example, as highlighted by a project partner, in the project locations where the trainings for school staff are organized, it is advisable to standardize those trainings in order to ensure consistency of the project results, but also in order to be able to measure the results and improve them in the forthcoming period. Capacity building-related activities can be planned and developed on the basis of mutually agreed criteria, including the length of trainings, the exact programs, methodology, etc, along with the indicators of success. Currently, it is not possible to assess whether trainings that take place in Sarajevo last too long, or the trainings in Banja Luka are too short, i.e. whether there is a need for follow-up trainings with the same participants and if yes, in which form, because there are no standardized criteria.

**To which extent Be a Man Clubs became a movement in BiH?**

The definition of a social movement used by CARE is an organized set of people vested in making a change in their situation pursuing a common political agenda through collective action. In this context, there is no doubt that Be a Man Clubs represents a social movement. However, it is very difficult to measure the extent to which some action in society has reached the level of a movement, so this evaluation relied mainly on the inputs from the participants of the project and its stakeholders. Firstly, every single interviewee is of the opinion that BMC is a movement, also indicating that this is the biggest success of this project. Secondly,
and anecdotally, the most illustrative example of this statement is when two youngsters who did not know each other before met by accident and in a random conversation they figured out that one of them was member of the BMC in Mostar and the other one in Belgrade. Another important aspect of BMC is, as some interviewees called it, it has become a brand, to the extent that now the youth recognise this specific approach that BMC has towards them that now they are able to recognise all the negative sides of the traditional “one-way” teaching in schools because they compare it to the interactive learning they experience in BMCs.

However, if observed within the definition of “a loosely organized but sustained campaign in support of a social goal”, then one of the interviewees had a point when stated that BMC should be more open, allowing other actors from society not linked to the project also contribute to the social goal that BMC is trying to achieve. The entire outcome 4 is dedicated to creating social movement, but according to this interviewee, social movements aimed at achieving a certain goal in society should not be framed in the context of an outcome and limited to project stakeholders only, but rather be flexible in finding synergies with other actors in society and thus contributing to the overall achievement of the goal.

Another thing that could ensure that the BMC becomes a country-wide well-known movement, as suggested by one of the project partners, is to ensure the standardised approach to as many aspects of the project as possible. For example, CARE has a very clear communications strategy, and if all the project partners and other associations participating in the project implementation make an additional efforts in respecting the strategy and thus synchronize their campaigning efforts, the impact of the general message behind the BMC can be much stronger thus bringing more sustainable results. As mentioned above, it is understandable why the project partners have a different approach to the project implementation in their local context. However, any campaigning activity would resonate much more at the level of the country if all the efforts and resources were pulled simultaneously. This suggestion is in no way related to lack of cooperation among the project partners, on the contrary, it appears that the project partners cooperate and exchange experiences and expertise very well. It is rather aimed at ensuring sustainable results with maximum effectiveness should all the resources be pulled into the joint and simultaneous campaigning and promoting the BMCs and other related activities.

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**Project Sustainability Summary**

- Increased capacities of youth associations represent an irrevocable result of the project: associations gradually become independent, independently seek sources of funding and take on healthy lifestyles, gender equality and violence prevention as leading topics in the community. The exceptions are some associations with which it was not possible to achieve this type of result, so these are sustainable results where the results have actually been achieved.

- Changing the awareness of young people about healthy lifestyles, violence prevention and gender equality is an “ongoing process” that the whole society should work on, and this project undoubtedly makes a great contribution to that process. The School Endline Assessment has shown progress, and a sustainable result can be observed at the level of the individual who has gone through the project activities.
In Outcome 2, the project allowed a certain level of flexibility in the methodology and approach, which maximized sustainable results:

- **Model 1**: the accreditation by relevant ministries automatically ensured sustainability because a systemic change has been made. The accreditation at some project locations is a sustainable result in itself, because it is a systemic change that no longer depends entirely on the goodwill of individuals employed in schools/institutions.
- **Model 2**: Integrating Program Y into the school’s annual curriculum (through Head teacher classes) also represents a change in the system. Strengthening the capacity of pedagogues, social workers and teachers through training also has an element of sustainability in this context.
- **Model 3**: commitment of the school management to the program, but in absence of resources, the project partners implement the program in schools.

- More consistent application of the CARE communication strategy as well as other CARE policy documents can help achieve maximum project results. For example, synchronization of efforts and synergy among project partners during public campaigns.

### III. Key Findings and Conclusions

Young Men Initiative – “Promoting Healthier Lifestyles among Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) by Challenging Gender Stereotypes II project’s overall goal is to increase the uptake of healthy, nonviolent and gender equitable lifestyles among young men and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Young Men Initiative II (YMI II) project builds upon CARE’s comprehensive and programmatic effort to fight interpersonal and gender based violence (GBV) as well as to improve gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina and address preventative issues related to youth extremism and violence. This project aims at scaling up and mainstreaming earlier achievements related to the implementation of the Gender Transformative Life Skills program, or short Program Y, via targeted advocacy and a close cooperation with relevant stakeholder through the support of movement/coalition building through the development of new alliances that engage parents and citizens in supporting gender equality focused life skills education program.

Through a comprehensive analysis both of the project documentation and the information provided the individual interviews with over 20 project participants, this evaluation drew a set of conclusions, both from the perspective of best practices and key challenges, which consequently led to a set of recommendations for CARE International Balkans on how to continue making this important social change.

Firstly, the project proved to be highly **relevant** for the context in which it has been placed, particularly in the following segments:
• Prevalence of GBV in BiH,
• Prevalence of peer violence in schools with a particular focus on general misconceptions about psychological violence, often wrongly interpreted in society as „teasing“, 
• Particularly low results of PISA test in BiH indicate the need for interactive engagement with youth in schools.

Furthermore, the project interventions showed a high relevance for the above context, especially in the following areas:

• Relevance of identifying grassroots youth organizations and using their potential in the local communities was proved to be very beneficial for achieving the project results, taking into account the fact that "buy-in" of project interventions in local communities is always easier for a grassroots organisation that is already recognised in the community than for an external actor (Outcome 1),
• Data from the School Baseline assessment indicated the relevance of working with high school students on topics covered by the project (Outcome 3),
• Relevance of the project interventions for the local context was intentionally achieved by the project partners because they designed the interventions in close consultations with relevant institutions and other stakeholders in the community,
• In the context of public policies related to peer violence, according to the public institutions, the least attention in their implementation is paid to prevention. The project interventions filled this gap thus showing its relevance to the context.
• Relevance is particularly visible in several examples where schools were not initially involved in the project invited the project partners to work with their students.
• The project proved to be very relevant for the regional context. The partner organisations continuously achieve a synergy effect at the regional level through joint activities and events that contribute to the common goals. The most illustrative example is the achievement of a regional visual identity of the Be a Man Club, through which the partners from different countries support each other in raising the profile of the movement and in this way achieve goals more effectively. Furthermore, the regional relevance can be seen also in the fact that partners from different countries form their own partnerships in the implementation of other projects outside the CARE project.

With regards to the project effectiveness, the following conclusions were drawn:

• Quantitative analysis, in accordance with the logframe, indicate a very high level of achievement, in some cases overachievement of the project activities,
• The methodology, procedures and actors in the implementation of the project activities proved to be very effective. Some of them include:
  o Identification of needs in close consultations with the public stakeholders and other relevant actors at the very beginning of the project implementation period;
  o Ensuring close coordination among all relevant institutions and other actors throughout the project implementation period;
  o Integration of project goals into relevant public policies,
  o Peer-to-peer education.

Efficiency of the project interventions can be summarised as follows:

• All the project activities were implemented in accordance with the plans, with the exception of some activities that had to be postponed or altered due to the COVID-19 circumstances,
The partners showed a very high level of resilience, flexibility and creativity in moving to an online *modus operandi* as soon as the COVID-19-related lockdown was imposed in the country. This creativity was visible not only during lockdown, but also more importantly at the beginning of the school year (September), because the circumstances did not allow any external actors to enter schools and work with youth.

- The project was supplied with adequate resources,
- The project management showed a high level of flexibility in procurement throughout the project implementation period in order to respond to *ad hoc* needs related to the project activities.

The **impact** of the project interventions was the most challenging part to evaluate. It was necessary to take a step back and place the impact of the project into the context of making any social change. This means that all the actors must take into account the fact that making a social change of any kind is a long term process that requires engagement from many actors over a long period of time, especially if such social change requires tackling deeply rooted traditional norms which is the case with this project. Having this context in mind, the evaluation relied both on the quantitative end line assessment data, but also on the subjective views of the interviewees. Summary of conclusions related to the impact of the project interventions is therefore as follows:

- Significant progress has been achieved in the area of gender relations and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health,
- Perpetrated physical violence, group violence and gender-based violence had decreased in most project locations, where most project participants now aim to constructively act and resolve conflict as it appears,
- Progress or consistent changes in the field of mental health could not be seen.
- The only weaker result is related to the use of different psychoactive substances (alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana), which, as concluded in the endline assessment, could be brought in relation to the period of growing up, as well as with some traditional and cultural customs.
- The comparative analysis of the school baseline and endline assessments prove the purposefulness of this project.
- The results indicate the need for relevant public educational institutions and schools to work more actively on the establishment of regular school curricula that would lead to improvement in the lifestyle of young people, which also indicates the need for this project to continue supporting the education authorities in achieving this goal.

Additionally, the project interventions achieved a few unintended results:

- traditional taboos broken among young women and men during the project activities, so they can speak freely about topics of their concern during the project activities.
- Without intentionally trying to achieve it, the project partners report that after some project activities/events (for example summer camps), young women and men would conclude that their peers coming from different parts of the country and belonging to a different ethnic group actually listen to the same music as them and experience similar adolescence-related problems. Without an intention to underestimate the complexities of any peacebuilding process, but taking into account the particular context of ethnically divided society caused by the conflict and the post-conflict mainstream politics, this shows that the project unintentionally contributed to the overall peacebuilding process in BiH.
The most important segment of every evaluation represents the extent to which the project results are likely to remain in place beyond the project implementation period. This is why all the above sections are in a way connected to the section on sustainability and as such should be examined comprehensively in this regard. Below is the list of conclusions in this regard:

- Increased capacities of youth associations represent an irrevocable result of the project: associations gradually become independent, independently seek sources of funding and take on healthy lifestyles, gender equality and violence prevention as leading topics in the community. The exceptions are some associations with which it was not possible to achieve this type of result, so these are sustainable results where the results have actually been achieved.

- Changing the awareness of young people about healthy lifestyles, violence prevention and gender equality is an “ongoing process” that the whole society should work on, and this project undoubtedly makes a great contribution to that process. The Endline Assessment has shown progress, and a sustainable result can be observed at the level of the individual who has gone through the project activities.

- In Outcome 2, the project allowed a certain level of flexibility in the methodology and approach, which maximized sustainable results:
  
  - **Model 1**: the accreditation by relevant ministries automatically ensured sustainability because a systemic change has been made. The accreditation at some project locations is a sustainable result in itself, because it is a systemic change that no longer depends entirely on the good will of individuals employed in schools / institutions.
  
  - **Model 2**: Integrating Program Y into the school's annual curriculum (through Head teacher classes) also represents a change in the system. Strengthening the capacity of pedagogues, social workers and teachers through trainings also has an element of sustainability in this context.
  
  - **Model 3**: commitment of the school management to the program, but in absence of resources, the project partners implement the program in schools.

- More consistent application of the CARE communication strategy as well as other CARE policy documents can help achieve maximum project results. For example, synchronization of efforts and synergy among project partners during public campaigns.

Taking all the above into consideration, the general conclusions about the project are as follows:

- In general, project activities were completed within the planned timeframes. Quantitative analysis in line with the logframe showed a very high level of implemented activities.

- Extremely high level of commitment and motivation of the project management and the partners.

- All the interviewed representatives of institutions, schools and other relevant actors show great enthusiasm about the project, with the hope that the project will continue.

- The fluctuation of youth associations reflected on the project in some way, but from the project documents as well as discussions with the management and the project partners it is
evident that such decisions were made with much consideration in order to minimize the negative effect on the project.

- Despite the strict financial and other administrative procedures and legal frameworks, the project management has shown a high level of flexibility in procurement in order to achieve the planned project objectives.
- Recognizing the local contexts as well as different legislative and institutional frameworks, the project management has shown flexibility in the methodology and approach, in order to achieve the maximum of project results, resulting in a range of sustainable results.

IV. Recommendations

Overall, taking into consideration the quantitative data obtained at the beginning and at the end of the project implementation period through the School Baseline and Endline Assessments, it can be concluded that one of the central problems in the life of a young person is traditional norms. Stereotype roles are manifested through unequal gender attitudes, violent behaviors and behaviors that represent a risk to the health and that include the use of alcohol or some narcotics. Therefore, although the impact has been achieved to a certain degree, it is important to continue working on reducing these phenomena, especially as it leads to other problems, such as violence.

Therefore, one of the priorities is to continue working on the prevention of violence perpetrated by young men and young women. Additionally, youth are generally not well informed about the sexual
and reproductive health, which indicates the need to invest further efforts in this direction. Regarding promotion of healthy lifestyles, it is undeniable that preventive programmes can bring positive results.

Having this in mind, there is no doubt that this project represents a positive model on how to work with youth in a spontaneous, creative and unobtrusive way and its interventions should continue in the context of making social changes that will influence the youth to become responsible adults with high moral values and mutual respect.

With regards to lessons learnt from the project implementation period covered in this evaluation, the following specific recommendations were drawn in view of maximizing the project results in the future:

- Standardization of training for teaching staff in order to more effectively measure their impact, which in turn helps improve the capacity building of this target group,
- More consistent adherence to the communication strategy as well as other policy documents of CARE in order to achieve maximum project results. For example, synchronization and synergy during public campaigns,
- Continue with the methodology of peer education as undeniably the most effective method of making changes in the behavior and attitudes of young people,
- Consider the alteration of project objectives in the next project phase: instead of “accreditation” which is difficult to fit into the existing formal legal framework in the local context, consider the formulation of “recognition” of the program by the relevant education authorities.
- Intend to work on standardization / methodology of work of peer educators in order to secure recognition of the program by the relevant ministries. Frequent fluctuations of peer educators tend to create concerns in the ministries because there are no clear guarantees, standards and competencies for educators to work with students in schools. In that sense, it is recommended to standardize competencies in the form of certification of peer educators and educators from the ranks of teaching staff and pedagogues.
- Expand the program to more schools,
- Extend a customized program to elementary schools,
- Examine the possibility of working with Pedagogical Faculties in order to change the curriculum and program as one model of creating systemic changes.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED AS PART OF THE PRIMARY SOURCE DATA COLLECTION PHASE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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**ANNEX 2: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT RESULTS**

ANNEX 2 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT RESULTS.pdf

**ANNEX 3: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

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