FINAL INTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Title of project:	**E-MINDFUL**: **E**nhancing European **MI**gration **N**arrative to **D**evelop **F**urther **U**nion's **L**ong-term actions
Project DC Code:	RER/22/02/EUR
Geographical coverage:	Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia
ILO Administrative Office:	Decent Work Team/Country Office for CEE (DWT/CO-Budapest)
ILO Technical Unit:	DWT/CO Budapest
Type of evaluation:	Internal
Timing of the evaluation:	Final
Duration of the evaluation:	5 November 2023 – 31 December 2023
Name of the Consultant	Branka Andjelkovic
Duration of the project:	30 months (1 June 2021 – 31 December 2023)
Links to ILO Programme and Budget (P&B) Policy Outcome:	P&B 2020-2021 and 2022-2023, Policy Outcome 7
Budget:	913,104 US$ (748,745.28 EUR)
Donor (Contracting Authority):	913,104 US$ (748,745.28 EUR)
ILO contribution:	None
Beneficiaries' contribution:	n/a
Donor (Contracting Authority):	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

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List of abbreviations

AB	Advisory Board
AMIF	EU Asylum Migration Integration Fund programme
BIH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CPO	Country Programme Outcome
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DA	Description of the Action
E-MINDFUL	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT/CO-Budapest	Decent Work Team/Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
EO	Employers' Organisation
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegation of the European Union to Serbia
FE	Final Evaluation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILS	International Labour Standards
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
IR	Inception report
KII	Key Informants Interviews
NFP	National Focal Point
NMCGs	National Multidisciplinary Creative Groups
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MKD	North Macedonia
MPC	Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute
NC	National Coordinator
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OPAM	Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration at the Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute
SRB	Serbia
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMART	Specific Measurable Accepted Realistic Timely
SoV	Sources of Verification
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCF	United Nations Cooperation Framework
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
UN SWAP	UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WB	Western Balkans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The final review[1] of the **E-MINDFUL**: **E**nhancing European **M**igration **N**arrative to **D**evelop Further **U**nion's **L**ong-term actions project was carried out with the aim to identify the achievements of the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) project component under the overall E-MINDFUL action led by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The E-MINDFUL designed and tested separate communication strategies aimed at "promoting a balanced and effective communication about migration" in six European countries: Austria, Bosnia Herzegovina, Germany, Italy, North Macedonia and Serbia.

This evaluation generated insights into the project's relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact in 3 countries: Bosnia Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia for which ILO was in charge. The evaluation also examined project's performance in regard to gender equality and non-discrimination.

The E-MINDFUL has been carried in consultation with The International Labour Organisation Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe (ILO DWT/CO Budapest), and in accordance with the guidelines[2] of the Evaluation Office at the ILO headquarters in Geneva. The E-MINDFUL review is part of the internal process of the progress monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

Scope The scope of this evaluation encompassed all activities and components implemented during the project's duration from June 1 2021 to December 31 2023 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia.
The main clients of this review are the technical specialists and management of the ILO DWT/CO Budapest, project staff, tripartite constituents, and the donor.

Mixed methods were applied in this evaluation to draw on multiple lines of evidence and multiple means of analysis to triangulate findings. Three main methods were used for collecting evaluation data: (a) document review, (b) 25 interviews with OSCE Project Manager; ILO regional and country office senior management and staff in Budapest and Bosnia Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia; E-MINDFUL constituents such as the high-level representatives of government in BIH, SRB, MKD: project partners such as the Multidisciplinary Creative Groups (NMCGs); etc., and (c) case studies/good practice examples.

Summary of the evaluation findings
The evaluation followed the OECD-DAC framework and principles for evaluation based on the following key criteria for the review: 1) relevance, 2) coherence of the interventions, 3) effectiveness in achieving outcomes, 4) efficiency, and 5) sustainability of the results.

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[1] In this report the terms "review" and "evaluation" are synonyms and are used interchangeably
[2] http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationpolicy/lang--en/index.htm

The overall objective of the E-MINDFUL project was to promote a social and economic environment where everyone, migrants and nationals, can feel welcome and belonging so as to encourage effective migration policy-making, particularly in the field of economic migration. In this regard, by researching those complex factors that shape public attitudes towards migrants, the E-MINDFUL project aimed at generating evidence-based guidance on how to communicate effectively about migration across multiple segments of society. In doing so, the project intended to offer relevant stakeholders a decision-making tool that will help orienting future, effective communication strategies on migration and migrants. The specific objectives include improving understanding of factors influencing audience perceptions about migration, testing lessons from stocktaking and awareness campaigns, assessing the early impact of innovative formats, and consolidating knowledge and tools. OSCE as the project lead partnered with the ILO and the Migration Policy Centre of the European Institute University to achieve set objectives and overarching goal.

Relevance: The E-MINDFUL project was conceptualised by the OSCE as a response to the migrant crisis of 2015/2016 affecting the European Union as well as the Western Balkans. In this context and overall, the project has been generally relevant. The strategic fit between the project design and the specific needs of the three countries involved and under the scrutiny of this evaluation (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia) was not explicitly established in the Description of the Action prepared by the OSCE but the lack of contextualization was compensated for by the development of contextual analyses at the national level during implementation. The Theory of change was not developed for this project.

Coherence: The review shows that the project was developed with a clear intervention logic, with articulated goals, outcomes, and outputs. However, while the initial project documents emphasised risk mitigation and monitoring for ongoing adjustments, the project lacked proactive risk mitigation and adaptability during implementation and a strategic response was largely absent.

Effectiveness: The evaluation of the E-MINDFUL project revealed several critical aspects that impacted its overall success. The neglect of the gender dimension considerations throughout all project phases is a notable shortcoming, affecting the comprehensiveness of the analyses and strategies. The main constraints, such as the poor OSCE coordination affected ILO in its work in the three designated countries for which ILO was in charge. Further, they encompassed insufficient methodological clarity, limited stakeholder engagement, all this hindering the project's ability to navigate challenges effectively. Despite these setbacks, the project demonstrated unique features in bringing diverse parties together for a communication experiment. The generation of interest from stakeholders suggests potential future demands for support and collaboration, even though explicit requests have not been made.

Efficiency: The E-MINDFUL project has encountered serious delays and an extension of the project timeline. Changes in the methodological approach by the OSCE misled national teams, causing them to stretch their capacities more than necessary. Despite encountered delays, the project delivered all planned outputs in the last six months of the project.

Sustainability The review of the project revealed weak ownership of national constituents over it. In this regard, the E-MINDFUL had limited impact on forming sustainable partnerships, policies and

stakeholders. At the same time, the contextual changes during the project's implementation highlighted the importance of the project's theme related to the migration, particularly to the labour migration.

Conclusions

Although the underlying design and approach to implementation led by the OSCE has not demonstrated a strong alignment and synergy with the ILO strategies and objectives, the project has laid the groundwork for the ILO's future role in addressing migration-related challenges in the WB region.

While the project design was primarily concerned with communication narrative around migration, the changing context affected the project: during the project implementation, the influx of migrants in Serbia, North Macedonia, and Bosnia Herzegovina significantly decreased compared to the numbers of 2015/2016, prompting these countries to reevaluate their migration policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, demographic changes, and labour shortages. The assessment of E-MINDFUL further pointed out to the complexity and challenges stemming from the multi-party projects design and implementation, as poor OSCE coordination impacted on the ILO as a project partner (as well as on the Migration Policy Centre (MPC) as the second partner), and on national partners and stakeholders, this all contributing to delays and ultimately resulting in weak national ownership.

Despite the setbacks, the project achieved its objectives. At the same time, changed scenery, as accounted in this review, gradually highlighted the importance of the ILO's expertise on labour migration. This presents a unique opportunity for the ILO to capitalise on heightened attention to migration issues and the increased relevance of the topic amid the challenges faced by both EU Member States and Western Balkan economies dealing with shortages in labour and skills. Actively engaging with stakeholders, raising awareness, and fostering a nuanced understanding of migration challenges will enable the ILO to play a pivotal role in the future shaping policies and making impact in the Western Balkan countries.

Lessons learned and emerging practices

Lesson 1: Lack of comprehensive risk mitigation and adaptability strategies hinders the Impact of the project The absence of comprehensive risk mitigation and adaptability strategies emerged as an important obstacle to better management and coordination, and project's impact. The OSCE, serving as the project coordinator, failed to incorporate comprehensive risk mitigation measures. This all contributed to the weak identification of challenges in real-time. The lesson learned from this experience is that future projects, especially those forged in partnership and addressing complex issues like migration, should prioritize the development of robust risk mitigation strategies. Proactive risk management is crucial to addressing unforeseen challenges promptly and avoiding substantial delays in project implementation.

Lesson 2: Weak delineation of partners' roles affects project's achievements In the evaluation of the E-MINDFUL project, a critical lesson emerged regarding the imperative need for clear delineation of roles and responsibilities among project partners, in this case between the OSCE and the ILO. The OSCE, acting as the project coordinator, was expected to collaborate with the ILO in a partnership capacity. However, the delineation of roles was ambiguous, and, as a consequence, the ILO found itself in a subordinated role. This subordination manifested in various ways, including unclear communication channels, poorly defined roles and responsibilities, and a lack of strategic insight. This lesson emphasises the vital importance of establishing clear lines of responsibility and authority among project partners from the outset. A lack of clarity in roles not only hampers effective decision-making but also contributes to delays, misunderstandings, and operational inefficiencies. Clear communication channels, well-defined roles, and strategic coordination are essential components of successful multi-organisational initiatives.

Emerging practices

Good practice 1: Communication campaigns: results of the survey - Migration Policy Centre, the European University Institute (EUI) The results of the survey carried out by the MPC in 2023 measured the influence of the devised communication prototypes on attitudes toward migration in all the countries. These diverse campaigns which were created as a part of the project, revealed key strategies for both successful and failed communication campaigns. The results of the survey directly help policymakers and communicators to tailor strategies to local contexts, address campaign-specific challenges, and remain cognisant of the dynamic socioeconomic factors influencing public attitudes.

Good practice 2: National Multi-Stakeholder Creative Groups - The establishment of the National Multi-Stakeholder Creative Groups (NMCGs) was forged in North Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina and their work supervised by ILO. In each country NMGCs consisted of up to five members with diverse backgrounds (sociology, philosophy, communication, journalism, TV, cinema, arts, etc. By combining academic rigor, artistic and technical expertise, NMGCs were tasked to develop awareness-raising and edutainment campaigns on migration, tailored to specific audience segments and grounded in practical considerations. The NMGCs played a vital role in achieving the project's goals.

Recommendations

This evaluation has witnessed the efforts made by ILO to achieve set objectives and results of the project. Given the nature of this evaluation, the following recommendations mainly focus on the medium to long term structural improvements and engagement of ILO in multi-party projects.

RECOMMENDATION 1. ENGAGE IN STRATEGIC PLANNING TO ACHIEVE HIGHER IMPACT IN THE MULTIPARTY PROJECTS
a. **Clarify roles and responsibilities early on**, with clear lines of management, reporting and communication in the projects with multi-party leadership to avoid confusion and ensure effective coordination. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly delineated to avoid information capture as it was the case with the E-MINDFUL and ensure effective management and coordination. Clear communication channels, transparent information dissemination, and a proactive risk mitigation strategy should be integral components of the management structure. Investing in strategic planning and organisation, with a top-down approach to problem-solving, will enhance the project's overall effectiveness.
b. Conduct risk mitigation planning: Develop a robust risk mitigation strategy that anticipates potential challenges during project implementation particularly in the multi-party projects. Identify alternative strategies to address these challenges and ensure flexibility in adapting to unforeseen circumstances. Regularly review and update risk assessments throughout the project lifecycle.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest	High	Low	Medium to long term

RECOMMENDATION 2. ADAPTATION PLANNING FOR IMPACTFUL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION
a. Carry out regular Monitoring and Evaluation (ME): To enhance the efficient use of resources, particularly time, funds, partnerships, knowledge, expertise, and tools, the project should implement a robust performance assessment and feedback system. Regular MEs will help identify areas for improvement and enable timely adjustments to strategies.
b. Integrate lessons learned: Systematically collect and document lessons learned throughout the project implementation. Use these insights to inform decision-making, improve the effectiveness of communication strategies, and guide future initiatives in the field of migration.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO country offices	High	Medium	**Medium** to long**term**

RECOMMENDATION 3. DESIGN AND CONCEPTUALISATION IN MULTI-PARTY PROJECTS FOR CONTEXTUAL ALIGNMENT

a. Ensure country-specific contextualisation and linkages to international frameworks in the multi-party projects: Align clearly the project activities with the national development priorities of the target countries, if they exist. Establish clear linkages between the project design and international frameworks such as the ILO Strategic Framework, the UN Cooperation Frameworks, and national efforts towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. Explicitly integrate relevant components from these frameworks into the project's intervention logic, goals, outcomes, and activities.

b. Develop a Theory of Change: Create/contribute to detailed Theory of Change for the project to provide a roadmap that clearly outlines the causal pathways from inputs to desired outcomes. This should include a step-by-step explanation of how project activities contribute to achieving the stated objectives and addressing the needs of the constituents.

c. Incorporate gender dimensions: Integrate a gender perspective into the project activities to address gender-specific challenges related to migration. Gender and anti-discrimination shall be reflected in the Theory of change, while the Checklist for Gender Mainstreaming in Project and Programmes can be a useful guide in determining access to resources, roles, and responsibilities, constraints, and priorities.

RECOMMENDATION 4. POLICY AND SOCIAL IMPACT

a. Enhance ILO (watchdog) role to labour migration - The ILO together with social partners should work to implement a whole-of-government understanding of the obligations under the applicable Conventions and support policies related to migration, that are rights-based and intersectional. ILO's watchdog role in safeguarding international labour standards particularly the ones related to migration shall be highlighted. For example, the E-MINDFUL exposed a lack of understanding of applicable international labour standards in the field of labour migration, pointing to the gap that ILO shall fill in. To achieve this, international labour standards shall be included in project design and implementation plans.

b. Strengthen the capacity of the tripartite constituents to enhance their internal planning processes and adapt their services to contribute to the development of effective national policies and actions related to labour migration. Social partners shall be supported to formulate development strategies with the aim of setting the vision, goals and theory of change for their organisations so to foster their engagement in migration related actions in the field of labour and economic development.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest ILO country offices	High	Medim	Medium to long term

Implementing these recommendations will contribute to the project's alignment with national and international frameworks, enhance contextual relevance, and improve its overall effectiveness in addressing the needs of the constituents and achieving the stated objectives. Regular review and adaptation will be crucial to ensuring the project's success in the dynamic context of migration and related challenges.

1. Project Background

In 2015 the EU experienced an unprecedented influx of refugees and migrants. More than 1 million people arrived in the European Union, most of them fleeing from war and terror in Syria and other countries (EU, 2017). These developments resulted in the portrayal of migration as a security threat, urging the EU to adopt the European Agenda on Migration (COM 2105(240). However, similar narratives had increasingly dominated global public discourse even prior to the so-called "migration crisis" of 2015. These misguided and stereotyped accounts neglected the intricate complexity of the migration phenomenon, making noticeable effects on policymaking and challenging every migration management approach that acknowledged the positive contributions of migrants in both home and host countries. Hostile attitudes have hindered the socioeconomic inclusion of migrants, leading to a progressive reduction in legal migration channels. This reduction, in turn, has had significant repercussions on the economies of both countries of origin, with decreased remittances, and countries of destination, grappling with labour shortages, the growth of the informal economy, and the exploitation of migrants (EU, 2017). The lockdown measures implemented due to COVID-19, while essential for saving lives, have introduced additional uncertainties regarding the role and perception of migrants in our societies. The perception of the "foreign virus" has further complicated the situation for migrants, yet there has also been a newfound appreciation for the vital role of migrant workers, particularly in essential sectors like public health, elderly care, and agriculture, casting a positive light on their contributions to host societies (Fouskas at al., 2022)[3]

Aware of the divisive potential of an increasing polarized public discourse on migration, the E-MINDFUL project offered the opportunity to leverage the role and respective mandates of the OSCE, a regional security organisation with a multi-dimensional mandate on migration, and the ILO, a specialized UN agency, custodian of the key international conventions on labour migration, in the framework of the EU Agenda on Migration. The aim has been to provide the European Commission, the OSCE and the ILO constituents with an evidence-based and action-oriented guidance, including innovative instruments that can orient future communications' efforts on migration and migrants.

The overall objective of this scientific based project was to promote a social and economic environment where everyone, migrants and nationals, can feel welcome and belonging so as to encourage effective migration policy-making, particularly in the field of economic migration. The project has involved countries in the EU and in the Western Balkans that are currently facing relevant challenges related to the presence of migrants: Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Italy, North Macedonia and Serbia.

Main responsibility for coordination and management of the E-MINDFUL project rested with OSCE as the project contractor. The OSCE was directly in charge of the implementation of activities carried out at national level in Austria, Germany and Italy. The OSCE supervised the implementation of activities of the co-Applicants, ILO and the Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration (OPAM) at the Migration

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[3] Theodoros, George Koulierakis, Fotini-Maria Mine, Athanasios Theofilopoulos, Sofia Konstantopoulou, Fabiola Ortega-de-Mora, Dimitrios Georgiadis, and Georgia Pantazi. 2022. "Racial and Ethnic Inequalities, Health Disparities and Racism in Times of COVID-19 Pandemic Populism in the EU: Unveiling Anti-Migrant Attitudes, Precarious Living Conditions and Barriers to Integration in Greece" *Societies* 12, no. 6: 189. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc12060189

Policy Centre, European University, and was fully responsible for reporting to the donors. ILO was responsible for the implementation of project activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia.

The project was funded by the OSCE with a budget of EUR 748,745.28.

2. Evaluation Background

The ILO project component under the overall E-MINDFULL action was subject to the final internal evaluation, which took place from November 5, 2023 to December 31, 2023. The aim was to identify the achievements, to ascertain if the project was coherent with the ILO's strategic objectives; relevant and useful to the key beneficiaries, and conducted efficiently according to ILO standards and the project document.

According to the Terms of Reference (TOR, attached as Annex 1) this evaluation is expected to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of of the E-MINDFUL action in three countries: Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, and North Macedonia for which ILO was responsible.

Scope of the final evaluation

The scope of this evaluation encompassed all activities and components implemented during the project's duration from 1 June 2021 to 31 December 2023 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Serbia.
In line with ILO evaluation policy, the evaluation integrated gender equality, disability inclusion and other non-discrimination issues as cross-cutting concerns throughout its methodology and all deliverables.

Main clients
The main clients of this analysis are the technical specialists and management of the ILO DWT/CO Budapest, project staff, tripartite constituents, and the donor.

3. Evaluation criteria and questions
In line with the evaluation framework and protocol produced by the ILO Evaluation Office, the final evaluation focuses on the following criteria: 1) relevance, 2) coherence of the interventions, 3) effectiveness in achieving outcomes, 4) efficiency, and 5) sustainability of the results. Also, the evaluation considered additional cross-cutting criteria – gender equality and non-discrimination. In this context, the review adhered to the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation[4].

The review takes both a summative as well as formative approach. It provides insights into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the E-MINDFUL project (summative). It is also

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[4] **http://www.uneval.org/document/download/1294**

forward looking by providing lessons learned and emerging good practices within the context of the potential project with similar thematic focus (formative).

The assessment sought answers to the following questions:

Relevance & Strategic Fit	1. To what extent were the project's objectives and approach relevant to the constituents' needs and context of targeted countries, as well as for national policy frameworks; the ILO' strategic framework, the UN Cooperation Frameworks, and the national endeavours to achieve the 2030 Agenda? 2. Were the project activities and outputs/tools relevant to the needs of the constituents and the stated objectives? 3. Was there a strategic fit between the project design and the direct beneficiaries' needs?
Coherence	1. Was intervention logic coherent and realistic to achieve the planned outcomes? Were the definition of goal, outcomes and outputs clearly articulated? Did the activities support the achievement of the set project objectives (strategies)? 2. How did the project promote international labour standards? Was it effective in assisting the country in translating such standards into national policies, programmes and results? 3. Have potential risks to the project's roll out been assessed and alternative strategies put forward? How well the project adapted during the implementation? 4. Do the problems/needs that gave rise to the project still exist, have they changed or are there new needs that should be addressed?
Effectiveness	1. To what extent the project's activities have considered and contributed to the advancement of the ILO's cross-cutting policy drivers (CCPDs)? 2. What are the main constraints experienced by the project (both in terms of methodology and context)? 3. To what extent have the project objectives been achieved? What were the results achieved? 4. What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement? 5. Were there any obstacles, barriers and/or successes, innovations? Were there any unintended results? 6. How and how well stakeholders have been involved in the implementation? 7. Were there any resulting changes in the stakeholders' capacities? 8. Was there any demand for additional support created by the project? How did that influence/strengthen the outcomes?
Efficiency & Management Arrangements	1. Have resources available (time, funds, partnerships, knowledge, expertise, and tools) been used efficiently? 2. Could the activities and outputs be delivered with fewer resources without reducing their quality and quantity? 3. What measures have been taken during the planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used? 4. Has the existing management structure and technical capacity been sufficient and adequate? 5. Has the project been receiving adequate political, technical and administrative support from the ILO and its national partners? If not, why? How that could be improved?
Sustainability and impact potential	1. What is the likelihood of sustainability of the outcomes? Are the results achieved likely to continue after the completion of the project, as well as to produce longer term effects? 2. Is the project supported by local institutions? Do these institutions demonstrate leadership commitment and technical capacity to continue to

	work with the project or replicate it after the completion of the project (capacity of people and institutions, laws, policies)? 3. What action might be needed to bolster the longer term effects?
Lessons Learned and Good Practices	1. What are the major lessons learned through the project implementation? 2. Are there good practices to be replicated? 3. What were the key factors of success?
Recommendations and next steps	1. What are the next steps to be undertaken? What is the best way to proceed? What would be the main issues to tackle? 2. Which actors and in which way should be engaged? 3. What action might be needed to bolster the longer-term effects and to come to further policy measures generating a positive change?

In line with ILO evaluation policy, the evaluation will integrate gender equality, disability inclusion and other non-discrimination issues as cross-cutting concerns throughout its methodology and all deliverables.

4. Evaluation methodology

a. Data collection methods

The methodology was based on the ILO's evaluation policy and procedures, which adhere to international standards and best practices articulated in the OECD/DAC Principles and the Norms and Standards for Evaluation.[5] The evaluation was participatory. It paid specific attention to responding to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, gender equality responsiveness and contribution of the ILO to the relevant targets set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The review used primary and secondary data sources to ascertain the plausibility of causal relationships between the project's achievements and respective outcomes.   Mixed methods were applied to draw on multiple lines of evidence and multiple means of analysis to triangulate findings. Three main methods were used for collecting evaluation data: (a) document review, (b) interviews, (c) case studies/good practice examples. Data were assessed using primarily a qualitative approach. The interviews were undertaken both remotely and in person.

Document review Relevant policy, strategy, programme and project documents were reviewed as well as the tools, policy guides and research papers prepared to support the project partners. In addition, progress reports and other mechanisms that allow to monitor the advancement and status of the ILO assistance to in accordance with the ILO Programming Framework were considered. The list is presented in Annex 3.

Interviews The interviews were held from November 21st throughout December 2023 with 25 interviewees (46 per cent female) from the contracting authority, constituents and their staff, ILO senior management and staff in North Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina and Budapest Regional Office, and project partners:

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[5] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), Network on Development Evaluation, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, 2019, available at: https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf

1. ILO regional and country office senior management staff in Budapest, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and North Macedonia, and ILO project officers engaged in the E-MINDFUL project in North Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina
2. Lead partner: OSCE Project Manager of the E-MINDFUL project
3. Constituents: high-level representatives of government (namely, the government BIH: Council of Ministers, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; SRB: Ministry of foreign affairs and Commission for refugees and migration)
4. Project partners such as the National Multidisciplinary Creative Groups from Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia composed of members from university (such as the faculties of philosophy, communication, digital marketing, journalism/TV, cinema and arts, etc.) and a national audio-video production company; and the Migration Policy Centre, European University from Italy.

Only interview could not be organized with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia due to the tight schedule of the responsible staff. See Annex 2: List of Key Informants/ Interviewees

Good practice examples were identified during the data collection phase, pointing to "topical" case studies. They were explored to identify positive response in terms of the E-MINDFUL implementation and factors underpinning the success. One focuses on the survey results related to the communication prototypes, testing their effectiveness (the Randomized Control Trial carried out by the Migration Policy Centre while the other assesses the work of the National Multi-Disciplinary Creative Groups, highlighting the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to the success of projects like this one.

b. *Data limitations*

The evaluation was carried out from the beginning of November until the end of December 2023. The interviews started in late November and were organized until the end of December. Busy schedules of all parties caused by the programme and projects closures at the end of the year, Christmas and new year holiday season impacted on the pace of interviews. Despite the difficulties, majority of them were completed as planned. As already mentioned, one interview was curtailed due to the inaccessibility of the interviewee. The breadth of topics, policy areas, programmes and services covered by the evaluation meant that not all could be covered in equal depth.

c. *Ethical considerations*

The evaluation followed the guidelines presented in the OECD DAC ethical considerations for development evaluations[6] and United Nations Ethical Guidelines[7], paying particular attention to the principles of impartiality, credibility, and accountability. Ethical considerations were especially in focus in the course of interviewing. Key Informants and respecting their personal rights. The review respected informants' right to provide information in confidence and also ensured that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Original data, including interview notes from interviews, are retained in confidential files until completion of the evaluation.

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[6] https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf
[7] United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation- UNEGFN/CoC , 2008.

5. Findings by evaluation criteria

This section presents the findings of the review against the set criteria and related questions. Summary of results and achievements are briefly presented per each of the outcomes against set criteria.

1. RELEVANCE

1.1 Relevance of the project's objectives and approach to the constituents' needs and context of targeted countries, as well as for national policy frameworks; the ILO' strategic framework, the UN Cooperation Frameworks, and the national endeavours to achieve the 2030 Agenda

The E-MINDFUL project was conceptualised by the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna in light consultations with the ILO and the Migration Policy Centre of the European University. The project was approved for funding in 2019 by the European Commission. The project was developed as a response to the migrant crisis of 2015/2016 and was set to contribute to the overall objective of the EU 2017 Asylum Migration Integration Fund (AMIF) programme, an initiative that focuses on addressing challenges related to asylum, migration, and integration within the European Union. The AMIF allocates funding to support various activities aimed at managing migration flows, ensuring the fair treatment of asylum seekers, and promoting the integration of migrants into host societies. One specific priority of the 2017 AMIF programme is outlined as "Raising awareness on migrants' contribution to EU/hosting societies." This priority underscores the importance of fostering understanding and appreciation for the positive impact that migrants can have on both the European Union and the societies hosting them. In this context, E-MINDFUL was set to address this particular priority with the aim to counter negative perceptions and stereotypes surrounding migration by highlighting the valuable contributions that migrants make to their host communities and the broader society (Description of the Action, Contribution Agreement AMIF-2019-AG-IBA-OSCE).

The project therefore involved countries in the EU and in the Western Balkans that have been facing relevant challenges related to the increasing presence of migrants: Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Italy, North Macedonia and Serbia. In the project design they were generally described as countries with individuals arriving from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, along the Eastern Mediterranean migration route. They were also identified as entities that contribute to outbound migration and mobility of their own citizens, leading to the formation of significant diasporas in European Union Member States and other locations. It was further noted that despite variations in their levels of development and connectivity, the six economies exhibited structural labour shortages in specific sectors. These shortages could be, according to the Description of the Action, addressed by welcoming migrant labour, given shared demographic trends such as declining population and other factors like high reservation wages.

Besides these general accounts, and the depiction of the six countries involved in the project as "paradigmatic", the selection criteria were not outlined nor additional highlights or features concerning the needs and context of the targeted countries were provided in the analysed documents. For instance, basic facts about the selected countries and relevant information about experiences with migration (inbound/outbound), policy framework related to migration, the relative and absolute numbers of

migrants in these societies, dominant discourse in reporting about migration and migrants, their socio-economic status, etc. were not discussed.

Similarly, there was no reference to the ILO Strategic Framework, the UN Cooperation Framework, or the national efforts aimed at achieving the 2030 Agenda. At the time of the project formulation, national development priorities were not taken into account.

From the perspective of the three target countries, the E-MINDFUL project did not mention linkages with the relevant UN documents, however the issue of migration has been broadly linked to the strategic priorities set out in the national United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks:
 a) United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks for Bosnia and Herzegovina (2021-2025) under the Development Pathway Society of equal opportunities and the Outcome 4 (People centred governance and rule of law), specifically related to strengthening migration management and asylum system needs to adequately respond to increased migrant and refugee flows which began in 2018; b) in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks for North Macedonia (2021-2025), under the Outcome 4 (Good governance) in relation to the human rights treaties' implementation related to the rights of specific vulnerable groups – Roma, refugees, migrants, stateless and persons with disabilities;
c) the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks for Serbia (2021-2025) under the Outcome 1.3 (Equitable economic and employment opportunities are promoted through innovation) with focus on development of the targeted employment programmes of the more vulnerable including asylum-seekers, refugees, migrants, and internally displaced persons) to support them in becoming active and contributing members of society; the Outcome 2.2 (Skills, education and capabilities are enhanced to ensure equitable opportunities for all) aimed at narrowing the employment gap through improved labour market analysis and forecasting to formulate efficient active labour market measures for women, youth and the vulnerable population, including refugees; the Outcome 2.3 (Mobility and demographic transition become vectors for positive change and prosperity for all people). Under this outcome, future-fit skills, knowledge and competencies and related policies are seen as key parameters for supporting asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants to actively participate in local economic life, having in turn positive impact on economic development. Lastly, under the Outcome Outcome 3.1 (All people, especially the more vulnerable, benefit from the realisation of human rights, gender equality, social cohesion, and enhanced rule of law in line with international commitments) the migration was addressed through the strengthening of national institutions in specific areas of home affairs to root (among other), migrant and refugee smuggling; and in achieving a fair and efficient asylum system, and protection-sensitive migration governance systems with the full respect of human rights.

The issues of migration, including the labour migration, were not part of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes of North Macedonia 2019-2022, 2023-2025 and Serbia 2019-2022. Bosnia Herzegovina did not have DWCP during the times of the E-MINDFUL implementation.

1.2 Strategic fit between the project design and the direct beneficiaries' needs

Based on the revised documents, the strategic alignment between the project design and the specific needs of the direct beneficiaries was not clearly established in the Description of the Action (Contribution Agreement AMIF-2019-AG-IBA-OSCE). Understanding the context of these three countries (BiH, NM, SRB) would typically require referencing the official project documents, reports, or relevant publications associated with the initiative. The project document eventually envisioned a contextual analysis for each country in the early phase of the project implementation, aiming to provide a more comprehensive overview of the specific challenges, policy contexts, and socio-economic conditions in Serbia, North Macedonia and Bosnia Herzegovina. In the process of developing the project idea, OSCE, in collaboration with ILO National Coordinators, visited relevant ministries in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and North Macedonia to ensure support for implementation, which they consequently received. The needs of the beneficiaries were later addressed in the first phase of the project implementation. These contextual analyses at the country level were conducted by the National Multi-Stakeholder Groups. They collected data on legal regulations, strategic frameworks in Serbia, North Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and identified prevailing narratives about migrants and migrations. The analyses served for a better understanding of the needs in targeted economies, and as a basis for shaping communication prototypes.

1.3 Relevance of the project activities and outputs/tools to the needs of the constituents and the stated objectives

The Description of the Action and project documents outlines the overall objective and specific objectives of the E-MINDFUL project, emphasizing the goal of promoting a welcoming and inclusive social and economic environment for both migrants and nationals. The specific objectives include improving understanding of factors influencing audience perceptions about migration, testing lessons from stocktaking and awareness campaigns, assessing the early impact of innovative formats, and consolidating knowledge and tools, as presented in the Box 1, bellow.

BOX 1: E-MINDFUL INTERVENTION LOGIC - SUMMARY

The overall objective of the E-MINDFUL project was to promote a social and economic environment where everyone, migrants and nationals, can feel welcome and belonging so as to encourage effective migration policy-making, particularly in the field of economic migration. In this regard, by researching those complex factors that shape public attitudes towards migrants, the E-MINDFUL project aimed at generating evidence-based guidance on how to communicate effectively about migration across multiple segments of society. In doing so, the project wishes to offer relevant stakeholders a decision-making tool that will help orienting future, effective communication strategies on migration and migrants.

Specific objectives (expected outcomes) entailed: 1. Improve the understanding of key factors that influence audiences' perceptions and reactions to messages related to migration and migrants according to selected ongoing and past communication endeavours promoting a balanced, fact-based and empathic discourse about migration and migrants; 2. Test lessons learned from the stocktaking on audiences targeted with the information/awareness-raising campaigns in the six countries involved in the project; 3. Assess the early impact of innovative awareness-raising/edutainment formats piloted in the framework of the project; 4. Consolidate the knowledge, tools and lessons learned generated in the framework of the project

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> **The project is expected to achieve the following results**: 1. A systematized and reliable baseline analysis on key factors that influence audiences' perceptions and reactions to messages related to migration and migrants; 2. A package of tested tailored campaign prototypes available for future communication interventions by multiple stakeholders, whether in the political, economic, and social sphere; 3. A set of lessons learned from pilot, innovative awareness-raising/edutainment formats collected and systematized for further access and use; 4. A comprehensive, action-oriented set of guidelines and tools grounded on the project's results and lessons learned (Description of the Action, Contribution Agreement AMIF-2019-AG-IBA-OSCE)

In terms of relevance to constituents' needs and stated objectives, the project activities and outputs/tools appear broadly aligned given the universality of the project's objectives: they address key aspects of communication about migration, aiming to understand audience perceptions, test campaign effectiveness, and provide guidelines and tools. The expected results, such as a baseline analysis, edutainment prototypes, lessons learned, and comprehensive guidelines, reflect a targeted approach to achieve the project's overarching goal. However, as the project description lacked contextualization, all the burden was placed on achieving these results during the project implementation.

2. COHERENCE

2.1 Coherence of the intervention logic

The intervention logic, often referred to as the logical framework or logframe, provides a clear and concise framework to articulate the relationship between a project's activities, outputs, outcomes, and overall goal By explicitly defining the logical connections between activities, outputs, and outcomes, in the context of the overall objective which represents the ultimate and broader purpose of the project, stating the long-term impact it aims to achieve, the intervention logic helps ensure that resources are efficiently allocated, objectives are measurable, and the overall goal is achievable.

As presented in the BOX 1 (above), the definition of the overall and specific objectives, outcomes and outputs were articulated in a detailed fashion, while planned activities supported the achievement of the set project objectives (strategies). Although the Theory of Change was not prepared for this project, it can be briefly reconstructed as presented below:

1. **Baseline analysis (stocktaking):** The project aims to provide a systematized baseline analysis of key factors influencing perceptions of migration. This aligns with addressing the need for a comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape attitudes towards migration in the targeted countries.
2. **Impact on stakeholders:** The project intends to impact relevant stakeholders at the EU and national levels. The provision of findings, outcomes, and tools can serve as a compass for communication endeavours on migration.
3. **Educational entities involvement:** By involving educational entities dealing with communication, such as universities and schools of communication/journalism/cinema/arts, the project aims to

raise awareness among educators and different audiences on one side, and contribute to building a new generation of communicators specialised in migration.

4. **Impact on audiences:** The innovative info/edutainment campaigns and awareness-raising activities at the national level are designed to influence the perceptions of various audiences about migration. This relates to understanding and shaping public perceptions in the targeted countries.

5. **Dissemination of findings:** The project aims to disseminate findings and tools beyond the project cycle.

The overall project process revolving around stocktaking and prototyping was intended for capitalisation in the project's aftermath. The project outputs such as the toolkit, publication and a set of distilled key findings and guidelines, were planned to provide a compass and related instruments to steer and assess future communication strategies on migration and migrants in the selected countries. Therefore, it can be concluded that the the intervention logic was coherent, ensuring at the same time the clarity of the definitions of goal, outcomes, and outputs based on the information available.

2.2 Projects' promotion of the international labour standards - assisting the country in translating such standards into national policies, programmes and results
The E-MINDFUL was implemented during two ILO's Biennium budget cycles (2020-2021, and 2022-2023) and contributed to the ILO Policy Outcome 7 (Promoting workplace compliance through labour inspection) under which Labour migration is placed. However, this link is not explicitly mentioned in the project document. The Description of the Action only briefly stated that the project will leverage the synergies between the "European Agenda on Migration" and the OSCE and ILO mandates – the ILO Migration for Employment Convention (1949), the Migrant Workers Convention (1975), the Domestic Workers Convention (2011). However, there was no linkage established to the intervention logic, goals, outcomes, outputs, and activities of the project.

According to the revised documents and based on the interviews with the stakeholders and NMCGc, the project did not envisage promoting international labour standards, and therefore could not contribute to assisting the targeted three countries (North Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia Herzegovina) in translating these standards into national policies, programs, and tangible results.

The lack of emphasis and impact on promoting and implementing international labour standards raises concerns about the project's alignment with these crucial benchmarks and their integration into the national context.

As mentioned earlier, the ILO standards related to migration, were not part of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) of North Macedonia 2019-2022, 2023-2025 and Serbia 2019-2022. Bosnia Herzegovina did not have DWCP during the times of the E-MINDFUL implementation.

2.3 Assessment of the potential risks for the project's roll out and creation of alternative strategies including the adaptation of the project during the implementation

As per the accounts from the interviews and the insights into the available documents, the OSCE did not develop risk mitigation measures to address challenges during the project implementation although the Description of the Action's put strong emphasis on Monitoring: "Monitoring will be carried out throughout the Action's implementation and will provide the project management with relevant feedback during the overall process of implementation so to adjust approaches and methods, when appropriate and necessary, in order to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of the Action. As part of its role of Project management the OSCE will carry out constant monitoring of project progress". Envisaged Mid-term Self-evaluation did not take place. At the same time, OSCE did not delegate the monitoring activities to its partner ILO for the three countries. The implementation of the project was subsequently delayed as pointed out in the ILO Progress Reports and unanimously reported by all the interviewed actors. The bottom-up approach was used to adapt to the implementation challenges while strategic response and guidance was by and large missing.

2.4 Do the problems/needs that gave rise to the project still exist, have they changed or are there new needs that should be addressed

The conception of the project occurred in a context where the overall migration situation in the three countries involved (Serbia, North Macedonia, and Bosnia Herzegovina) was different. During the project implementation, the influx of migrants and refugees significantly decreased in these 3 economies. The three countries are usually considered as transit countries by the migrant population and not the end destination. At the same time, the migration and asylum-seeking policies in respective countries are considered hostile towards these populations (UNHCR 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019) However, in light of subsequent developments such as the COVID-19 pandemic, accelerated demographic changes, and emerging labour shortages, these countries have more recently initiated a re-evaluation of their migration policies. This reassessment is particularly focused on aspects related to labour and economic development. The evolving circumstances, including the challenges posed by the pandemic and shifting demographic dynamics, have prompted a reconsideration of how these countries approach and address migration within the realms of labour and economic strategies. At the same time, the influx of migrants has been significantly reduced almost to negligible numbers.

3. EFFECTIVENESS

3.1. The extent the project's activities have considered and contributed to the advancement of the ILO's cross-cutting policy drivers (CCPDs)

Gender dimension and non-discrimination considerations were omitted in all phases of the project: in selecting countries, in providing guidelines to the stocktaking exercise in national contexts, and in guiding the creation of edutainment prototypes. The gender aspects of migration, specifics and challenges and perceptions female and male migrants were not taken into account in the presented project document/description of the action nor there was a plan to address them later in the process of the project implementation. None of the contextual analyses prepared for each country (SRB, BIH, MKD) differentiated between the men and women when discussing the findings.

Similar practice occurred in the context of the stock-tacking exercise which aimed to assess strengths and weaknesses of a selected number of communication strategies dealing with migration and migrants.
The primary function of the stock-taking exercise was to provide a critical baseline and inform the second phase of the project, in which national teams formed by academic experts, media and content creators were planned to collaborate towards the production of edutainment products in a way that raise the awareness of migration's contribution to hosting societies. The task was assigned by the OSCE to a Multidisciplinary Working Group (MWGs) whose members' backgrounds include sociology, semiotics, dramaturgy/storytelling, cultural anthropology and behavioural marketing. Between June and December 2021, the MWG analysed a series of communication initiatives.[8]   None of them has taken gender dimensions into account.

However, gender dimension was addressed in relation to the gender dynamics of the anti-migration sentiment in the report prepared by Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration at the Migration Policy Centre, European University. The report "What works and what does not when promoting a balanced narrative about migration? Experimental evidence from the E-MINDFUL project" presented the evidence about the effectiveness of the edutainment materials (videos) produces in 3 countries on perceptions and attitudes of general public. The evidence was based on two rounds of surveys in all participating countries – the first round took place between 15 August 2023 and 19 September 2023, and the second round took place between 28 September 2023 and 25 October 2023. The sample was representative of the national population for the main socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, and region of residence). The report concluded that gender seems not to play a role in determining attitudes towards migration un either the Western European countries or the Western Balkan countries.

Given the context, it is not a surprise that the follow up edutainment prototypes created in the national contexts completely overlooked gender aspect of migration. After changes in the project coordination in OSCE, this deficiency was noticed, and in the last 6 months of project implementation (June – December 2023), there was an attempt to promote a gender perspective in communicating about migrations. One such initiative resulted in the creation of the expert text "Telling migration from a gender perspective: a critical reflection (Berta Güell and Sònia Parella)," which was published on the project's website and shared through social networks.

3.2 Main constraints experienced by the project (both in terms of methodology and context)
The main constraints experienced by the project in the terms of methodology are as follows:
Insufficient methodological clarity: The project faced challenges due to unclear methodologies in certain aspects, particularly in outlining the selection criteria for countries and the lack of a detailed Theory of

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[8] The considered communication initiatives include:
☐ Seven projects implemented under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) 2017 AG INTE 01, funded by Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) of the European Commission;
☐ A pool of communication initiatives, selected by the Multidisciplinary working group (MWG), which include awareness-raising campaigns, commercials, TV series and infotainments.

Change. Yet, as noted earlier, buy-in was secured by the governments of the three selected countries in the process of the project's conceptualisation by the OSCE.

Inadequate contextual analysis: The project design lacked a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic and political context of the targeted countries, especially regarding migration trends, policy frameworks, and public attitudes. This omission impeded the development of a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities that were intended to serve as the baseline and guiding idea. The contextual analyses conducted in the initial phase of the project substituted this deficiency.

Lack of stakeholder engagement: The involvement of key stakeholders in the project implementation was limited. This impeded the project's capacity to gather diverse perspectives and may have affected the relevance of its strategies to the actual needs and dynamics of the target countries. The government entities in SRB, MKD, and BIH were informed about the project implementation in brief meetings serving to endorse the project realization in these countries. The OSCE led meetings were organized with the ministries of foreign affairs with the purpose to get the official approval to carry out the E-MINDFUL. The project also established the function of Focal Points in all three countries whose goal was to establish communication with all relevant stakeholders in the field of migration. However, as demonstrated later, this well-thought-out idea lacked implementation strength, as the project activities were delayed, and there were no achievements to showcase for quite some time.

In terms of contextual considerations, the main ones relate to the ones already mentioned in the sections about Relevance and Coherency:

Failure to align with UN development priorities: The project did not sufficiently align with the national development priorities of the target countries, as evidenced by the absence of consideration for the ILO Strategic Framework, the UN Cooperation Frameworks, and the countries' efforts toward the 2030 Agenda.

Risk mitigation and adaptability gap: The absence of a proactive approach to risk mitigation and adaptability during the implementation phase resulted in substantial delays and a reliance on a bottom-up approach for problem-solving. A lack of strategic response and guidance was notable.

Shift in migration patterns: The project faced challenges due to a significant decrease in the influx of migrants and refugees during its implementation. This shift in migration patterns, along with changing policy considerations influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, posed unforeseen challenges to the project's original objectives.

3.3 The extent of the achievement of project objectives and results

The project activities started with substantial delay, most of them actually being completed in the last 6 months of the project, which was extended from June 2023 to December 2023. Within the project, two additional activities were implemented that were not initially planned: the conference "Navigating Labour Shortages in the Western Balkans" was held in Budapest on 12 December 2023, and "It's About Work: Bringing back the interaction of migration, the labour market and economic development in the public discourse" was organized in Vienna on 14 December 2023. Both events were attended by dozens of participants, including social partners, government institutions, and other relevant groups. These

additional activities were carried out to draw attention to the issue of labour migration, which was not sufficiently represented during the implementation, despite continuous ILO focus on this topic.

3.4 The reasons for the achievement or non-achievement and obstacles, barriers and/or successes, innovations and unintended results

Although the E-MINDFUL objectives, outputs and activities were clearly identified in the design of the project, the review showed that the obstacles towards their achievement and promotion was reflected in the absence of joint efforts. In the process of evaluation, the members of the National Multidisciplinary Creative Groups in all three countries continuously highlighted the lack of coordination and lack of guidance by the OSCE with ILO as the key issues that hampered the project implementation.

NMCGs were the key project partners tasked to provide analysis of the migration background in the respective countries but also to influence creation of edutainment products. The NMCGs were created as the pool of experts/scholars from university faculties of semiotics, art, marketing, schools of journalism/TV/radio and social media, in combination with the media production companies. These experts with diverse backgrounds were expected to inform the development of new approaches and innovative communication models and edutainment formats that will be further assessed in order to identify and analyse key factors that shift public attitudes on migrants. In this way, the project was designed to ensure inclusive, evidence-based methodology and co-creation processes. While on one side in all the countries synergies were created among these ad-hoc created groups, their achievements were stalled by the weak management. According to the interview accounts, the decision-making processes were flawed, inconsistent, or lack strategic insight. For example, all three NMCGs pointed out that the communication about project goals and timeline was slow and often changing, the guidance related to creation of edutainment products misleading, taking time and absorbing limited human resources of the NMCGs. Furthermore, communication channels were unclear, information was not effectively disseminated, and there was a lack of transparency. The project activities were delayed without any explanation.

They also pointed to the OSCE's weak management which was manifested in a lack of coherent project plans, poorly defined roles and responsibilities, and inadequate resource allocation. For instance, as highlighted by the interviewees, the roles of OSCE and ILO were not clearly delineated. In the views of the NMCGs in Serbia, North Macedonia and Bosnia Herzegovina ILO was expected to coordinate activities in these three countries but it soon became clear that all the information relevant to the project implementation was captured by the OSCE. This left ILO in the back seat, disabling its management and coordination role. According to the testimonies ILO was sidelined by the OSCE. Last but not the least, the project suffered from the absence of methodological guidance. Guidelines were unclear and led to a lack of direction. Without a clear roadmap, teams faced challenges in aligning their efforts with the intended outcomes, contributing to deviations from the project plan. All this led to misunderstandings, decreased morale, and operational inefficiencies. This in the end also resulted in a lack of ownership by ILO over the project. According to the accounts, OSCE interpreted the lack of methodology as an intentionally open communication channel meant to encourage thinking outside the box potentially resulting in something new and unprecedented. In this search for innovation, OSCE management frequently changed its

approach. The ILO team could only follow these changes as they were not the conceptual creators of the creative process.

On a positive note, all the parties pointed to the unique features of the E-MINDFUL which aimed to bring various parties together in this communication experiment. E-MINDFUL success was in this regard reflected in the production of edutainment content at the output level. As unanimously highlighted, with more effective management and methodological guidance, the quality of the edutainment products would have been significantly higher.

3.5 How and how well stakeholders have been involved in the implementation?
The project plan was to provide a systematized and reliable baseline analysis of key factors that influence audiences' perceptions and reactions to messages related to migration and migrants together with tools and guidelines that will help addressing challenges related to communicating migration in an effective and balanced way.

The findings and outcomes of the project were expected to generate the following impact: 1. On relevant stakeholders at EU and national level: the overall set of findings/outcomes/products should have provided a relevant compass to understand, orient and assess communication endeavours on migration while the innovative info/awareness-raising prototypes should have offered the chance to be possibly further serialized and distributed; 2. On the project partners: by involving educational entities dealing with communication –universities as well as schools of communication/journalism/cinema/arts - the project intended to raise the awareness of a new generation of communicators about the complexities of contemporary migration and challenges in communicating migration and migrants in a balanced and fact-based way; 3. On the audiences targeted by the innovative info/edutainment campaigns and other awareness-raising/information activities at national level.

To steer the stakeholder's engagement, the National Focal Points (NFPs) were established at the beginning of the project by the OSCE. They were tasked to involve various actors such as government institutions in charge of migration policymaking, mainstream media outlets, academia, practitioners, and educational entities in order to strengthen the ownership of the project outcomes. However, due to the substantial delays in the project implementation planned engagement of stakeholders did not occur. Also, NFPs engagement was concluded in December 2022, one year before the project completion. The lack of stakeholder engagement impeded the project's capacity to gather diverse perspectives, affecting the relevance of its strategies to the actual needs and dynamics of the target countries.

3.6 Were there any resulting changes in the stakeholders' capacities
As explained above, none of the initially targeted stakeholders were included in the project implementation but were informed about the progress and key findings during the project implementation. However, both OSCE and ILO plan to disseminate the project's findings and tools beyond the project cycle, when possible and appropriate, throughout the respective institutional activities. OSCE and ILO will also explore ways to use the project's results to offer policy recommendations on migration, in line with their respective mandates and roles. The intended plan involves dissemination of the publication, distilled key findings, and guidelines, offering a relevant compass and crucial instruments for steering and assessing future communication strategies on migration and migrants.

3.7 Demand for additional support created by the project

Due to its experimental and scientific approach the project has has sparked curiosity, setting the stage for potential future demands for support and collaboration. However, explicit demands for additional support have not been made. During the evaluation, stakeholders and beneficiaries have demonstrated an increased interest in the insights, tools, and methodologies introduced by the project, indicating a latent need for continued assistance and guidance in navigating migration-related challenges.

4. EFFICIENCY

4.1 Usage of available resources (time, funds, partnerships, knowledge, expertise, and tools) efficiently

As mentioned earlier, the project activities were seriously delayed from the onset of the project implementation. This led to the consequent non-cost extension of the project from June 2023 to the end of December 2023. However, for cost effectiveness reason the project produced for example, one instead of initially designed three edutainment prototypes per country. Due to the delays, the Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration at the Migration Policy Centre, European University carried out the testing surveys in 3 countries with the one year of delay (July – October 2023), which had several consequences: on one side, the NMCGs did not have time to improve the video material according to the plan; on the other hand this delay affected OPAM capacities and planning significantly: the staff they hired to carry the assignment was in the end not utilized for the planned task; instead OPAM's core staff from other units was engaged pro bono to help finalize the assignment.

OSCE's weak management also resulted in overstretching the capacities of the media outlets that were part of the NMCGs due to methodological shifts and changes in the design of communication campaigns. Time gaps between project activities was also leaving national partners without clues about next steps and needed input in terms of resources. The absence of performance assessments and feedback loops made it challenging to identify areas for improvement and adjust strategies accordingly.

4.2 Could the activities and outputs be delivered with fewer resources without reducing their quality and quantity?

As explained above, changes in the OSCE methodological approach and expectations of the edutainment content and format misled the national teams. For instance, initially, the edutainment materials were expected to take various forms, including video, art, performance, music, video games, etc. However, when the teams were already in the process of creating their products, OSCE instructed them to focus only on the video format. In this process, the National Multidisciplinary Creative Groups spent much more time on the creation of the edutainment products due to the changes in the approach.

Furthermore, while the OSCE initially instructed NMCGs to create material that would alter negative attitudes and perceptions, in the later phases, the OSCE instructed to focus on the individuals in the middle (movable middle). In conclusion, these alterations in instructions and expectations impacted the efficient

use of resources, suggesting that a more streamlined approach could have been achieved with clearer and consistent guidance from the outset.

4.3 Measures taken during the planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used

 In the initial stages of the project, comprehensive planning was undertaken, which encompassed the crucial components of risk management and monitoring. However, as the project transitioned from the planning phase to actual implementation, there was a discernible decline in the emphasis placed on these essential aspects. The once-established mechanisms for identifying and addressing risks, as well as monitoring the progress, appeared to lose prominence.

Despite the national teams recognizing issues and expressing dissatisfaction with the OSCE's project management and coordination, their attempts to communicate these concerns proved ineffective. The persistence of these challenges, without adequate response or resolution, created a sense of frustration and hindered the project's efficiency.

Subsequently, a noteworthy development occurred with the appointment of a new OSCE project manager to take charge of the project coordination. However, the transition in project management did not occur as a proactive response to address the identified issues. Instead, it transpired due to the departure of the initial project manager, who was leaving the organisation as her mandate came to an end.

4.4 Management structure and technical capacity

As already highlighted, the management structure and technical capacity have proven to be insufficient and inadequate for the successful implementation of the E-MINDFUL project. Several key shortcomings contribute to this assessment, such as the lack of clarity and effectiveness from the OSCE, leading to flawed decision-making processes, inconsistency, and a lack of strategic insight. This was accompanied with the slow and often changing communication about project goals and timelines, creating confusion and hindering progress. Roles and responsibilities, particularly between the OSCE and ILO, were not clearly delineated. The absence of a well-defined structure has resulted in information capture by the OSCE, sidelining the ILO and undermining its intended management and coordination role. The project suffered from the OSCE poor planning and organisation, as highlighted by the NMCGs. The absence of a proactive approach to risk mitigation and adaptability during the implementation phase resulted in substantial delays in the production of the major project's outputs. There has been a reliance on a bottom-up approach for problem-solving, indicating a lack of strategic response and guidance.

Given that the conceptual products were in the hands of the OSCE, there was little that ILO could do. On its side, the ILO project management timely fulfilled the obligations that were part of their responsibility, such as the NMCGs contracting, reporting, the organisation of meetings for which ILO was in charge.

4.5 Has the project been receiving adequate political, technical and administrative support from the ILO and its national partners? If not, why? How that could be improved?

The ILO senior management, the Senior Employment Specialist and former Director of the ILO Office for Central and Eastern Europe were regularly briefed on the project implementation, achievements, and challenges faced by the staff collaborating with OSCE. On multiple occasions, they provided their technical support by participating in events organized by OSCE and offering guidance for the project's further development. However, as accounted by the ILO senior staff based in Budapest, ILO was a minority partner by the design, and the pace of the implementation was dictated by the OSCE. The goal was thus to achieve what is possible and to focus on the activities for which ILO was responsible.

Yet not many activities were solely tasked to ILO because of the project's conceptual design. For example, while the establishment of the national Focal Points (FPs) was a positive step, the execution has been less than optimal. The ILO cooperated with appointed FPs in BIH, MKD and SRB to support them in promoting the main principles of the E-MINDFUL project at the national level. As the project implementation was marked by some delays in searching for the most adequate approach to the design of the edutainment prototypes, the NFPs were not confident about what and how to present it to the national authorities. Therefore, their engagement was not intensive as anticipated. Despite the fact that NFPs were engaged in so called ILO countries, OSCE remained responsible for the content that NFPs were obliged to present to authorities. Similarly, the ILO found itself frequently caught in a sandwich position between the OSCE and NMCGs. The NMCGs often sought clarifications from the ILO, which, in turn, required explanations from the OSCE—explanations that often materialized with delay.

ILO strengths were on the other side manifested in the domain of content creation and promotion of the project. The ILO produced policy briefs, ensured translation into three languages (Bosnian, Macedonian and Serbian) of the three issues of the Newsletter (September 2022, November 2022 and March 2023) and led the communication campaign informing relevant stakeholders and partners about the new content. The ILO strived to reframe the narratives on migration by breaking the stereotypes that surround it and invites inspirational guests from the region to the podcasts to discuss topics that reveal the positive aspects and values of migration. In March 2023, ILO took over managing the E-MINDFUL social media profiles on Facebook and LinkedIn. A Social Media Plan was prepared, and, since then, with constant updates and careful content curation, E- MINDFUL profiles have increased the number of their followers by 15 per cent on Facebook and 33 per cent on LinkedIn.

In conclusion, while the project has made strides, there was room for improvement. Politically, the ILO should consider elevating similar projects within its organisational priorities, advocating for its importance and alignment with broader labour and migration goals. This involves garnering support from high-level decision-makers from partner organisations (in this case the OSCE) to ensure the project receives the attention it requires. On the technical front, the ILO should be persistent in ensuring integration of international labour standards into similar projects' framework.

5. SUSTAINABILITY

5.1 Likelihood of sustainability of the outcomes? Are the results achieved likely to continue after the completion of the project, as well as to produce longer term effects?

The current trajectory raises concerns regarding the sustainability and long-term impact of the achieved results beyond the completion of the project. The challenges faced during implementation, such as delays and related underutilization of project funds, and the absence of proper communication and coordination by the OSCE, have already compromised the effectiveness of the project. The weaknesses in resource utilization, changes in methodology, and unclear communication channels have hindered the creation of a solid foundation for enduring outcomes. In the light of the above, E-MINDFUL contribution to building sustainable partnerships with various parties was limited.

To bolster longer-term effects, there is a critical need for comprehensive post-project strategies. The project is still to deliver the final report, tools and guidelines for various actors how to navigate communication campaigns around migration. Establishing monitoring and feedback mechanisms that extend beyond the project's lifespan will facilitate ongoing improvements and adaptability to evolving circumstances. Moreover, engaging standard ILO partners like trade unions and employers' organisations is imperative to ensure further actions and projects around labour migration. Lastly, fostering stronger collaborations between organisations such as the ILO, OSCE, and EU is essential to create a unified front for sustained efforts in the realm of labour migration.

6. Conclusions

The E-MINDFUL project should not be regarded as an isolated intervention, but rather as a project that set the stone for the future ILO projects in the field of labour migration in the Western Balkans. Although the underlying design and approach to implementation led by the OSCE has not demonstrated a strong alignment and synergy with the ILO strategies and objectives, the E-MINDFUL has to be examined against its contribution to the pivotal ILO's role in the field of labour migration.

The E-MINDFUL project aimed to address challenges related to communicating migration effectively as a response to the migrant crisis of 2015/2016. In this context and overall, the project has been generally relevant, with a clear intervention logic, including articulated goals, outcomes, and outputs. However, the project lacked proactive risk mitigation and adaptability during implementation and a strategic response was largely absent although the OSCE, as the project lead, paid a due attention to this topic in the project design but utterly lacked to address it during the implementation. The changing context also affected the project: during the project implementation, the influx of migrants in Serbia, North Macedonia, and Bosnia Herzegovina significantly decreased compared to the numbers of 2015/2016, prompting these countries to reevaluate their migration policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, demographic changes, and labour shortages.

The evaluation of the E-MINDFUL project revealed several critical aspects that impacted its overall success. The neglect of the gender dimension and considerations throughout all project phases is a notable shortcoming, affecting the comprehensiveness of the analyses and strategies. The main constraints, encompassing poor OSCE coordination with ILO, insufficient methodological clarity, continuous delays and limited stakeholder engagement, hindered the project's ability to navigate challenges effectively. This all contributed to delays, operational inefficiencies, and a lack of ownership. Ultimately, the E-MINDFUL project highlighted the importance of methodological clarity, stakeholder engagement, and adaptability in addressing the complexities of migration communication.

Despite these setbacks, the project delivered all planned outputs in the last six months of the project while also demonstrating unique features in bringing diverse parties together for a communication experiment. The generation of interest from stakeholders suggests potential future demands for support and collaboration, even though explicit requests have not been made.

At the same time, the contextual changes during the project's implementation highlighted the importance of the project's theme related to the migration, particularly to the labour migration. In this context, ILOs expertise in the labour migration globally shed the light on the ILO unique position allowing strong impact of the E-MINDFUL and future similar projects on the government policies and regulations.

The ILO therefore stands in a unique position to harness the evolving narrative on migrations, taking advantage of the increased relevance of the topic amid the challenges faced by both EU Member States and Western Balkan economies dealing with shortages in labour and skills. This pivotal moment presents an opportunity that should not be overlooked. By strategically capitalizing on the heightened attention to migration issues, the ILO shall play a key role in addressing the concerns and needs arising from labour and skills shortages. This involves not only raising awareness but also actively engaging with stakeholders in project development and implementation and fostering a nuanced understanding of migration-related challenges. Such a proactive stance will contribute to shaping a more informed and constructive dialogue surrounding migration, ultimately supporting the broader goals of the ILO in the context of labour and migration dynamics.

7. Lessons learned and emerging good practices

7.1 LESSONS LEARNED

Lesson 1: Lack of Comprehensive risk mitigation and adaptability strategies hinders the Impact of the project

In the context of the E-MINDFUL project, which aimed to address migration-related challenges in Serbia, North Macedonia, and Bosnia Herzegovina, the absence of comprehensive risk mitigation and adaptability strategies emerged as an important obstacle to better management and coordination, and project's impact. The project's challenges stemmed from various factors, including insufficient methodological clarity, a lack of effective communication, monitoring and evaluation, etc.

The OSCE, serving as the project coordinator, failed to incorporate comprehensive risk mitigation measures. Keeping almost all the coordination to itself, ILO was restricted to perform independently some activities. This all contributed to the weak identification of challenges in real-time.

The lesson learned from this experience is that future projects, especially those forged in partnership and addressing complex issues like migration, should prioritize the development of robust risk mitigation strategies. Proactive risk management is crucial to addressing unforeseen challenges promptly and avoiding substantial delays in project implementation. Clear communication channels and effective stakeholder engagement are integral components of such strategies, ensuring that issues are identified early and addressed collaboratively. Otherwise, the challenges, when left unaddressed, can have cascading effects on the overall impact of the project, highlighting the need for a holistic approach to risk management and adaptability.

Lesson 2: Weak delineation of partners' roles affects project's achievements

In the evaluation of the E-MINDFUL project, a critical lesson emerged regarding the imperative need for clear delineation of roles and responsibilities among project partners. Specifically, the project suffered from a weak delineation of roles between the OSCE and ILO, leading to significant challenges and a sense of subordination for the latter.

The OSCE, acting as the project coordinator, was expected to collaborate with the ILO in a partnership capacity. However, the delineation of roles was ambiguous, and, as a consequence, the ILO found itself in a subordinated role. This subordination manifested in various ways, including unclear communication channels, poorly defined roles and responsibilities, and a lack of strategic insight.

One of the key manifestations of this weak delineation was the marginalization of the ILO in decision-making processes. The OSCE, being in a dominant position, dictated project goals and timelines with slow and often changing communication. The result was confusion among project partners, particularly the National Multidisciplinary Creative Groups in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and North Macedonia, who found themselves caught in a bureaucratic entanglement between the two organisations. The information relevant to project implementation was captured primarily by the OSCE, sidelining the ILO.

This lesson emphasizes the vital importance of establishing clear lines of responsibility and authority among project partners from the outset. A lack of clarity in roles not only hampers effective decision-making but also contributes to delays, misunderstandings, and operational inefficiencies. Clear communication channels, well-defined roles, and strategic coordination are essential components of successful multi-organisational initiatives.

7.2 GOOD PRACTICES

Example 1

Project /programme Title:	
Communication campaigns: results of the survey - Migration Policy Centre (MPC), the European University Institute (EUI)	
The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.	
Name of Evaluator: Branka Andjekovic	Date: December 2023
GP Element	Text

Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The E-MINDFUL project was conceived in 2017 as a response to migration crisis of 2015/2016 resulting in the high influx of refugees and asylum seekers into the EU and Western Balkans countries. In this context, effective communication was seen as crucial not only to combat misinformation but also to foster a more balanced public discussion on migration, ideally contributing to migrant integration, economic benefits, and upholding safety and rights in these countries.
	Approved in 2019, the E-MINDFUL Project aimed at understanding the effects of strategic communication on attitudes to migrants and migration. Throughout 2020-2023 the project was drawing on the results of campaigns that have been developed by National Multidisciplinary Creative Groups in six countries in the context of the project. The communication campaigns have been created, tested and surveyed across Austria, Germany, Italy, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia. The ILO was tasked to carry out activities in the letter three economies based on the OSCE overall project design. The results of the survey carried out by the MPC in summer and fall 2023 measured the influence of these interventions on attitudes toward migration in all the countries, revealing key strategies for both successful and failed campaigns. The results of the survey directly help policymakers and communicators to tailor strategies to local contexts, address campaign-specific challenges, and remain cognizant of the dynamic socioeconomic factors influencing public attitudes.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The findings from the 2023 E-MINDFUL project's survey underscore the complexity of designing effective communication to shape attitudes toward migration. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding country-specific contexts and identifies key strategies, such as emphasizing conformity and appealing to common interest. Employing clear migrant descriptions also emerged as highly effective. The study further acknowledges the temporal nature of positive effects and suggests additional research into the intricacies of prolonging the positive effects of communication campaigns. The study also highlights limitations, including the multifaceted nature of campaign success and potential unintended negative effects. The critical discussion highlights that applying proven effective strategies can still be unsuccessful when other elements of the communication campaign are obstructive. For example, unclear messages and appeals to negative emotions can hinder impact. Ethical considerations, continuous research, and a nuanced understanding of the interplay between strategies and context are crucial for shaping effective communication on migration. This knowledge can be applied universally not only in the 6 targeted countries.

Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The OSCE and ILO supported the design and implementation of communication strategies (cause) aimed to influence public attitudes toward migration (effect). Based on the edutainment prototypes developed in the targeted countries, MPC, the third partner on the project, identified specific strategies, such as emphasizing conformity, common interest, and clear migrant descriptions, as effective in achieving positive effects. Conversely, factors like unclear messaging, inappropriate messengers, and appeals to negative emotions are associated with ineffective campaigns, resulting in limited or no positive impact. Therefore, the causal link between the chosen communication strategies and their impact on public attitudes provides a framework for policymakers and communicators to understand and optimize their interventions in shaping perceptions of migration. The intervention directly contributed to showing both positive and negative examples of campaigns aimed at affecting the attitudes of general public and movable middle about migration.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The measurable impact of the E-MINDFUL project's communication campaigns is reflected in changes in public attitudes toward migration, as assessed through the surveys conducted in targeted countries (first wave summer 2023; second wave fall 2023). The impact is quantified by variations in respondents' perceptions across five dependent variables: the influence of migration on the overall country, economy, culture, demography, and people's lives. Measurable indicators include shifts in survey responses, such as increased positive attitudes or decreased negative sentiments, within specific time frames. Examining specific campaign outcomes, Serbia achieved notable success, while Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia faced challenges leading to null effects, emphasizing the need for more targeted approaches. However, all the campaigns have limited effect, not longer than a month. The targeted beneficiaries of the communication campaigns are diverse and include the general public within the participating countries. Policymakers, social scientists, and communicators involved in shaping public discourse on migration benefit from the insights gained through the study. Specifically, these stakeholders can utilize the research findings to refine and tailor their communication strategies for more effective outcomes. Additionally, the broader public benefits from the potential improvement in the quality of public discussions on migration, leading to better-informed opinions and attitudes. Ultimately, the targeted impact is on societal perceptions and understanding of migration issues, contributing to a more balanced and informed public discourse.
Potential for replication and by whom	The findings of this experimental scientific based project can be used across EU countries given that the phenomenon of migration has been increasing globally, including the EU. The study offers actionable insights for policymakers and communicators, advocating for clear, relatable messaging and the consistent application of effective strategies to shape public attitudes toward migration. It contributes valuable knowledge to ongoing discussions and informs future endeavours in strategic communication on migration.

Upward links to higher ILO Goals (E-MINDFULs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Linked to ILO policy outcome 7 – Promoting safe work and workplace compliance/ Thematic Area 15. Labour migration SDG Targets: 8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, and those in precarious employment 10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of panned and well-managed migration policies
Other documents or relevant comments	Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration at the Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute

Example 2

GP Element	Text
Project /programme Title: National Mult-Stakeholder Creative Groups (NMCGs) **Name of Evaluator:** Branka Andjelkovic **Date:** December 2023 The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.	
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The establishment of the National Multi-Stakeholder Creative Groups within the E-MINDFUL project was forged in North Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina and their work supervised by ILO, and in Austria, Italy and Germany under OSCE oversight. In each country NMGCs consisted of up to five members, including scholars and researchers from various fields, such as sociology, philosophy, communication, journalism, TV, cinema, arts, etc. In addition, the NMGCs involved members of audio-video production companies to translate ideas into tangible products. By combining academic rigor, artistic and technical expertise, NMGCs were tasked to develop awareness-raising and edutainment campaigns on migration. The cross-fertilization of ideas, experiences, and skills was aimed at development of the communication campaigns tailored to specific audience segments and grounded in practical considerations. A number of joint workshops was organized for the NMGC members by OSCE and ILO to provide a platform for sharing insights and lessons learned from past initiatives. This collaborative environment was essential for refining concepts, brainstorming creative solutions, and collectively understanding successful strategies. At the national level, the NMGS members worked together throughout all the phases of the E-MINDFUL, collectively contributing to various outputs. The diverse expertise within NMCGs played a crucial role in enriching the migration narratives but also in promoting the project goals to different audiences to which NMGC members belonged themselves. NMGCs played a vital role in achieving the project's overarching goals.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The NMCGs were established as an experimental group to facilitate the first-ever edutainment prototypes on migration narratives in Serbia, North Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The prototypes were developed by the NMCGs throughout 2021 and 2022, and they were completed in early 2023. This work has been highly relevant, given its pioneering nature.

Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The cause-effect relationship within the E-MINDFUL project involving National Multi-Stakeholder Creative Groups is a strategic progression aimed at influencing public perceptions and attitudes toward migration. The initial cause is the formation of NMCGs by the OSCE and ILO, which brings together diverse expertise from university faculties and audio-video production companies. These groups engage in collaborative workshops supported by the OSCE and ILO, researching country-specific contexts and exploring innovative campaign prototypes. The co-creation process follows, leading to the development of tailored communication prototypes, focusing on audience segments with mixed feelings about diverse societies. The campaigns, rooted in lessons learned and interdisciplinary collaboration, aim to shift public attitudes toward migration. They are then tested by the Migration Policy Centre on specific audience segments, contributing to a nuanced understanding of their outreach and impact (discussed above under the Success Story 1). Surveys conducted by MPC provide quantitative insights into changes in awareness, perceptions, and attitudes. Overall, the cause-effect relationship underscores how the systematic efforts of NMCGs, from collaborative formation to the implementation of tailored campaigns, contribute to a measurable shift in public discourse. The iterative nature of research, co-creation, and testing ensures a comprehensive and dynamic approach to influencing attitudes and fostering a fact-based understanding of migration issues.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The impact of NMCGs is multifaceted, influencing public opinion, shaping attitudes, and benefiting various stakeholders involved in migration-related issues. The NMCGs anticipate a significant impact through a measurable shift in public perceptions and attitudes toward migration. Their success is gauged by the effectiveness of the communication strategies developed, measured through changes in public opinion, increased awareness, and engagement assessed via surveys, focus groups, and other research methods. NMCGs have diverse beneficiaries, including the general public, specific audience segments, government and policymakers, educational institutions, and NGOs. The general public benefits as NMCGs shape public discourse on migration by developing campaigns that challenge stereotypes, dispel misinformation, and foster empathy, contributing to a more informed and nuanced opinion. Insights generated by NMCGs benefit government agencies and policymakers, facilitating evidence-based policymaking in the realm of migration. Educational institutions gain by integrating practical, real-world projects into their curricula, offering students and faculty valuable experience in developing communication strategies. NGOs and civil society organisations can leverage NMCG outcomes to enhance their advocacy and support initiatives, aligning with the overall goal of fostering a more supportive and inclusive environment for migrants.

Potential for replication and by whom	The National Multi-Stakeholder Creative Groups model shows considerable potential for replication across diverse stakeholders engaged in strategic communication on migration. The NMCGs multidisciplinary composition ensured a holistic approach while the diversity fostered creativity and innovation. This makes the NMCG model applicable to different cultural contexts: by forming similar groups in other countries, stakeholders can harness varied expertise, encouraging a comprehensive understanding of migration-related or other challenges and effective communication strategies. Furthermore, the support provided by the OSCE and ILO through collaborative framework, technical guidance, continuous interaction through social platforms, and flexible workshop models, offer a comprehensive model for effective communication strategies in various global contexts.
	Government agencies for example can spearhead this effort by forming similar groups within their countries, fostering collaboration among experts from various fields to address specific challenges related to migration discourse. International organisations, such as the OSCE and ILO, can share insights into the establishment of NMCGs, thereby promoting a standardized yet adaptable approach to communication strategies.
	Academic institutions can also replicate the NMCG model by engaging students and faculty members in multidisciplinary groups. This would contribute to innovative campaigns that challenge existing narratives and resonate with diverse audiences. This model can be further used by NGOs and civil society organisations, media and communication companies, international donors, and educational institutions.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (E-MINDFULs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Linked to ILO policy outcome 7 – Promoting safe work and workplace compliance/ Thematic Area 15. Labour migration SDG Targets: 8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, and those in precarious employment 10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of panned and well-managed migration policies
Other documents or relevant comments	

8. Recommendations

This evaluation has witnessed the efforts made by ILO to achieve set objectives and results of the project. Given the nature of this evaluation, the following recommendations mainly focus on the medium to long term structural improvements and engagement of ILO in multi-party projects.

RECOMMENDATION 1. ENGAGE IN STRATEGIC PLANNING TO ACHIEVE HIGHER IMPACT IN THE MULTIPARTY PROJECTS

a. **Clarify roles and responsibilities early on**, with clear lines of management, reporting and communication in the projects with multi-party leadership to avoid confusion and ensure effective coordination. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly delineated to avoid information capture as it was the case with the E-MINDFUL and ensure effective management and coordination. Clear communication channels, transparent information dissemination, and a proactive risk mitigation strategy should be integral components of the management structure. Investing in strategic planning and organisation, with a top-down approach to problem-solving, will enhance the project's overall effectiveness.

b. Conduct risk mitigation planning: Develop a robust risk mitigation strategy that anticipates potential challenges during project implementation particularly in the multi-party projects. Identify alternative strategies to address these challenges and ensure flexibility in adapting to unforeseen circumstances. Regularly review and update risk assessments throughout the project lifecycle.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest	High	Low	Medium to long term

RECOMMENDATION 2. ADAPTATION PLANNING FOR IMPACTFUL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Carry out regular Monitoring and Evaluation (ME): To enhance the efficient use of resources, particularly time, funds, partnerships, knowledge, expertise, and tools, the project should implement a robust performance assessment and feedback system. Regular MEs will help identify areas for improvement and enable timely adjustments to strategies.

Integrate lessons learned: Systematically collect and document lessons learned throughout the project implementation. Use these insights to inform decision-making, improve the effectiveness of communication strategies, and guide future initiatives in the field of migration.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO country offices	High	Medium	Medium-term

RECOMMENDATION 3. DESIGN AND CONCEPTUALISATION IN MULTI-PARTY PROJECTS FOR CONTEXTUAL ALIGNMENT

Ensure country-specific contextualisation and linkages to international frameworks in the multi-party projects: Align clearly the project activities with the national development priorities of the target countries, if they exist. Establish clear linkages between the project design and international frameworks such as the ILO Strategic Framework, the UN Cooperation Frameworks, and national efforts towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. Explicitly integrate relevant components from these frameworks into the project's intervention logic, goals, outcomes, and activities.

Develop a Theory of Change: Create/contribute to detailed Theory of Change for the project to provide a roadmap that clearly outlines the causal pathways from inputs to desired outcomes. This should include a step-by-step explanation of how project activities contribute to achieving the stated objectives and addressing the needs of the constituents.

Incorporate gender dimensions: Integrate a gender perspective into the project activities to address gender-specific challenges related to migration. Gender and anti-discrimination shall be reflected in the Theory of change, while the Checklist for Gender Mainstreaming in Project and Programmes can be a useful guide in determining access to resources, roles, and responsibilities, constraints, and priorities.

RECOMMENDATION 4. POLICY AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Enhance ILO (watchdog) role to labour migration - The ILO together with social partners should work to implement a whole-of-government understanding of the obligations under the applicable Conventions and support policies related to migration, that are rights-based and intersectional. ILO's watchdog role in safeguarding international labour standards particularly the ones related to migration shall be highlighted. For example, the E-MINDFUL exposed a lack of understanding of applicable international labour standards in the field of labour migration, pointing to the gap that ILO shall fill in. To achieve this, international labour standards shall be included in project design and implementation plans.

Strengthen the capacity of the tripartite constituents to enhance their internal planning processes and adapt their services to contribute to the development of effective national policies and actions related to labour migration. Social partners shall be supported to formulate development strategies with the aim of setting the vision, goals and theory of change for their organisations so to foster their engagement in migration related actions in the field of labour and economic development.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest ILO country offices	High	Medim	Medium-term

Implementing these recommendations will contribute to the project's alignment with national and international frameworks, enhance contextual relevance, and improve its overall effectiveness in addressing the needs of the constituents and achieving the stated objectives. Regular review and adaptation will be crucial to ensuring the project's success in the dynamic context of migration and related challenges.

ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference

ANNEX 2: List of Key Informants/ interviewees

ANNEX 3: List of reviewed documents