



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

**Project: 101088262 — GEAR
GEAR – Gender Equality and Antidiscrimination for Roma
CERV-2022-GE**

**DIGIVIS SRLS
WP3 – Training for practitioners from public and private entities**

**Synthesis Evaluation Report
November 15th, 2024**

**D3.3 Delivery of training activities for practitioners
T3.4 Realization of training activities for practitioners**

GEAR

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. THE RESPONSES TO THE FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE	4
2.1 THE ANALYSIS OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED THROUGH TRAINING	4
2.2 PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK	7

1. Introduction

Between May and September 2024, all members of the GEAR (Gender Equality and Antidiscrimination for Roma) project consortium implemented the activities under *Task 3.4 - Realization of training activities for practitioners*. Thus, a series of training sessions were organized for specialized personnel in the field of social work and cultural mediation, in many cases working in contact with disadvantaged segments of the population. The training was delivered by partners within their home areas, involving several national and international experts who shared their knowledge with the audience present at the meetings.

The sessions were organized in Belgium by Internationaal Comite, in Bulgaria by CSCD, in Italy by ArciSolidarietà, and in Romania by APEL. For the planning of the activities, all partners relied on the preliminary research work done by Digivis (*WP3, D3.2 - Materials for the training activities*), which by March 2024 had delivered to the consortium seven training modules focusing on the topics the activities were to address:

1. Combating discrimination against girls in: education, skills, development, training, health and nutrition;
2. Countering negative cultural practices and attitudes towards girls.
3. Promotion and awareness raising on the rights of girls.
4. Combating the economic exploitation of child labor.
5. Protection of the girl's participation in social and political life through an increased awareness of her needs and potential.
6. Strengthening the role of family responsibility in improving the status of girls.
7. Contrast to violence and abuse against girls.

Implementing the initiatives in individual geographic contexts enabled the partners to address in greater depth issues that were more relevant in the participants' areas of intervention, while also gaining the strategic advantage associated with the use of the native language for the courses and shared learning materials.

The seven training modules were presented in combination or one at a time within dedicated seminars, at the end of which each partner also organized two workshops dedicated to *case management* and *intervention design*. In the latter two meetings, dense discussions were held on the application of tools, approaches, and methodologies learned.

Between the end of the series of workshops dedicated to the seven modules and November 2024, all participants were asked to complete an anonymous feedback questionnaire developed by Digivis, through which the working group was able to obtain information on the impact of the training activities and the degree of satisfaction of the practitioners who participated.

The questionnaire includes eight questions: two aimed at studying the participants' preparedness on the topics covered by the courses before and after their delivery, and six focused on acquiring overall feedback and judgments.

In total, among all professionals working in social work and cultural mediation who attended the meetings, 54 responded to the anonymous feedback questionnaire. The purpose of this document is to provide a summary analysis of the data derived from the questionnaire.

2. The responses to the feedback questionnaire

2.1 The analysis of prior knowledge and knowledge acquired through training

The first question posed to those who participated in the GEAR training initiatives was aimed at determining what advanced knowledge practitioners possessed prior to the start of the courses regarding the topics covered, and thus regarding various aspects related to the promotion of girls' rights, including combating discrimination and economic exploitation, raising awareness about their rights, combating violence and abuse, and strengthening the role of the family in protecting and empowering girls in the social and political spheres.

As highlighted in *Tab.1*, for most topics less than half of the respondents said they had advanced prior knowledge, as evidenced by the average “yes” value of 24 (43.9%). Exceptions were only “Promotion and awareness raising on the rights of girls” and “Contrast to violence and abuse against girls.” For these two topics, the share of people already possessing advanced knowledge is 59.5% (32) and 51.9% (28) of the total, respectively. The only other values above the overall average are associated with “Combating discrimination against girls in education, skills, development, training, health and nutrition” and “Countering negative cultural practices and attitudes toward girls.” Among the topics on which practitioners said they were least knowledgeable is “Strengthening the role of family responsibility in improving the status of girls,” with a 68.5% (37). A similar result is noted for “Combating the economic exploitation of child labor” and “Protection of the girl's participation in social and political life through an increased awareness of her needs and potential,” both topics on which more than 60 percent of participants had no prior knowledge¹.

Tab.1/question 1: "There are a total of seven topics addressed by GEAR training. On which of them did you already have advanced skills?"; a.v. & v.%, 2024

Topics/replies	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
1. Combating discrimination against girls in: education, skills, development, training, health and nutrition	26	48,1	28	51,9	54	100,0
2. Countering negative cultural practices and attitudes towards girls	25	46,3	29	53,7	54	100,0
3. Promotion and awareness raising on the rights of girls	32	59,3	22	40,7	54	100,0
4. Combating the economic exploitation of child labor	18	33,3	36	66,7	54	100,0
5. Protection of the girl's participation in social and political life through an increased awareness of her needs and potential	20	37,0	34	63,0	54	100,0
6. Strengthening the role of family responsibility in improving the status of girls	17	31,5	37	68,5	54	100,0
7. Contrast to violence and abuse against girls	28	51,9	26	48,1	54	100,0
Average	24	43,9	30	56,1	54	100,0

From the responses to the second question, the working group was able to obtain from the respondents themselves a summary assessment of the impact of the courses on their overall knowledge base. The data, included in *Tab.2*, show that for each individual topic at least half of the respondents said they had acquired additional skills, with an average value of 60.1% of the total. The topics indicated by the largest number of practitioners are 1 and 5, with a share of 66.7% (36). They are followed with a slight difference by topics 2 and 3, in relation to which 64.8% (35) of the participants obtained more preparation. At opposite extremes are topic 4, for

¹ In the remainder of this document, to promote ease of reading, topics addressed by GEAR training will be cited in the text almost exclusively using the numbers assigned to them and the label "topic".

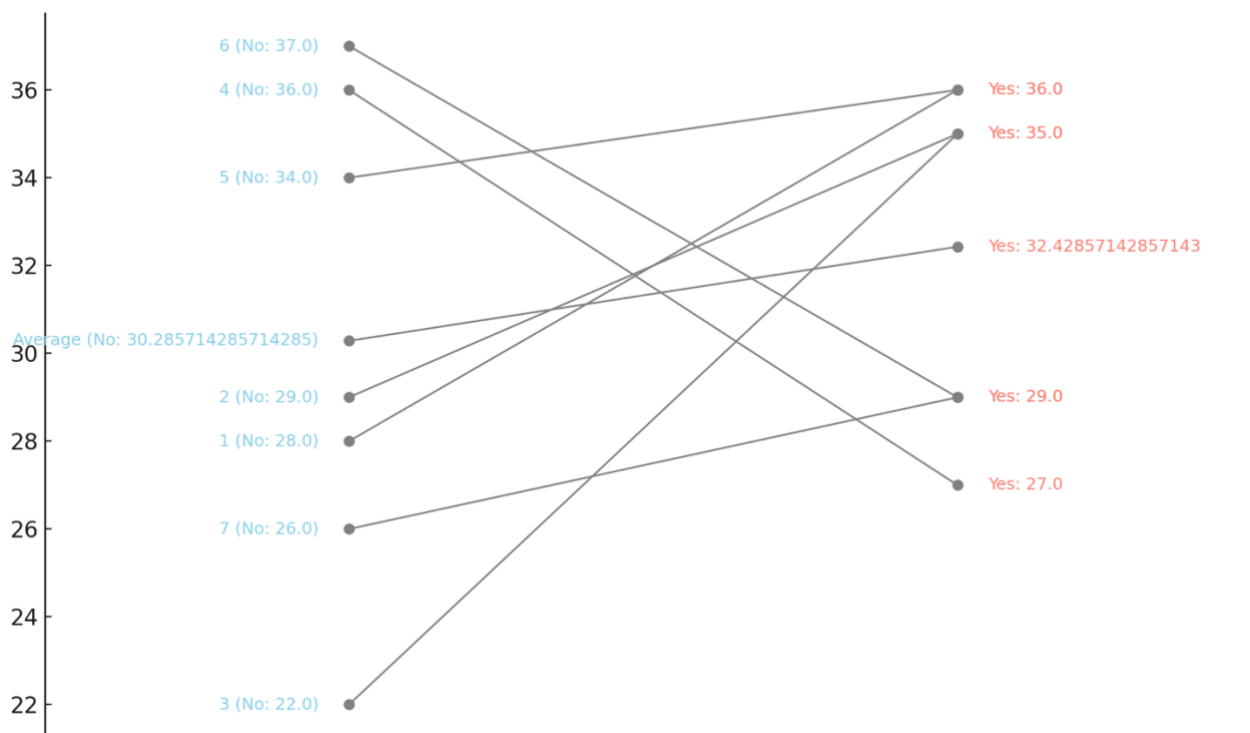
which “only” 50% (27) confirmed the presence of new skills, and topics 6 and 7, with 46.3% (25) of practitioners NOT gaining additional knowledge.

Tab.2/question 2: "After attending the GEAR training, on what topics do you think you have developed additional knowledge?", a.v. & v.%, 2024

Topics/replies	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
1. Combating discrimination against girls in: education, skills, development, training, health and nutrition	36	66,7	18	33,3	54	100,0
2. Countering negative cultural practices and attitudes towards girls	35	64,8	19	35,2	54	100,0
3. Promotion and awareness raising on the rights of girls	35	64,8	19	35,2	54	100,0
4. Combating the economic exploitation of child labor	27	50,0	27	50,0	54	100,0
5. Protection of the girl's participation in social and political life through an increased awareness of her needs and potential	36	66,7	18	33,3	54	100,0
6. Strengthening the role of family responsibility in improving the status of girls	29	53,7	25	46,3	54	100,0
7. Contrast to violence and abuse against girls	29	53,7	25	46,3	54	100,0
Average	32	60,1	22	39,9	54	100,0

Fig. 1 compares the groups of participants who had no advanced prior knowledge of the topics and those who gained additional knowledge after the training.

Fig. 1: GEAR training, comparison between practitioners who stated they had no prior knowledge and practitioners who stated they gained knowledge after participation, distribution by topics covered, a.v., 2024



The proportion of respondents possessing advanced prior skills on the topics offered by GEAR training was less than 50% (on average). After participating in the courses and for each individual topic, at least half of the participants saw their knowledge increase. The number of practitioners who said they felt better prepared after participating in the sessions organized by the project exceeded in almost all cases the number of practitioners who did not feel prepared

on one or more topics before the start of the activities. The only cases in which the “No's” entered for question 1 exceeded the “Yes's” resulting from question 2 corresponded to the topics on which the largest number of practitioners had said they lacked expert knowledge: topics 6 and 4.

To better understand what the impact of the GEAR trainings was, however, it is appropriate to explore in more detail the data derived from the anonymous feedback questionnaires completed by participants. *Tab. 3* shows, for each topic, the number of practitioners who did not have advanced prior skills but gained additional knowledge because of the sessions held by project partners. Considering this specific group, some key aspects emerge. On average, 50.9% of those who had indicated “No” for one or more topics in question 1 indicated “Yes” in question 2. Training on combating discrimination against girls in education, health, and nutrition was the one most likely to provide additional knowledge to those who did not have it: there were 26 practitioners who had stated that they had no prior skills on topic 1; of these, 19 acquired them through the GEAR modules (67.9%), accounting for 52.8% of the total group who gained new knowledge on the topic². Another result that stands out is that related to training on topic 5, where as many as 21 among the 34 who did not have advanced knowledge obtained it later from courses (61.8%), showing a 58.3% incidence of the total “Yes” recorded for topic 5 in question 2. The worst results are observed for training related to topics 4, 6 and 7, and for the topic of combating the economic exploitation of child labor, on which “only” 15 out of 36 practitioners who had not declared possession of advanced prior skills obtained new ones. This result equates to a 41.7%, indicating, however, positive results even regarding the thematic areas for which respondents experience more difficulty and unpreparedness.

Tab.3: respondents who indicated ‘No’ to question 1 and indicated ‘Yes’ to question 2 by topics covered, a.v. and v.% compared to ‘No’ in question 1, 2024

Topics/replies	a.v.	v.% (‘No’ in q1)	v.% (‘Yes’ in q2)
1. Combating discrimination against girls in: education, skills, development, training, health and nutrition	19	67,9	52,8
2. Countering negative cultural practices and attitudes towards girls	14	48,3	40,0
3. Promotion and awareness raising on the rights of girls	12	54,5	34,3
4. Combating the economic exploitation of child labor	15	41,7	55,6
5. Protection of the girl's participation in social and political life through an increased awareness of her needs and potential	21	61,8	58,3
6. Strengthening the role of family responsibility in improving the status of girls	16	43,2	55,2
7. Contrast to violence and abuse against girls	11	42,3	37,9
Average	15	50,9	47,6

Tab.4, on the other hand, includes information on those who had reported possessing advanced skills prior to participation in GEAR modules and still obtained new ones. This group includes, on average, 71.7% of respondents who already possessed prior specialized skills. The data derived from this subgroup explain how it was easier, on average, to develop new skills for those who already had a concrete body of knowledge.

This is particularly evident for the topic of countering negative cultural practices and attitudes toward girls, where as many as 21 out of 25 practitioners who already had skills developed more (84.0%). This is followed by topic 5 and topic 6, in reference to which 75% (15) and 76.5% (13)

² That includes, of course, participants who had indicated the presence of advanced prior knowledge.

of respondents with prior knowledge learned additional notions, respectively. No negative results are shown for this group: the lowest figure is associated with topic 7, regarding which, however, 18 among the 28 professionals who had answered “Yes” to question 1 expressed a positive opinion about the usefulness of the training course (64.3%).

Tab.4: Respondents who indicated ‘Yes’ to question 1 and indicated ‘Yes’ to question 2 by topics covered, a.v. and v. % compared to total ‘Yes’ in question 2, 2024

Topics/replies	a.v.	v.% (‘Yes in q1)	v.% (‘Yes’ in q2)
1. Combating discrimination against girls in: education, skills, development, training, health and nutrition	17	65,4	47,2
2. Countering negative cultural practices and attitudes towards girls	21	84,0	60,0
3. Promotion and awareness raising on the rights of girls	23	71,9	65,7
4. Combating the economic exploitation of child labor	12	66,7	44,4
5. Protection of the girl's participation in social and political life through an increased awareness of her needs and potential	15	75,0	41,7
6. Strengthening the role of family responsibility in improving the status of girls	13	76,5	44,8
7. Contrast to violence and abuse against girls	18	64,3	62,1
Average	17	71,7	52,4

2.2 Participants' feedback

The second part of the questionnaire aimed to collect a more general judgment from participants regarding:

1. Importance of the issues addressed;
2. Relevance of the training modules to the activities of a social worker;
3. Usefulness of the knowledge gained for field work in contact with social minorities;
4. Level of preparation of the lecturers;
5. Overall appreciation of the course series and its management.

For each question, participants were given a choice of four modes indicative of different levels of judgment and liking. These modes ranged from “Yes, very much” - best judgment - to “Not at all” - worst judgment.

As shown in *Tab. 5*, almost all respondents agreed that the topics addressed by the GEAR training represented an important portion of the macro domain that includes discussion of women's rights and gender inequality: 72.2% (39) of the total strongly agreed with this statement, while 25.9% (25.9) only sufficiently. Among the comments that the participants could include within the questionnaire, it is worth reporting one from an practitioner of Romanian nationality who indicated “Yes, quite sufficiently” as a response, focusing on the need to promote more, through efficient communication strategies, the organizations that work addressing the issues proposed by the courses.

“In Romania many of the topics - addressed by GEAR courses - are considered taboo. There are teachings on the subject both in school and outside the classroom, but few practical examples. It should be better studied how to promote more organizations that deal with at least one of these topics, including on social media.”

There is a single negative response (Not very much) not substantiated.

Tab.5/question 3: "Do you think that the topics proposed by GEAR training address an important portion of the issues related to women's rights and gender inequality?", a.v. and v.%, 2024

Judgements/answers	a.v.	%
Yes, very much	39	72,2
Yes, quite sufficiently	14	25,9
Not very much	1	1,9
Not at all	0	0,0
Total	54	100,0

The group of participants responded even more positively when questioned about the added value that the knowledge acquired during the course represents for a social worker. The best feedback (Yes, very much) was provided by 79.6% of respondents (43), while 18.5% (10) chose the most moderate level of positive judgment (Yes, quite sufficiently).

Although GEAR training has provided basic tools and best practices, it is still important to continue to explore the characteristics of the challenges that social workers face daily to always frame new insights for discussion. Going into detail, one practitioner of Romanian nationality, for example, pointed out how sometimes office work takes up so much of practitioners' time that it takes them away from street interventions. Regarding this critical issue, the hope is to establish increasingly strong networks between NGOs and public agencies to share the workload and ensure increasingly broad coverage of interventions.

"Those who work in the social sector, especially municipal employees, are very overburdened by bureaucracy and do not go into the field; this is where I think local NGOs can be more involved."

There was also only one moderately negative and unsubstantiated feedback for question 4.

Tab.6/question 4: "Do you think the skills acquired through the training modules could represent an added value for a social worker?", a.v. and v.%, 2024

Judgements/answers	a.v.	%
Yes, very much	43	79,6
Yes, quite sufficiently	10	18,5
Not very much	1	1,9
Not at all	0	0,0
Total	54	100,0

Question 5 asked respondents whether they thought that the skills obtained through the training modules could be helpful to professionals working with social minorities for the specific purpose of combating gender inequality. The group of responses to this question is characterized by the greatest diversity in the context of the section of the questionnaire devoted to the acquisition of direct feedback. 29.6% (16) responded that the acquired notions can be "only" sufficiently useful, while 3.7% (2) said that it is not particularly functional knowledge for fieldwork. However, it is worth noting that as many as 66.7% (36) of the respondents gave a

totally affirmative answer. The group that provided the most positive feedback was also the one that wrote the most optional comments. Among them:

From Belgium: *"I think this kind of training should be implemented in any course for social workers in Europe, as addressing the existence and social challenges of Roma is a shared responsibility. It is a blind spot that needs to be covered."*

From Bulgaria: *"This is the purpose and benefits of such information forums! You get very valuable and important information about working with minority groups and how to deal with a problem."*

Negative reviews were not substantiated.

Tab.7/question 5: "Do you think the skills acquired through the training modules can help professionals work against gender inequality during fieldwork in contact with social minorities?", a.v. and v.%, 2024

Judgements/answers	a.v.	%
Yes, very much	36	66,7
Yes, quite sufficiently	16	29,6
Not very much	2	3,7
Not at all	0	0,0
Total	54	100,0

Trainers were rated very positively by course participants, with 79.6% of the total (43) finding them to be competent, knowledgeable and available to clarify any doubts. A share of 18.5% of the respondents (10) did not give the same rating of excellent, but still gave a sufficiently positive assessment. Several practitioners made comments regarding the characteristics of the trainers.

From Bulgaria: *"Yes, the trainers were very knowledgeable, competent, understanding and tolerant. People who put themselves in the shoes of the groups concerned and live their problems."*

A Belgian practitioner also emphasized the versatility and adaptability of the trainers. Of course, being designed as a general basis, the training modules were not able to fully address the specific dynamics found in individual geographic settings, so it was necessary for the team of trainers to make modifications to the programs to adapt them to the specific needs of professionals in the area. The professionals chosen by the consortium to deliver the training courses handled this critical issue brilliantly.

"The course content did not fully correspond to the Belgian reality. The trainer was competent in applying few modifications that adapted the training proposal to the concrete situations experienced by this group."

The preparation of the trainers was never judged negatively, although one practitioner used the optional comment available for this question to provide negative feedback related to the organization of the courses themselves.

"-The Trainer was - definitely competent and had a lot of practical experience, but - the course - was not well prepared/structured"

Tab.8/question 6: " Did the trainers appear competent, prepared, and willing to clarify any doubts?", a.v. and v.%, 2024

Judgements/answers	a.v.	%
Yes, very much	43	79,6
Yes, quite sufficiently	10	18,5
Not very much	1	1,9
Not at all	0	0,0
Total	54	100,0

The same respondent reiterated his thoughts when answering question 7, which asked participants about the organizers' proper handling of the training modules.

'The meetings lacked structure, it felt more like an informal 8-hour chat'

On the other hand, 79.6% (43) of the participants rated very positively the organization and duration of the meetings, as well as the learning materials shared, as shown by the data in *tab.9*.

From Bulgaria: *"Yes, everything was of a high standard and tidy; the material very accessible. Thank you!"*

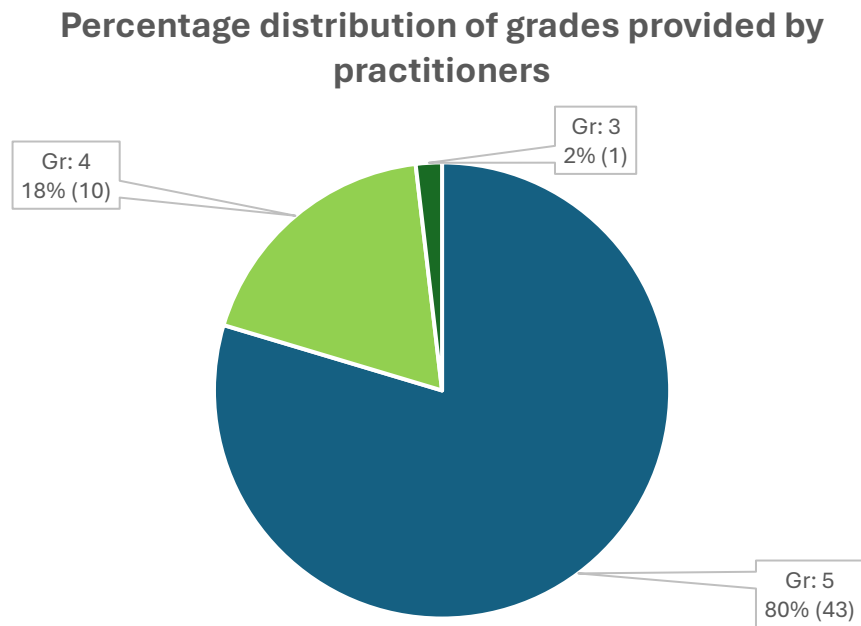
16.7% of the respondents (9) gave a moderately positive opinion (using the answer 'Yes, quite sufficiently'), while overall negative (moderate) opinions accounted for 3.7% (2 in total).

Tab.9/question 7: "Were the training modules properly managed (organization, duration, shared learning materials, etc.)?", a.v. and v.%, 2024

Judgements/answers	a.v.	%
Yes, very much	43	79,6
Yes, quite sufficiently	9	16,7
Not very much	2	3,7
Not at all	0	0,0
Total	54	100,0

Finally, with the last question of the questionnaire participants were asked to provide an all-round evaluation of the training organized and managed by the GEAR project. The respondents were given the opportunity to express an overall assessment using a grade from 1 (the lowest) to 5 (the highest). *Fig. 2* shows the results of the survey.

Fig.2/question 8: "What was your overall level of appreciation for the meeting series?", a.v. and v.% per grade (1 = lowest; 5 = highest), 2024



About 8/10 participants (43) gave the meeting series the highest available rating, i.e. 5. From the group that chose to assign the highest grade also came several comments.

From Belgium: *'The trainer is a very good example of lived experience, academic knowledge and is a strong voice of the community'*.

From Bulgaria: *'The trainers were very punctual in meetings and in sharing materials and information. They were also polite, respectful and tolerant towards all participants'*.

From Romania: *'Thank you very much for the important information!'*

A share of 18% of the participants (10) gave a more moderate positive evaluation, still awarding the second-best grade (4). One of the professionals from Belgium who rated the course series with 4 said:

"Good arrangement. The course was free of charge, which made it very accessible for organizations/participants. The free lunch and free coffee/tea/water also gave the feeling of being appreciated as a participant. The trainer had the necessary skills to work with us and to use the course material. There was an open atmosphere with room for - discussion of - cases in the field'

There was only one grade below 4, and that was a 3. This was not justified by the practitioner who shared it.



Center for Sustainable Communities Development

