

EXTERNAL PROJECT EVALUATION
BIRN FINAL REPORT

Project Title

Balkan Transitional Justice Initiative

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May 2022

FINAL REPORT

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Balkan Transitional Justice Initiative

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report draws on the results of desk work, review of key documents and online meetings with selected beneficiaries and stakeholders in the WB. The evaluator would like to thank the staff of BIRN for their open and constructive approach and for the practical assistance they have provided by making available key project information, documents and other relevant data. BIRN staff has also facilitated some of the online meetings.

List of abbreviations

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| | |
| BCMS | Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian languages |
| BTJ | Balkan Transitional Justice |
| BIRN | Balkan Investigative Reporting Regional Network |
| BIRN BiH | Balkan Investigative Reporting Network Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| C-19 | Covid Pandemic |
| CfP | Call for Proposals |
| CS | Civil Society |
| EC | European Commission |
| EQ | Evaluation Question |
| EU | European Union |
| ICTY | International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia |
| IR | Inception Report |
| IRMCT | International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals |
| KI | Key informant |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency |
| TJ | Transitional Justice |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| UN | United Nations |
| WB | Western Balkan |

Executive Summary

The evaluation report of the EU-funded project presents the findings, conclusions, lessons learned and good practices emanating from the assignment carried out in March-May 2022. The evaluation was commissioned immediately upon project completion. BIRN contracted an independent consultant to conduct a review of this format. The consultant assessed the project performance taking into account the adherence to BIRN's operational principles and OECD DAC evaluation criteria.

The project maintains a high degree of **relevance** and responds to the needs of the target groups. Preliminary consultations with project partners were undertaken as well as analysis of the situation on the ground. The added value of the project is easily justified in terms of reach, **efficiency** and timeliness. The implementation is generally observed positively and project management mechanisms have become well-embedded by the project team as no major issues have been noted in relation to reporting, financial management, knowledge-sharing and stakeholder engagement. In terms of **effectiveness**, it can be assessed that key targets have been reached by project end, especially in relation to promoting and strengthen TJ mechanisms and processes by regular, in-depth, standardised reporting across the WB, and to some extent in relation to strengthening the capacities of local journalists, to monitor, effectively engage and shape ongoing TJ. Challenges have been experienced in delivering appropriate, timely assistance in a pandemic environment that was often rapidly evolving and, in some cases, vulnerable to changes and political turmoil although this did not negatively affect the achievement of results as the target groups have demonstrated a strong project ownership. The long-term **impact** of the results could be even higher if supported by further **sustainability** measures in close consultation with local and regional stakeholders relevant to the TJ process. Sustainability ought to be directed towards various areas of support mostly grouped around key components related to expanding the work of the platform Balkan TJ programme, supporting and promoting TJ projects with an interdisciplinary and holistic approach and increased coverage and involvement of youth in the TJ processes. The concept of museum creation will go a long way in ensuring that TJ efforts are heard by a wider population and for this the continuous engagement of BIRN as a service provider in projects dealing with TJ is highly recommended.

EU and SIDA should scale-up the assistance. A follow-up action should be launched based upon tested approaches and methodologies. The current intervention provides for transfer of best practices and the WB countries could benefit from replicating in areas where a multi-target group approach is crucial for securing the present results.

INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE PROGRAMME

BIRN received funding from the EU, Matra programme of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SIDA for a 3+1-year support to the Balkan Transitional Justice Initiative. The support was aimed to contribute to increased public knowledge and awareness about TJ processes and their impact on reconciliation and intercultural dialogue, and engage civil society actors and journalists in the promotion of more effective TJ strategies.

The overall objective of the project was to increase public knowledge and awareness about TJ processes and their impact on reconciliation and intercultural dialogue, and engage CS actors and journalists in the promotion of more effective TJ strategies. The overall objective was relevant to the global objective of the CfP which aims to stimulate an enabling legal and financial environment for CS and pluralistic media, as well as to empower CS and media organisations to be effective and accountable independent actors, and to improve their capacity to dialogue with WB governments influencing policy and decision-making processes. The project was designed around three specific objectives. Specific objective 1 was to promote and strengthen TJ mechanisms and processes by regular, in-depth, standardised reporting from Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. Specific objective 2 was to increase and strengthen capacities of local journalists, CS actors and victims' groups to monitor, effectively engage and shape ongoing TJ processes, including the implementation of the TJ EU policy framework. Specific objective 3 was to secure visibility of project activities and increase understanding of general population of the importance of reconciliation and intercultural dialogue.

The action aimed to empower diverse groups of stakeholders – journalists, media, CS, victims' groups, prosecutors and judiciary – to effectively map the key areas of intervention in the area of TJ, increase the amount of media coverage on these topics and define policy recommendations for improvement on the institutional level. All activities have been carried out in line with the EU policy framework on TJ in order to make sure that the proposed actions are complementary to the WB countries EU accession processes.

The project was being implemented in the WB region: Albania, BiH, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME – ITS LOGIC THEORY, RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND EXTERNAL FACTORS LIKELY AFFECT SUCCES

In line with the forward-looking character of the evaluation elaborated by the BIRN management, the assignment focused on project's effectiveness in terms of the outcomes set-out in the intervention logic, as well as its log-frame. The intervention logic is coherent in structure and provides the necessary information for assessing the project contribution to the achievement of the specific objectives and results. It was developed taking into account the attempted change as the basis for result-orientation in relation to increased public knowledge and awareness about TJ processes and their impact on reconciliation and intercultural dialogue, as well as the engagement of CS actors and journalists in the promotion of more effective TJ processes. The theory of change is at the heart of the project with the aim to produce a narrative of how the envisaged change will take effect. This has been accomplished by establishing the link between the three specific objectives that were considered indispensable to making this change happen. In view of this, the project team was able to define the TJ common challenges and potentials, and establish what they want to change and how to make a difference. There are no apparent methodological weaknesses in the design and an improved version of the LFM has been applied as a planning tool which provided an overview of a project's goal, specific objectives, outputs and activity framework. It also provided a solid structure to help specify the components of the project and its activities and relate them to each other. The LFM format comprises four tiers in the results chain: impact (overall objective), outcomes (specific objectives), outputs and activity clusters. The LFM has good quality results statements and indicators.

The introduction of a risk management register has been developed with the aim of addressing main risk factors and mitigation measures. In operational terms, it provided the project team with intelligence to navigate operational hazards, maintain control and drive continuous performance improvements. Managing a complex project requires a systematic approach in risk management and the documentation of risks was vital to the success of the action especially in light of the pandemic related circumstances and the need to adapt to them. In this context, the risks have been well identified, described and divided into several categories (significant political ones being one of them). None of the risks had been labelled as high and this proved to be the case.

The detailed work plan revision resulted from a comprehensive review of the project activities, including the consideration of various strategic and operational priorities and parameters, as per received feedback and consultations with key stakeholders. Although some minor activity adjustments have been made in the early implementation phase, the strategic objectives and priorities remained unchanged. Given the

enhanced need to protect personal safety, the project team had a critical role to play during the pandemic in assessing the continued appropriateness of the support. This was well done.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation ToR was designed in order to facilitate both a review of the existing project and to learn what are considered as the most urgent and prioritized areas for future steps for the project to achieve greater impact and sustainability. The evaluation is being carried out upon project completion. The evaluation expert has assessed project implementation taking into account adherence to BIRNs operational principles and OECD DAC evaluation criteria that are judged to be relevant in the context of this project. In addition, the expert has documented lessons learned from the project that may well help inform the planning and implementation of future projects.

The purpose of this evaluation is to undertake a comprehensive overall assessment of the achieved results of the support and to provide recommendations for possible continuation and scaling of the project. The conclusions and recommendations generated by this evaluation will be addressed to its main users: organizational management and the donor community. Lessons learned by the different stakeholders (project management, target groups, partners) have been identified as well. Finally, the evaluation is providing solid evidence on the potential for future continuation and/or up-scaling of the initiative.

KEY QUESTIONS AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION WITH INFORMATION ON LIMITATIONS AND DE-LIMITATIONS

The present organization and methodology explains the approach to the evaluation in view of managing the challenge of providing significant insights stemming from an iterative and participatory process with key project stakeholders. The evaluator sought close interaction with BIRN to find appropriate solutions for managing this assignment to the highest quality standards and within the budget and calendar. The methodology has been defined in view to manage the challenge of providing significant insights stemming from an iterative and participatory process with key stakeholders as presented in the ToR but also unpredictable circumstances related to C-19.

The key EQs were developed through an extensive advice-giving process in order to develop the evaluation framework, which was done before preparing the IR and conducting the actual evaluation. The EQs are coherent for warranting a comprehensive assessment despite the scale and diversity of what was being evaluated – a 4 year project, covering a multitude of documents and various key informants (interviewees). The EQs were structured around four broad categories as stipulated in the ToR i.e. relevance, implementation process (efficiency and effectiveness), lessons learned and good practices. Organising key EQs under these categories, allowed an assessment to the extent possible, having in mind their relevance and the range of issues that fall under the TJ subject-matter.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach of the evaluation aims to guarantee an efficient execution of tasks which are readily in line with the requirements listed in the ToR as well as received feedback in the briefing meetings held with the BIRN project team and interviewed parties. The evaluator's approach is demand driven and target-group oriented. The general evaluation framework that the evaluator apply is based on standard DAC OECD evaluation criteria, correlated by BIRN specific standards. The evaluation tasks and questions are addressed by applying a model that allows the evaluator to assess the relevance and design of the project as well as its efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

In accordance with the ToR requirements, the evaluator applied an appropriate mix of techniques which entailed interviews with key stakeholders (primary first-hand information) and a document study (secondary source of information). Given the enhanced need for personal safety of all parties involved, a total of 20 individuals were interviewed online mostly by phone but also via online tools such as Viber, Skype and WhatsApp. The interviewees were selected on an agreed approach with BIRN project management also taking into account logistical and time constraints. In the same way, a few respondents were given preference based on their availability.

The desk review included analysis of project documentation and its intervention logic as well as policy documents and complementary assessments pertaining to the subject-matter. Concerning data collection, the evaluator applied a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods to conduct the exercise. They were used as complementary tools, with respect to specific questions posed – thus seeking to grasp the TJ processes, implementation, and stakeholder involvement and perspectives.

Notes taken during interviews were reviewed to identify key issues and findings related to different evaluation criteria and questions. In this regard, it should be noted that questions in the protocols for the

respondents had been clearly referenced to the evaluation criteria and questions to facilitate analysis. Secondary quantitative data, pertaining to the achievement of performance indicators, was available in consecutive interim narrative and financial reports, in a comparative manner between targets and achievements. This information was used in assessing the project design and its effectiveness and efficiency, through comparative analysis. Conclusions were drawn on the basis of evidence-based findings and accordingly, actionable, specific, and realistic recommendations are put forward. The overall findings, conclusions, and recommendations as well as discussions with BIRN management, helped identify key lessons learned to inform both current and future programming, for BIRN and other concerned stakeholders as may be relevant.

ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance

The relevance of the project does not only consist of tailored activities directed towards meeting key objectives but it is also fulfilling its promise of setting a 'direction of travel' toward a more engaged style of stakeholder commitment clearly cemented in promoting TJ mechanisms but also in strengthening capacities of local journalists, CS actors and victims' groups to monitor, effectively engage and shape ongoing TJ processes.

EQ1 - To what extent did the assistance target the needs of its target group?

The project team carried out a comprehensive needs assessment and context analysis which was useful in several ways. It helped structure the major thematic concerns and served to examine the project environment with the aim of reaching out to key target groups and identifying what other actors are active in the areas, and what those actors are already offering. In view of this, the project served as a direct response to raised concerns that WB stakeholders have varying opinions on previous TJ initiatives despite it being recognized as a useful tool for promoting and strengthening TJ mechanisms and processes by regular, in-depth, standardized reporting. The action was facilitating this process while making an effort to address not only the needs, but also the perceptions of the citizens at large. For the most part, the initiative addressed the most urgent needs of the direct target group being the WB journalists, CS actors including victims' organizations as well as media outlets. For the purpose of wider CS inclusion, good cooperation was ensured with the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, the Missing Persons Institute of BiH, the International Commission for Missing Persons, the Srebrenica Memorial Center, the Humanitarian Law Center, the Post-conflict Research Center, the Civil Rights Defenders etc.

Beyond the territory of WB, good partnerships were maintained with Impunity Watch and UNDP, which proved to be useful for extensive knowledge-sharing of TJ mechanisms and different processes useful for conducting project activities. Although designated as secondary target groups, the judiciary and law enforcement agencies had a specific role to play in the project framework in relation to implementation of more effective TJ strategies as well as modelling a mechanism for meaningful participation in project design. For instance, the respective WB judiciaries and regional experts are making good use of the news pieces and reporting, in order to shape their own decisions (in Serbia the decision to make secret documents public and in BiH to make a few indictments public are just a couple of examples worth noting). The importance of this cannot be underestimated. It is widely recognized that the judiciary practitioners and experts adopting this strategy, rely on accessible information and where the story 'comes from' and the sources quoted in news reports shape the message and the nature of the communication conveyed. Bias by source control is a major issue in the reporting but this has been fairly tackled by inviting the journalists and BIRN representatives to part-take in various TJ discussions.

The project provides the EU and the donor community with a reference point for information on the experiences and perspectives of TJ processes. It also serves as a direct response to raised concerns that WB stakeholders have an indistinct level of knowledge and awareness about TJ processes and their impact on reconciliation and intercultural dialogue. As the project is supported by the EU, its decision-makers have a clear stake in the TJ in the project and the process as a whole. EU MS delegates are also seen as wider stakeholders i.e. they have invited BIRN representatives to attend their meetings and the project has been perceived as a one-stop-shop for objective and quality reporting.

Implementation process

The implementation is generally observed positively and project management mechanisms have become well embedded by the project team as no major issues have been noted in relation to reporting, financial management, knowledge-sharing and stakeholder engagement.

EQ2 - Have the resources of the support been used in a cost-effective manner?

The project has been financially backed by the EU but to safeguard its viability and to increase its impact on the general public, it has secured additional support via the Matra Regional Rule of Law Program and SIDA. SIDA core support has been seen as an important leverage and enabler. The strategy through which the core support was pitched did address needs of both BIRN and its stakeholders. The project budget has been managed carefully. The financial plan was justified and complied with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency and in line with EU and BIRN procedures. This was also verified with the Independent Auditors' Report, where it was stated that

the financial performance and its cash flows have been in accordance with the legal financial reporting framework applicable in BiH. The basis for opinion conducted in the audit was in accordance with International Standards on Auditing.

EQ3 - How would you evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of project management (including the effectiveness of partnership strategy and stakeholder involvement from the perspective of 'good practice model')

The coordinator of the grant contract was BIRN Hub. It was fully involved in the design of the project and remained involved in the implementation of the work-plan. It had provided strategic directions in project application and in the outputs produced with the objective of increasing public knowledge and awareness about TJ processes and their impact on reconciliation and intercultural dialogue. As the project aimed to adhere to the principle of inclusiveness of cooperation, activities were already consolidated within a wider format offering enough flexibility to satisfy different working methodologies and established formats. In operational terms, BIRN Hub was supervising and guiding all activities and remained responsible for the overall coordination of the action. The project was regionally managed from Sarajevo but in addition, the BIRN regional offices were utilized for ensuring operational support. The core team consisted of journalists and editors while the other members were recruited on ad hoc basis either as experts or grantees. The project team utilized a standard team of journalists (which were engaged on daily basis albeit in some countries their inputs were higher e.g. Serbia and Kosovo) which together with the editors comprised the core line-up. A number of prominent experts were engaged for execution of various activities and they proved good value for money. Several good examples are noted. In cooperation with UNDP, CS experts on TJ and gender, organized a journalist training event on reporting about TJ topics and war crime trials in the WB. Another illustration is the instance when BIRN had a special in-depth coverage of high-profile judgments rendered before domestic and international courts and tribunals. In the case of Vojislav Seselj, BIRN had coverage from the Hague, but also recorded reactions of officials, and experts on TJ and victims' associations from various cities such as Banja Luka, Srebrenica, Mostar, Prijedor, Sarajevo, Stupni Do, Zagreb and Belgrade. Very good inputs were also received from a number of experts in relation to the War Crimes Verdicts Map.

The project set-up and team composition proved to be very important in creating an enabling project environment and in addressing operational and management issues. Multi-country project teams appear to be the norm in the present EU/BIRN assistance, yet making the transition from managing projects where the complete team is local to managing projects with teams covering various country components becomes increasingly challenging. The project strong point was the ability to overcome operational challenges and address outstanding issues while relying on trustworthy project reference points in the WB countries. This was done within the project management team structure consisting of a Project

Manager, Executive director, Project Coordinator, Communications manager, Operations manager, Finance Officer and Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Officer.

EQ4 - Did sound financial management contribute to meeting the objectives?

Sound financial management practices were deployed in order to facilitate stated goals as foreseen in the intervention logic. Financial management was more than an administrative and control function as it proved to be a critical prerequisite for successful project delivery. Timely and precise financial data have been accounted for (as presented in the budget and financial data) for effective decision-making as well as for implementing corrective action taken by the project management in order to enhance the prospects of timely completion within the planned project budget and scope of deliverables.

The project budgeting was conducted in the initial steps of project planning and it was performed in parallel with the activity scheduling process. As a collaborative BIRN Hub in-house process, inputs were received on cost estimates of individual activities, work packages, historical data and records, resource information, and policies in order to identify monetary resources required for the project. The structure of the project budget shows that the resources have been well-planned and the ratio was appropriate between the parts of the budget dedicated to human resources, travel, equipment, supplies and other costs. Project savings have been made (such as the online 4 workshops) which resulted in re-allocations to increase support for implementation of activities in the 4th year.

EQ5 - How would you assess the monitoring system during the support, focusing on relevance of the performance indicators?

The internal supervision system has proved to be effective and a number of practical considerations were taken into account by the BIRN when planning and executing a control-environment related monitoring. In operational terms, the monitoring system was well-established and functional in relation to the expenditure rate, the internal accounting system (financial monitoring), and this was done systematically. The work-plan was accordingly adjusted and it served as an important tool helping the project team to assign tasks, manage workflow and track the various action and milestone deadlines. Given the enhanced need to protect personal safety, monitoring had a critical role to play during the pandemic in assessing the continued appropriateness of the actions. The project team monitoring

mechanism, revised and adopted to the new pandemic implementation circumstances especially in 2020-2021. This served to advance the effective implementation and to further increase accountability.

The project team devised yearly and monthly operational plans, a monitoring and evaluation plan, procurement plan, internal and external communication plan, as well as a risk mitigation plan. The project monitoring system was multi-level and effective and it was checked through the EU and SIDA procedures and reporting lines with the aim of securing an uninterrupted result-oriented project implementation. The narrative reporting provided good insight into activity implementation and results achievement including significant intermediate results. At the same time, it provided useful data and information on different parameters related to relationship between the beneficiaries, stakeholder engagement and visibility and communication attainments. The activity reports provided a clear picture on realised activities and outputs produced. The narrative and financial reports submitted to the EU and SIDA are of good quality. In addition to the reports, systematic management and PSC meetings were held and they served as a well-established and functional supervision structures benefiting all parties involved. In terms of strategic management, the BIRN Hub head of Regional Operations provided critical guidance on various issues relevant to the action.

In terms of performance indicators, at the impact level, the main one relates to the cases of people who have been prosecuted for war crimes and resolved by responsible courts across the WB. The baseline presented in the LFM is the EU policy framework on support to transitional justice adopted in 2015. Its primary principle public acknowledgement is crucial for the TJ process. This denotes that outreach activities, including public consultation, media engagement and the dissemination of information should inform the public about the purpose and design of TJ mechanisms. All of the above were geared towards understanding the views and expectations of the community and tailored to avoid or correct misinterpretations and manage expectations.

EQ6 - How would you assess the prospects for activities continuing after the end of the support, including the potential of the organization to be sustainable and what would be the impact of the organization's identity on this?

The implementation mechanism is appropriate as it is expected to maximize effectiveness and contribute to sustainability of project results. Given BIRN's track record, the agreed model seems appropriate. As verified, project execution included a great range of factors having an effect on sustainability of the positive outcomes. The project is likely to have a lasting impact but sustainability depends on further positioning of BIRN as a frontrunner in the area of TJ. It has a strong and long-standing presence in the WB countries and has extensive experience in implementing projects that have served to support and

promote projects with interdisciplinary and holistic approach in order to access TJ comprehensively (through educational projects, documentaries, policy papers and reports, exhibitions, digital platforms and maps, quality journalism, investigative reporting and research on conflict studies). The current intervention provides for the transfer of ownership and the provision of support to develop and support publications on various TJ topics, and provide a vibrant community space for journalists and CSOs to gather and discuss critical issues in the WB societies.

EQ7 - What is the organization's capacity to take on a mentoring, knowledge-sharing and guiding roles?

From the early conceptualization, BIRN Hub remained true to its original purpose of providing an authoritative account of issues and problems surrounding the project environment under the results components. It has a strong and long-standing presence in the WB countries and has extensive experience in implementing projects and knowledge-sharing in the area of TJ. Knowledge-sharing is not always an easy process. Following the assumption that human knowledge is created through social interaction and that implicit and explicit knowledge is intertwined, BIRN clearly understands the importance and the value of youth involvement in the area of TJ and the exchange of opinions to explore a holistic approach to this. In view of this, it is sensible and legitimate to argue that there will always be an existence of know-how or implicit knowledge that cannot be shared or measured accurately. But BIRN's goal and objective should be to exploit as much as implicit knowledge as possible to create value for the organization. Storytelling and mentorship can be an effective form to accomplish that but establishing a knowledge storing medium has a stronger value and impact i.e. stored into certain storing mediums like documents, organization manuals and systems. In this sense, its strategy is to continue to support mentorship programmes with young people, production of oral history videos and organization of regional youth exchange programmes. It will also continue to strengthen partnerships and collaborations with the local and regional stakeholders relevant to the TJ area of interest.

EQ8 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the mechanism for engaging stakeholders?

As noted, the BIRN team organized 4 stakeholder meetings in BiH, Croatia, Serbia and Kosovo, aimed at discussing current issues in regional cooperation in prosecution of war crimes. In total, over 60 stakeholders from these four countries participated in stakeholder meetings. Participants were representatives of justice ministries, victims' associations, courts, prosecution offices, as well as various CS groups, journalists, international organizations and members of the academia. The stakeholder

meetings were an exceptional prospect for assembling relevant actors to meet, discuss and provide each other with a clearer insight on problems they are facing in relation to TJ.

Ranging from CS to state institutions, the project adaption phase was used to bring key stakeholders on board also in relation to receiving clearance from respective subjects on how to develop the project approach. Given the dynamics of the WB region, it was hard to escape from the political dimension (elections, changes in governments, political turmoil, WB state rivalries etc). In operational terms, numerous meetings held with public representatives (prosecution offices, courts, ministries of justice for instance) and operating under rigid procedures when organizing events and booking state officials was not always perceived as an enabling environment. Within the project framework, BIRN was also consulted to provide strategic and practical advice to senior executives who shape and lead institutional TJ policies. This included providing practical guidance to CS representatives and journalists who engage regularly with national stakeholders i.e. public officials.

The project should largely be more community-based but the mechanism to obtain support from all other avenues is not exhaustive as it should include a range of actors which play an important role in project activities. Despite this, evidence of established community support for the project is well demonstrated and their role and contribution have been essential in supporting the advancement of project areas and extensive consultations with project stakeholders have continued from the previous project into the current one, so as to carry over the practice of close coordination that has so far ensured support to the activities. The role of the journalists in this respect was also very good. On the flip side, a better engagement of CS dealing with TJ and victims (empowering to monitor, effectively engage and shape ongoing TJ processes) was not optimal as the former are known to be quite lethargic in the level of engagement which is understandable given the effects of war which include long-term physical and psychological harm. At the same time those CSO's which have been actively engaged in this particular area is shrinking, hence the possibility to effectively engage and shape ongoing TJ processes was not high as they have followed other thematical trajectories.

Knowing this and the fact that CS is an essential constituent partner in TJ and transition from conflict and fragility to sustainable peace and resilience, the importance of higher stakeholder engagement on a local level (in the communities) is paramount. A sense of higher public ownership of the peace process can help foster this kind of commitment especially in those communities where war atrocities took place, as opposed to national political level policy-makers who have other priorities i.e. they don't have the added advantage of being able to work with different groups divided by war within the same communities to find common ground from which they can work together to reconcile past grievances and establish or re-establish peaceful co-existence. Clearly, placing a focus on improving effective community engagement, a large part of which includes working more inclusively with CS actors that organize and

represent the interests and expectations of local communities and war victims, particularly the youth, would maximise impact in the area of monitoring and effectively shape TJ processes.

EQ9 - How would you assess BIRN's ability to report and summarise the link between activity and outcome?

The reporting is seen as an obligation that stems from the fact that BIRN receives direct funding which implies clear accountability. The requirements for such reporting are typically based on the grant contract for funding and the requirements of the respective donor entities. BIRN has used its hitherto project management experience to follow stricter reporting standards. One reason for that has been the need to increase transparency around the receipt and use of donor resources but also as seen in the present project context, to be able to monitor the links as defined in the results chain which provides a model for defining the interrelated components of the project that are required for its success (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts). The developed indicators that track these different components, have ensured precise reporting based on which the assessment can pinpoint to what extent the initiative has been implemented as planned. The provided data (on inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes) in the reports and the revised LFM provided a clear picture on project accomplishments. For this, a coordinated set of RACER indicators have been used to define the levels of measurement. The value of the indicators is considered as an important factor in assessing project performance.

Effectiveness

The project has achieved the results expected, especially in relation to promoting and strengthen TJ mechanisms and processes by regular, in-depth, standardised reporting across the WB, but also to some extent in relation to strengthening the capacities of local journalists, to monitor, effectively engage and shape ongoing TJ. Challenges have been experienced in delivering appropriate, timely assistance in a pandemic environment that was often rapidly evolving and, in some cases, vulnerable to changes although this did not negatively affect the achievement of results as the key target groups have demonstrated a strong project ownership.

EQ10 - To what extent has the support contributed to the expected results?

The extent of the support can be better understood at the impact level and this authenticated via the published and updated a war crimes verdicts map. Widely available, it is designed as an interactive tool which perceptibly provides an overview of court rulings on the crimes that were committed during the wars in ex-Yugoslavia in the 1990s. It includes all final war crimes verdicts that have been handed down by national courts in BiH, Croatia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Serbia. It also includes verdicts handed down by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia located in the Netherlands. With a user-friendly interface, it presently contains 507 verdicts and can be searched by courts, defendants, countries, units and dates. By country the verdicts are as follows: BiH 232, Croatia 142, Serbia 52, Kosovo 11, Montenegro 5 and the Netherlands 65.

The critical overall target is that least 50% of all cases of people prosecuted for war crimes in WB countries are resolved by 2022. The project contribution is well documented in relation to the above and independently verified via consecutive EU progress reports as well as respective WB courts war crime cases' verdicts. In relation to reaching the overall objective level, there are externalities at the WB societal level which are determined by factors such as lack of political will, thematic priorities or the pandemic, to name but a few. Thus, demonstrating a causal relationship between the project and the overall impact in relation to the above target is difficult, especially since the exact figures may typically appear only after considerable time, in this case certainly beyond 2022. In view of this, the target (50% of all cases of people prosecuted for war crimes in WB countries are resolved by project end) has been defined jointly by the EU and ICTY but also taking into account received feedback from respective courts across the WB countries. While the ICTY is no longer operational (and since the EU has somewhat refocused its interest on supporting other pressing issues), the responsibility of reaching the designated target lies chiefly within the respective WB national courts. There has been a promising tendency in

some countries and less so in others. The upward trend and the number of verdicts reached in Kosovo and BiH (despite the pandemic) but also the slower domestic handling of war crimes in Serbia are well noted. Serbia continues to publicly challenge the judgments of ICTY, including at the highest levels. At the same time, regional judicial cooperation in processing war crime cases remains less effective despite some good examples noted and processes also generated by the project itself. For instance, the bilateral protocols on cooperation related to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide between the Prosecutor's Office of BiH and its counterparts of Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro helped to reduce judicial impunity but this has not been applied systematically. Cooperation with Serbia has led to indictments being issued pursuant to cases transferred from BiH, which are yet to lead to verdicts. In a similar way, cooperation between BiH and Croatia continued to face a number of barriers and has not led to tangible results in terms of indictments. A protocol between BiH and Montenegro prosecutor's office is in place but is still not effective.

EQ11 - What exactly has changed because of the support (internally and externally)?

The actual changes are well noted at the project results level. The project team has clearly achieved the results expected, especially in relation to promoting and strengthening TJ mechanisms and processes by regular, in-depth, standardised reporting across the WB, and to some extent in relation to strengthening the capacities of local journalists, to monitor, effectively engage and shape ongoing TJ. The support provided through the project is of horizontal nature, targeting the entire WB structure. The reported outputs are not fully reflecting the work of the project team - there was a lot more lobbying, mentoring and coaching work behind the scene, involving the permanent engagement of the CS, journalists, national decision-makers and donor representatives, which is not entirely captured in the reports and not reflected through indicators. For instance, beyond media production, BIRN reports from war crime trials in Serbia generated responses from various CSOs, including the Youth Initiative for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch. BIRN reports also highlighted the need for institutional transparency dealing with war crimes and which were fully supported by the Serbian Ombudsman.

In relation to outcome 1 (to promote and strengthen transitional justice mechanisms and processes by regular, in-depth, standardized reporting from Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia) good progress has been made in meeting the key performance indicators and critical targets have been reached despite the pandemic. The achievements made stems from the fact that developments during the first year have positively influenced the potential of achieving the outcomes and the likelihood of reaching the objectives within the 2nd and 3rd year which were further influenced by a few enabling factors related to project environment and BIRNs ability to engage key stakeholders. Despite

the pandemic, progress of each output was conforming to the initial undertaking and in line with the revised work-plan. As attested by the reporting and confirmed by project documents and evaluation interviews, the project outputs have been produced in a logical sequence across the components. They are of good quality and the most prominent ones are highlighted herein. (1) The project team produced 8,707 articles (news, analysis, features, investigations and other news genre) produced in English and in all local languages; BIRN BiH published 2,011 articles. Additionally, BIRN BiH published 2011 articles on war crime trials in BiH. (2) An e-book was produced which assembled all BIRN articles about the Radovan Karadzic case before the ICTY. (3) The multimedia investigation series entitled the Last Despatches, was updated with 17 new cases of journalists killed during the wars in ex-Yugoslavia. In relation to this, BIRN opened an exhibition in Sarajevo to promote the book that exposes atrocities and human rights abuses in the 1990s while also providing insights into the work of the media in drafting the first historical accounts of the collapse of federal Yugoslavia. The exhibition opening was attended by circa 80 people from the local media community, families and friends of the killed journalists, CSO's and other stakeholders. (4) The war crimes verdicts map was upgraded, updated and published. Over 500 verdicts were added to the map, which is now searchable by courts, countries, crime locations, dates, defendants and their units. The map was extensively promoted via the BTJ social media profiles. (5) A mass graves database entitled the Bitter land was published. It is an interactive, user-friendly online database of mass graves found in BiH, Croatia, Kosovo, and Serbia related to the 1990s wars. (6) In cooperation with BIRN Kosovo, a high number of TV shows were produced and aired. They covered episodes related to justice in Kosovo and war crime trials in BiH.

In relation to outcome 2 (to increase and strengthen capacities of local journalists, CS actors and victims' groups to monitor, effectively engage and shape ongoing transitional justice processes, including the implementation of the EU policy framework on transitional justice) good progress has been made in meeting the key performance indicators and critical targets have been reached despite the pandemic. This is despite the attested fact that a better engagement of CS and victims (empowering to monitor, effectively engage and shape ongoing TJ processes) was not optimal. Despite the pandemic, progress of each output was conforming to the initial undertaking and in line with the work-plan. As attested by the reporting and confirmed by project documents and evaluation interviews, the project are of good quality and the most prominent ones are highlighted herein. (1) A total of ten grantees stories were developed and published. They were written by journalists who were selected in 2018. All ten stories were translated into local languages and published on the website. (2) Jointly with UNDP, the project team realized a training for journalists on reporting about TJ topics and war crime trials in the WB. A total of 25 journalists from different media outlets attended the training and after the training, participants submitted one-story proposals on TJ issues in WB. Based on their story proposals and their engagement during the training, BIRN selected 10 journalists who participated in the study visit to the Hague. (3) BIRN continued to publish stories as a part of the BTJ granting scheme aimed to promote and put to use the archives of BIRN as well as the international and local courts, thus increasing intercultural dialogue

and prospects for reconciliation. BIRN provided grants, guidance and mentorship to young journalists, activists, researchers, and artists, improving and enhancing their skills to successfully implement their complex projects.

EQ12 - Does the support have any effect on the functioning of other media?

In WB societies, media plays a powerful role in shaping public attitudes. Media content can inflame violence, but it can also build public awareness of the benefits of nonviolent strategies of conflict resolution, and help to consolidate peace in societies emerging from conflict. With this in mind, the project has made an impact on various groups of society (as it has a keen interest to explore the possibility of having fair distribution of effects) that looks beyond the immediate beneficiaries and target group and includes the general public and various media outlets. Efforts to reach out to a wider audience (via websites, social media, radio, TV stations and journalists) were part of the project strategy to ensure effective and transparent information dissemination to the general public. Considerations were given on how the project can tie in with promoting the wider TJ agenda for strategic planning as well as the broader work done by the BIRN in WB. This should help ensure that set project activities are seen as part of a larger TJ process and not just as a stand-alone project focusing on a limited set of target groups. In view of this, the project is perceived as a hub for collecting, developing and sharing approaches for gaging the impact of media, aiming to better understand TJ and how it can impact individuals and communities in changing knowledge, attitudes and behavior. Owing to the action itself, the targeted journalists are now capacitated and able to produce standardized and unbiased reports on war crime trials and other TJ topics. This together with the number of BIRN BiH republications in local and regional media will certainly have the potential to increase media outreach. Via the media and trained journalists, the project has the potential to have an effect on other media by bolstering their TJ approach and help create links between independent media outlets to expand their outreach, media literacy and critical thinking skills. This may also go a long way in reporting and disseminating independent TJ news through social media and online channels.

EQ13 - What is the BIRN's point of view on reconciliation, BIRN's actions and what was the impact of those during the support?

Arguably, spreading awareness on the concept of TJ and reconciliation in the WB has been spearheaded by BIRN. This is the 3rd project in continuity since 2011. As a follow-up, BIRN wanted to pursue TJ in a regional context (and not on country-by-country basis) as what took place in the region has widespread

implications, hence the regional approach on the subject matter. Related to this is that BIRN's strategy was to enhance cooperation of journalists as at the time it was weak (it's still not optimal) and also to motivate them to work together on a topic which they would have otherwise done independently (country by country). By doing so, BIRN approached the topic by relying on facts and covering different aspects of dealing with the past. It not only monitored war crime trials but also published numerous reports, analysis, investigations, and features on various topics important for post-conflict societies such as gender justice, missing persons, memorialization processes, reparations, returnees, internally displaced persons, etc. This way, BIRN continued to address TJ issues expansively and holistically, contributing to the processes of reconciliation and regional cooperation, and raising awareness about the issues that victims' families are still facing.

The overall adopted approach by BIRN in relation to reconciliation covers a full range of processes and mechanisms associated with WB society's attempts to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation. In doing so, project activities have been tailored to promote possibilities for peace, reconciliation and democracy but at the same time understanding that TJ is not a special form of justice but justice adapted to WB societies transforming themselves after a period of pervasive human rights abuse. In some cases, these transformations happen suddenly, in others, they may take place over many decades. Within the activity scope, and for their effort in promoting reconciliation, BIRN journalists received 14 prizes for their reporting on TJ issues in former Yugoslavia, including the prestigious European Press Prize and Reporters Without Borders Annual Press Freedom Award. BIRN also published ten stories written by local journalists who in 2018 received grants some of them directly covering reconciliation efforts. A very imposing example was that the two BIRN offices in Kosovo and BiH produced a total of 28 thematic TV shows related to TJ, dealing with the past and reconciliation as part of their award-winning television series – TV Justice.

EQ14 - To what extent has the support empowered target groups?

One of the most challenging planning tasks was to meld the target group expectations into a coherent and manageable set of goals across the WB countries. The project's success is measured by how well these goals are met. As the planning stage, the project was driven by a desire to enable journalists from WB to be given the opportunity to have input into the ongoing TJ process. The element of project implementation and structure that most permitted journalists' voices to be raised in the process was the focus in the promotion of more effective TJ strategies, while building capacities of journalists and engaging CS actors in the promotion of more effective TJ mechanisms related to the reconciliation

processes. While the immediate effect of the journalist training is evident in the widespread dissemination of daily journalistic production, the project is also providing a powerful means for journalists to help build the historical record of atrocities inflicted during the war period, and thus to influence the general public and WB governments as they continue the process of TJ. The training events and the study visit to Hague was a good opportunity to meet with representatives of Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office, International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Association of Defense Counsel Practicing before the International Courts and Tribunals and the International Commission on Missing Persons. In addition to the meetings and training, the journalists also used the opportunity to network with representatives of these organizations and to strengthen relationships - which is seen as important for their future reporting on TJ topics in the WB. This was also seen as a prospect to improve the state of reporting in TJ by creating a regional network of journalists who are trained to competently cover all aspects of the process and allow local media to republish high quality contributions.

EQ15 - What factors (internal and external) have been affecting the performance and have they been taken into consideration?

The response to COVID-19 and its project impact in WB was at forefront of the consultation process and the diagnosis followed suit. The pandemic had a negative effect on project implementation. Given the enhanced need for personal safety, the project team had a critical role to play during the pandemic in assessing the continued appropriateness of providing face-to-face events. The constraints concerning the pandemic have been taken into account and this was another project strong point. As soon as the crisis begun, the project team took appropriate measures to keep the project under control and in check. Immediate consultations took place with various target groups as well as with partner organizations. From the perspective of BIRN, the pandemic has made work challenging and set targets uncertain. At the same time, there was a strong belief that the crisis had opened up some opportunities to operate in an online mode. For instance, the project team held seven public promotions of the War Crimes Verdicts Map and Bitter Land mass graves database despite the difficulties that the pandemic imposed. In the same way, it was able to get in touch with students and young activists and present its work despite the constraints when the schools and educational institutions were closed during 2020 (BIRN was unable to physically visit faculties to hold public promotions, so some of the public events were held online).

Lessons learned and good practices

EQ16 - Do the activities funded by the support have potential to be replicated, either in terms of expansion or replication, and have any steps been taken to do so?

BIRN has a keen interest to explore the fair distribution that looks beyond the immediate beneficiaries and target group covered by this action. This is the 3rd consecutive project since 2011 and BIRN's current strategy is to further enhance the cooperation among the targeted journalists (as it's still not optimal) but also to motivate them to work in synergy on TJ topics which they would have otherwise done independently (country by country). By doing so, BIRN's project approach has the potential to be replicated by addressing TJ issues more expansively and holistically, but also by increasing the target group coverage which do not fall within the present project framework i.e. journalists, CS and victims groups. In view of this, replicating the project denotes recognizing additional target groups where BIRN can leverage the key lessons from the completed and otherwise successful project. While the importance of replication in TJ actions in this format are not uncommon (other implementors and geo regions), exact duplications are rare in practice, especially given the amount of knowledge acquired and lessons learned hitherto. For future reference, there is a clear need to increase the target group scope to those categories which have been labelled as indirect in the present TJ implementation environment but do have the potential to contribute to the project's success and further maximize impact beyond the project lifetime. An important group of people are the students and youth in general but also the social-media opinion-makers. Engaging the youth for instance in a future TJ project is important not only because they have been hitherto underrepresented because of their age and social status, but also for the reason that they are generally excluded from adult channels of communication and decision-making. In the WB countries, it is rare that youth are directly represented by CS on delicate topics, hence they have larger challenges than adults in accessing certain types of information, having their voices heard and finding safe spaces to express their views and concerns on TJ processes. In order to include students and youth in TJ project activities it is essential to design outreach plans that openly consider them as a specific group in addition to other converging target groups, not only according to age and gender considerations, but also to reach-out to the most-vulnerable ones (such as orphans who have lost their parents in wars and/or students/youth with disabilities). While the future action should be driven by the above premises, the outreach could be also expanded in relation to coordinating and partnering with CSO's that have direct relationships with prominent professionals such as artists and historians. A good example of the use of art and cultural approaches for outreach could potentially be a project campaign designed to help WB local level (community) citizens contribute to the healing process by submitting artistic works (poems, paintings, woodcarvings, sculptures, plays etc) that represent reflections on their country's violent past and their shared hopes for the future. The importance of including historians and artists has been piloted in the present context with the grantees, when they explored archives of the

ICTY and local courts WB that dealt with war crimes cases. But beyond their immediate contributions (investigative story, video/short film, data visualization, publication, exhibition, multimedia project, social media campaign) the grantees and their peers can be further “exploited” to promote truth, justice and accountability in the WB.

As evidenced within the project framework, working with CS and state level stakeholders is important but having a higher involvement of community-based stakeholders is critical. This is so as in most WB countries the policymakers refer to the need for TJ initiatives to be perceived as authentic by the public, because it is they who are asked to participate in TJ institutions, and who in due course must accept their decisions. By contrast, local communities are, however, more likely to support initiatives that they themselves help to develop and implement. Evidence of established community support for the project is well-demonstrated and their role and contribution needs no in-depth explanation. What needs to continue in a more rounded and tangible way is to involve local communities in the design of future TJ initiatives, thus making them more likely to respond to the unique needs and challenges of each community. Experience has shown that WB TJ initiatives at times are approached in a standardized way thus preventing respective WB national-level strategies to capture the meaning of conflict for specific communities. Increasing the voice of communities in the design of TJ initiatives makes it more likely they will be responsive to local priorities. In practical terms, moving forward, a future initiative may well address issues related to marginalization and disempowerment both of which are the root causes of human rights violations. By enabling communities to be heard in decisions on TJ, partaking addresses the loss of self-esteem and confidence that can result from victimization, which in turn increases local communities’ ability to engage more with TJ processes, and to compel the public and government actors to see them as human beings with dignity and a drive to be treated on the basis of equal opportunity.

EQ17 - Are there any specific practices to highlight and what has made them successful?

Sharing good practices among BIRN project partners and developing adaptable models for use among targeted stakeholders in the WB region has been much appreciated. The intervention builds on the fact that the TJ experiences and challenges felt in one WB country, including what limited donor resources are available, may be very similar among the other targeted countries. The impact of the action relates to practical measures taken successfully in one WB country to increase cohesion and access which may be useful to the others. The regional dimension of the action is important. Its benefits can be seen primarily in the context of its application as a valuable supporting tool which would contribute to better regional cooperation and exchange of good practices between journalists and CSOs (above all) which operate in similar environments and share a common historical and political background and which can

seize the advantage of understanding of the local languages. Thanks to the strengthened cooperation and collective action among the project target groups and stakeholders, multiplier effects are already emerging from the regional dimension of the project and they should potentially generate greater impact with the prearranged creation of the first independent, non-profit regional museum in the WB that brings the comprehensive story of the break-up of ex-Yugoslavia and its aftermath to the attention of as many people as possible in the region and worldwide. Potentially, the museum will offer a captivating, fact-based narrative but it will also attempt to document that TJ issues are heard by a wider population. This will help preserve the archival collection of one of the most notorious periods in recent WB history. The museum's primary mission will be to advance and disseminate knowledge about this unprecedented tragedy and preserve the memory of those who suffered. It will also encourage its visitors to reflect upon the TJ questions realized in the aftermath of wars in ex-Yugoslavia. As conceptualized, the museum will be situated in Sarajevo and the allocated space will include two permanent exhibition floors and a community area of more than 600 square meters. BIRN's goal to create a regional venue for the documentation, study, and interpretation of war history in the 1990's Yugoslav wars is in direct correlation with the production of BIRN's database. Beyond regular journalistic production and war crime trial monitoring, the project team dedicated significant resources to multimedia journalism outputs - from specialised reporting to building databases on the basis of the court documents, photography, forensics and other CSO resources. In an effort to promote judicial and forensic truth, as well as efforts of the families to mark the gravesites, BIRN developed and published the mass graves database which is an interactive, user-friendly online database of mass graves found in BiH, Croatia, Kosovo, and Serbia related to the 1990s wars. The database includes material on the layout, location and surroundings of the gravesites, judicial evidence, open-source investigations, witness testimonies, forensic evidence, videos, drone footage, animations and 3D modelling. It also reflects on the memory culture associated with the clandestine gravesites. This unique database is designed for the general public, journalists, and media, but also for CS activists, academics, policymakers, and decision-makers interested in TJ. It is constantly updated and it will become an integral part of the museum.

The further promotion of a cooperative concept as a successful community-managed and owned institution is expected to be a welcoming idea within the project area. The successful demonstration of this approach will be spilled over to other areas and in this respect, BIRN will continue to expand the work of the platform BTJ programme. It will also continue to support and promote projects with an interdisciplinary and holistic approach in order to access TJ expansively – through educational projects, documentaries, policy papers and reports, exhibitions, digital platforms and maps, quality journalism, investigative reporting and research on conflict studies.

The long-term impact of the above best practices could be even higher if supported by further sustainability measures in close consultation with local and regional stakeholders relevant to the TJ

process. Sustainability ought to be directed towards various areas of support mostly grouped around key components related to expanding the work of the platform Balkan TJ programme, supporting and promoting projects with an interdisciplinary and holistic approach (via educational projects, documentaries, policy papers and reports, exhibitions, digital platforms and maps, quality journalism, investigative reporting and research on conflict studies) and increased coverage and involvement of youth in TJ actions. The concept of museum creation will go a long way in ensuring that TJ efforts are heard by a wider population and the continuous engagement of BIRN as a service provider in projects dealing with TJ is important should not be underestimated.

In conclusion, a good feature and best practice worth highlighting is the production of multitude of articles 8,707 articles (news, analysis, features, investigations and other news genre) produced in English and in all local languages; BIRN BiH published 2,011 articles i.e. three times more than envisaged by the whole project. TJ is a dynamic and ever-evolving subject and the authors have devoted their efforts to different facets of this field of examination, and this has been recognised by media outlets that quoted or republished BIRN stories. Among them are the New York Times, Foreign Policy, Guardian, Voice of America, The World News, Euronews, Liberation, Al Jazeera, N1, Nedeljnik, Novosti, Radio Free Europe, Danas, Klix.ba, Blic, Index, Panorama, Gazetama etc. Via this high level of republications, in particular among mainstream media in WB countries and the leading international media outlets, factual and quality content was provided to the wider audiences, as a counter narrative to the growing denial and revisionism among politicians and their affiliated media.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

There is a clear relevance to the global objective of the CfP which aims to stimulate an enabling environment for cs and pluralistic media, and to empower them to be effective and accountable independent actors, but also to improve their capacity to dialogue with WB governments, thus influencing policy and decision-making processes. The relevance of the project does not only consist of the tailored activities directed towards meeting those objectives but it is also fulfilling its promise of setting a 'direction of travel' toward a more engaged style of policy framework commitment clearly cemented in promoting TJ mechanisms but also in strengthening capacities of local journalists, CS actors and victims' groups to monitor, effectively engage and shape ongoing TJ processes. In terms of target group coverage, the degree of involvement of CS and journalists in this respect is also very good. By contrast, the engagement of CS and victims (empowering to monitor, effectively engage and shape ongoing TJ processes) was not optimal as the latter target group is known to be quite lethargic while some of the CSOs have moved to pastures new.

Efficiency

The implementation is generally observed positively and project management mechanisms have become well embedded by BIRN, as no major issues have been noted in relation to reporting, financial management, knowledge-sharing and stakeholder engagement. The implementation mechanism is appropriate as it has maximized effectiveness and contributed to sustainability of project results. BIRN was fully involved in the design of the project and remained firm in the implementation of the work-plan. As the project adhered to the principle of inclusiveness of cooperation, activities were already consolidated within a wider format offering enough flexibility to satisfy different working methodologies and established national/regional formats. The spread of the pandemic has dealt the project many blows but the project team had revised its strategy and made adaptations in line with the rapidly changing situation as result of the fact that a number of activities were shifted online.

Effectiveness

The progress of each output was conforming to the initial undertaking and they were of good quality. The regional dimension of the project was very important. Thanks to a strengthened cooperation and collective action among the project stakeholders, multiplier effects are already emerging from the

regional dimension of the project. The project team has clearly achieved the results expected, especially in relation to promoting and strengthening TJ mechanisms and processes by regular, in-depth, standardized reporting across the WB. The support provided through the project is of horizontal nature, targeting the entire WB structure. The reported outputs are not fully reflecting the work of the project team - there was a lot more lobbying, mentoring and coaching work behind the scene, involving the permanent engagement of the CS, journalists, national decision-makers and donor representatives, which is not entirely captured in the reports and not fully reflected through indicators.

Impact

Project benefits can be seen primarily in the context of its application as a valuable supporting tool which would contribute to better regional cooperation and exchange of good practices between journalists and CSOs (above all) which operate in similar environments and share a common historical and political background and which can seize the advantage of understanding of the local languages. Thanks to the strengthened cooperation and collective action among the project target groups and stakeholders, multiplier effects are already emerging from the regional dimension of the project and they should potentially generate greater impact with the prearranged creation of the first independent, non-profit regional museum in the WB. The further promotion of a cooperative concept is expected to be a welcoming idea within the project area. The successful demonstration of this approach will be spilled over to other areas and in this respect, BIRN will continue to expand the work of the platform BTJ programme. It will also continue to support and promote projects with an interdisciplinary and holistic approach in order to access TJ expansively – through educational projects, documentaries, policy papers and reports, exhibitions, digital platforms and maps, quality journalism, investigative reporting and research on conflict studies.

Sustainability

The long-term impact of project best practices could be even higher if supported by further sustainability measures in close consultation with local and regional stakeholders relevant to the TJ process. Sustainability ought to be directed towards various areas of support mostly grouped around key components related to expanding the work of the platform Balkan TJ programme, supporting and promoting projects with an interdisciplinary and holistic approach (via educational projects, documentaries, policy papers and reports, exhibitions, digital platforms and maps, quality journalism, investigative reporting and research on conflict studies) and increased coverage and involvement of youth in TJ actions. The concept of museum creation will go a long way in ensuring that TJ efforts are heard by a wider population and the continuous engagement of BIRN as a service provider in projects dealing with TJ is important.

LESSONS LEARNED

Documenting lessons learned along the whole lifecycle of the project, refers to the experience gained by participating in the completed project. BIRN should apply past lessons learned at the beginning of a new venture. The purpose of documenting and applying lessons learned is to encourage improvement in best practices for future projects. The goal is to create a team that learns from its missteps and repeats and improves its successes. This will represent BIRN's commitment to project management excellence and project management opportunity to learn from actual experiences.

LL1

BIRN's strategy to enhance cooperation of journalists and also to motivate them to work together on a TJ topic which they would have otherwise done independently (country by country) is a good lesson learned. Within the activity scope, and for their effort in promoting reconciliation, BIRN journalists received 14 prizes for their reporting on TJ issues in former Yugoslavia, including the prestigious European Press Prize and Reporters Without Borders Annual Press Freedom Award. BIRN also published stories written by local journalists who in 2018 received grants some of them directly covering reconciliation efforts. This needs to continue.

LL2

BIRN continued to publish stories as a part of the BTJ granting scheme. It was able to promote and put to use its archives, thus increasing intercultural dialogue and prospects for reconciliation. It provided grants, guidance and mentorship to young journalists, activists, researchers, and artists, thus improving and enhancing their skills to successfully tackle TJ topics. The project is perceived as a hub for collecting, developing and sharing approaches for gauging the impact of media, aiming to better understand TJ and how it can impact individuals and communities in changing knowledge, attitudes and behavior. Owing to the action itself, the targeted journalists are now capacitated and able to produce standardized and unbiased reports on war crime trials and other TJ topics. This together with the number of BIRN BiH republications in local and regional media will certainly have the potential to increase media outreach. Via the media and trained journalists, the project has the potential to have an effect on other media by bolstering their TJ approach and help create links between independent media outlets to expand their outreach, media literacy and critical thinking skills. This needs to continue.

LL3

The engagement of CS dealing with TJ and victims (empowering to monitor, effectively engage and shape ongoing TJ processes) was not optimal as the former are known to be quite lethargic in the level of engagement which is understandable given the effects of war which include long-term physical and psychological harm. At the same time the number of CSO's which have been actively engaged in this particular area is shrinking, hence the possibility to effectively engage and shape ongoing TJ processes was not high as they have followed other thematical trajectories. This matter needs to be addressed.

LL4

The regional dimension of the action is important. Its benefits can be seen primarily in the context of its application as a valuable supporting tool which would contribute to better regional cooperation and exchange of good practices between journalists and CSOs (above all) which operate in similar environments and share a common historical and political background and which can seize the advantage of understanding the local languages. Thanks to the strengthened cooperation and collective action among the project target groups and stakeholders, multiplier effects are already emerging from the regional dimension of the project and they should potentially generate greater impact with the creation of the first independent, non-profit regional museum in the WB.

LL5

Guaranteeing continuity in provision of support gives credibility to BIRN as successfully implemented projects can serve as references when applying for new projects. The project is likely to have a lasting impact but sustainability depends on further positioning of BIRN as a frontrunner in the area of TJ. It has a strong and long-standing presence in the WB countries and has extensive experience in implementing projects that have served to support and promote schemes with an interdisciplinary and holistic approach in order to access TJ comprehensively (through educational projects, documentaries, policy papers and reports, exhibitions, digital platforms and maps, quality journalism, investigative reporting and research on conflict studies). This needs to continue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are presented in the framework of key issues identified in this report. It is important to focus more strongly on practical recommendations and to work more strategically on areas which are regarded as being especially relevant thus increasing the usefulness of the evaluation. By focusing on areas that are high on the BIRN's agenda, it will also be possible to place more attention in respect to contributing to the realization of TJ issues in a wider regional context.

Recommendation 1

BIRN's next project tackling TJ issues should largely be more community-based and it should include a wide range of actors which play an important role in project activities. The importance of higher stakeholder engagement on a local level in the communities is paramount. A sense of higher public ownership can help foster this kind of commitment especially in those communities where war atrocities took place, as opposed to national political level policy-makers who have other priorities and have no leverage. Clearly, placing a focus on improving effective community engagement, a large part of which includes working more inclusively with CS actors that organize and represent the interests and expectations of local communities and war victims, particularly the youth, would maximize impact in the area of monitoring and effectively shape TJ processes.

Recommendation 2

BIRN's project approach has the potential to be replicated by addressing TJ issues more expansively and holistically, but also by increasing the target group coverage which does not fall within the present project framework. In view of this, replicating the project denotes recognizing additional target groups where BIRN can leverage the key lessons from the completed and otherwise successful project. For future reference, there is a clear need to increase the target group scope to those categories which have been labelled as indirect in the present TJ implementation environment but do have the potential to contribute to the project's success and further maximize impact beyond the project lifetime. An important category are the students and youth in general but also the social-media opinion-makers. While a future action should be driven by the above premises, the outreach could be also expanded in relation to coordinating and partnering with CSO's that have direct relationships with prominent professionals such as artists and historians.

Recommendation 3

BIRN's immediate objective should be to exploit as much as contained knowledge as possible to create value for the organization. Sustainability ought to be directed towards various areas of support mostly grouped around key components related to expanding the work of the platform Balkan TJ programme, supporting and promoting projects with an interdisciplinary and holistic approach (via educational projects, documentaries, policy papers and reports, exhibitions, digital platforms and maps, quality journalism, investigative reporting and research on conflict studies) and an increased coverage and involvement of youth in TJ actions. The concept of museum creation will go a long way in ensuring that TJ efforts are heard by a wider population and the continuous engagement of BIRN as a service provider in projects dealing with TJ should be clearly supported.

Recommendation 4

EU and SIDA should scale-up the assistance. A follow-up action should be launched based upon tested approaches and methodologies. The current intervention provides for transfer of TJ best practices and the WB countries could benefit from replicating in areas where a multi-target group approach is crucial for securing the present results.

Annex 1 Documentation consulted

| YEAR | RELEVANT PROJECT DOCUMENTS |
|--------------------|---|
| 2017 | Description of the Action |
| 2018 | Concept Note BTJ |
| 2018 | Full Application BTJ |
| 2018 - 2019 | BTJ MOTT Reports |
| 2018 - 2019 | BTJ RBF Reports |
| 2018 - 2020 | BTJ SIDA Reports |
| 2018 - 2022 | Project Narrative Reports |
| 2018 - 2022 | Project Interim Financial Reports |
| 2018 – 2022 | Project Legal Documents |
| FURTHER REFERENCES | |
| 2014 | UNEG: Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations |
| 2015 | GIZ: Knowing What Works: Capturing Results Using Contribution Analyses |
| 2018 - 2022 | EU Progress Reports on Albania, BiH, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia |
| 2019 | EU's Policy Framework on Support to Transitional Justice |
| 2021 | ICTJ: Measuring Results and Monitoring Progress of Transitional Justice Processes |
| 2021 | OECD Evaluation Criteria |
| 2021 | SIDA: Evaluation Manual |

Annex 2 List of people interviewed during the inception phase

| NAME | POST | Subject | INTERVIEW METHOD |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|------------------|
| Ms Dusica L. Stilic | Head of Regional Operations | BIRN | Online meeting |
| Ms Nejra Mulaomerovic | Programme Associate | BIRN | Online meeting |
| Ms Marija Ristic | Executive Director | BIRN | Online meeting |
| Mr. Nikola Cace | HR and Operations Officer | BIRN | Online meeting |

| NAME | POST | Subject | INTERVIEW METHOD |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Ms Minha Kreho | Judge | Court of BiH | Online meeting |
| Mr. Irhad Bilic | Adviser | Court of BiH | Online meeting |
| Mr. Bekim Blakaj | Executive Director | Humanitarian Law Centre Kosovo | Online meeting |
| Ms Ivana Zanic | Executive Director | Humanitarian Law Centre Serbia | Online meeting |
| Mr. Ivan Jovanovic | Chief Technical Advisor | UNDP, Serbia | Online meeting |
| Mr. Sven Milekic | Journalist & Editor | Croatia | Online meeting |
| Ms Una Sabljakovic | Journalist & Project Grantee | Deutsche Welle, BiH | Online meeting |
| Ms Lamja Grebo | Journalist & Project Grantee | Freelance, BiH | Online meeting |
| Mr. Barlow Brown | Journalist & Project Grantee | Freelance, UK | Online meeting |
| Ms Selma Korjenic | Director | Trial International, BiH | Online meeting |
| Ms Margarita Ivanova | EU Expert | Freelance, North Macedonia | Online meeting |
| Ms Emza Fazlic | Spokesperson | Missing Persons Institute, BiH | Online meeting |
| Mr. Vasilije Seratlic | Prosecutor | Prosecutors Office, Serbia | Online meeting |
| Ms Iva Vukusic | Historian | Freelance, Croatia | Online meeting |
| Mr. Harald Schenker | Country Director | ZDF, North Macedonia | Online meeting |
| Ms Amina Kravac | Director | War Childhood Museum, BiH | Online meeting |

Annex 3 List of evaluation questions (EQ)

EQs listed in the ToR

Relevance and design

To what extent did the assistance target the needs of its target group?

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the support contributed to the expected results?
- What exactly has changed because of the support (internally and externally)?
- Does the support have any effect on the functioning of other media?

- What is the BIRN's point of view on reconciliation, BIRN's actions and what was the impact of those during the support?
- To what extent has the support empowered target groups?
- What factors (internal and external) have been affecting the performance and have they been taken into consideration?
-

Implementation process

- Have the resources of the support been used in a cost-effective manner?
- How would you evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of project management (including the effectiveness of partnership strategy and stakeholder involvement from the perspective of 'good practice model')
- Did sound financial management contribute to meeting the objectives?
- How would you assess the monitoring system during the support, focusing on relevance of the performance indicators?
- How would you assess the prospects for activities continuing after the end of the support, including the potential of the organisation to be sustainable and what would be the impact of the organisation's identity on this?
- What is the organisation's capacity to take on a mentoring, knowledge-sharing and guiding roles?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the mechanism for engaging stakeholders?
- How would you assess BIRN's ability to report and summarise the link between activity and outcome?

Lessons learned and good practices

- Do the activities funded by the support have potential to be replicated, either in terms or expansion or replication, and have any steps been taken to do so?
- Are there any specific practices to highlight and what has made them successful?

Supplementary and restructured EQs proposed by the evaluator

| Relevance | |
|-----------------------|--|
| EQ1: | To what extent is the intervention still relevant? |
| EQ2: | Is the project relevant to the needs of the targeted population? |
| EQ3: | Is the choice of IP/method of implementation proving to be appropriate? |
| EQ4: | Do all key stakeholders demonstrate effective commitment to the objectives of the intervention? |
| EQ5: | Is the intervention (still) reflecting and benefiting from adequate EU/SIDA added value? |
| EQ6: | What is the current quality of the intervention logic? Are planned outputs and outcomes coherent and feasible, and have key assumptions and risks been clearly identified? |
| | |
| Efficiency | |
| EQ7: | Can the project be seen as efficient? |
| EQ8: | Does the intervention have an adequate internal monitoring system? |
| EQ9: | Are the inputs/resources provided by the various stakeholders adequate for achieving the planned results? |
| EQ10: | Has the intervention encountered any delays and was the planning revised accordingly? |
| EQ11: | Is spending in line with the budget? |
| | |
| Effectiveness | |
| EQ12: | Are the outputs being achieved with the expected quality? |
| EQ13: | Is the project effective? |
| EQ14: | To what extent have the projects results been achieved? |
| EQ15: | Is the intervention having any unintended positive or negative effects? Were the negative effects considered for possible (risk) mitigation? |
| | |
| Impact | |
| EQ16: | What kind of impact was achieved by the project? |
| EQ17: | To what extent are the impacts sustainable and what further improvements are needed? |
| EQ18: | What are the factors that hampered the impact and sustainability of the assistance? |
| | |
| Sustainability | |
| EQ19: | Are the project results sustainable? |
| EQ20: | Are key stakeholders attaining the necessary capacities to ensure the continued flow of benefits/services? |
| EQ21: | Is access to the benefits generated by the intervention affordable for target groups over the long term? |