

**Project:** Youth against discrimination

**Grantee:** Romani CRISS – Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies

**Partners:** ARDOR – Romanian Association of Debates, Oratory and Rhetoric

**Project duration:** 10 months

Interviews with:

Cezara David, Romania CRISS Project Coordinator  
Emanuel Beteringhe, debate coordinator, ARDOR

On-line survey of representatives of the NGOs regional affiliates /coordinators part of ARDOR network involved in project activities (5 replies received):

ARDOR - Sediul Central, Monica Mocanu - Presedinte executiv  
Asociatia Transilvana Disputa, Knopp Ildiko Presedinte  
ARDOR Banat, Andreea Nistor, director dedezvoltare, Sergiu Scripca, presedinte  
ARDOR Moldova, Ciprian Zaharia - Presedinte  
ARDOR Muntenia, Emanuel Beteringhe - Presedinte  
AES, Gelu Hanganu - Presedinte  
ARDOR Transilvania, Emil Mesaros - Presedinte

*In italic information provided by the grantee*

**1. Problem/s addressed by the project and the relevance of the proposed goals and objectives**

The project addressed 3 problems described in rather general terms, with no particular reference to the target groups approached by the project, or the particular context – highschoools.

Problem 1 – public attitudes towards various minorities

*Studies show that significant parts of Romanian population do not want to have as neighbors Roma people 50%, 60% gay, (along with the alcoholics and drug addicts), 42% HIV/ AIDS infected neighbors<sup>1</sup>. Similar attitudes are shown when they are asked about having a gay, a member of a religious minority, etc to live in Romania, in their locality, to work in the same place and accepting them in their group of friends.*

Problem 2 – elite’s attitude towards minorities

*60% of members of Romanian Parliament still believe that Roma people are a setback for Romania’s image and that interethnic conflicts between Roma and Romanians are caused mainly by Roma’s antisocial behavior.<sup>2</sup> Only 20% of Romanian MPs would accept a Roma person or HIV infected people in their family, and only 12% of the interviewed MPs a person would accept with a different sexual orientation. None of the MPs have ever met a person which is not heterosexual. Only 50% of the interviewed would accept a physically disabled person as member of their family and just 30% in the case of mentally or physically disabled person. In terms of religion, the Orthodoxy is considered by 89% of the respondents the fundament of Romanian nation, thus 62% of them think it’s normal to place the Christian symbols in public institutions.*

Problem 3 – lack of information

*Studies and surveys show people’s general belief is based on a lack of information that leads to prejudice, stereotype and, in the end, to discrimination and denial of access to rights.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Public Opinion’s Poll, October 2007, Soros Foundation, Romania.

<sup>2</sup> [http://accept-romania.ro/images/stories/atitudinea\\_parlamentarilor\\_romani\\_fata\\_de\\_discriminare.pdf](http://accept-romania.ro/images/stories/atitudinea_parlamentarilor_romani_fata_de_discriminare.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See the jurisprudence of the Romanian National Council for Combating Discrimination – [www.cncd.org.ro](http://www.cncd.org.ro)

The project proposed to focus on teenage youth – “a period when people’s mind develops a set of values” – in ARDOR network of high schools (in general the best high schools in their region), targeting the future intellectuals

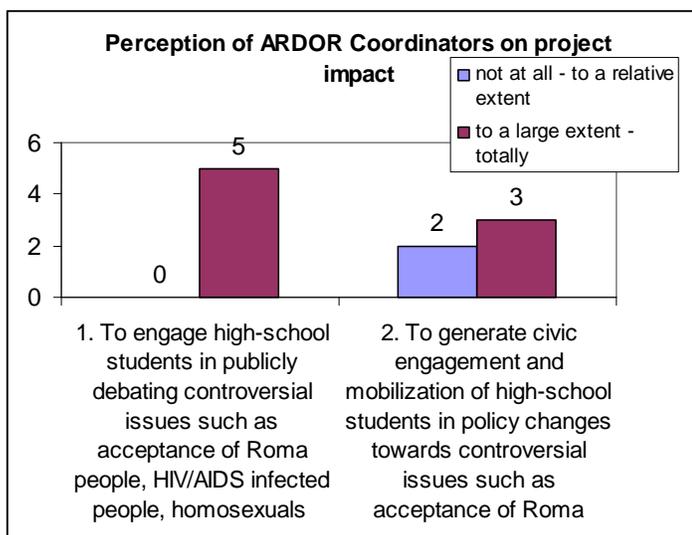
The 30 debates took place in 16 national high-schools, 8 theoretical high-schools, 2 technical high-schools, one commercial school, one informatics high-school, one non-governmental organization, and one university. There is an obvious disproportion between the institutions with theoretical profile and the vocational and technical schools included into the project (the ratio is 25:3). As there is a well-known difference of performance between the two types of institutions, it is likely that the program addressed mostly high-school students with a performance well above average (the youth group least susceptible of discriminating, but predisposed to occupy positions in the upper strata of the social, economic and political hierarchy upon the completion of studies). However, the disparity is due in part to the predilection of institutions with theoretical profile to organize debate clubs. The relative scarcity of debate clubs in technological institutes limited the options of the project implementation unit in selecting places to organize the debates.<sup>4</sup>

**2. Goals and objectives - relevance for the problems described**

<p><b>Goal:</b> to civic engage and mobilize high-school students in publicly debating and policy changes towards controversial issues such as acceptance of Roma people, HIV/AIDS infected people, homosexuals</p>	<p><b>Objectives – section 2.3</b> To involve 1500 high school students and teachers in researching, debating and getting informed on the topics of the project</p>	<p><b>Objectives section 1.5</b> To involve 1500 high school students and teachers in researching, debating and getting informed on the topics of the project</p>
	<p>To raise awareness among 1000 people from Romania about discrimination, diversity and minority realities, as a basic element of a democratic society</p> <p>To support direct reflection of information about various minorities in Romania</p>	<p>To raise awareness among 1000 people from Romania about discrimination, diversity and minority realities, as a basic element of a democratic society</p> <p>To support direct reflection of information about various minorities in Romania</p>

While the problem description refers to the general population, the grantee clarifies why it has chosen to target the youth in particular. Therefore we can say that the goal and objectives are well addressing the problems as described.

*“The activities of this project are a very good tool to make them understand, on their own, that bias and prejudice are an impediment in personal and professional development, as well as incompatible with human rights and promotion of diversity which is vital to our growth.*



<sup>4</sup> Evaluation of the “Youth Against Discrimination Project” done for Romani Criss By Marius Wamsiedel

*Starting from this context, these problems and the project aims to involve the high school students throughout the country in changing their thinking by getting informed. The previous projects implemented by Romani CRISS and ARDOR showed that it's more indicated to work with younger people on anti-discrimination and diversity issues, as they are more prone to change."*

- Objectives are specific and measurable, maybe too specific, and in some cases they refer to activities "to involve young people in researching debating, etc.."

That is why we have also looked at the proposed impact in the application and identified to main areas of impact that the grantee was approaching.

### 3. Effectiveness

*Have the stated objectives been achieved, and therefore how relevant the solutions proposed by the projects for the problems addressed, what were the successes and difficulties, what worked and what didn't?*

Objectives	Indicators / (rate of achievement)
To involve 1500 high school students and teachers in researching, debating and getting informed on the topics of the project	<p><u>No. of high school students and teachers involved in researching, debating on the topics of the project</u>            – 800 (<b>100%</b>) Data in the narrative final report - 600 students directly involved in the debate process and approx. 200 young people - coaches and jury of the debates (mainly university students, former debaters and teachers) participated in the documentation process, elaboration of debate strategies and gave feedback to the strategies proposed and arguments            - 1723 (<b>115%</b>)            the 30 local debates (competitions) had a combined attendance of 1,379 persons            the 6 regional debates (competitions) had a total attendance of 244 persons            The final stage of debate competition at Mamaia gathered about 100 persons.            Attendance figures include debaters and public?? The number of debates was 89.</p>
To raise awareness among 1000 people from Romania about discrimination, diversity and minority realities, as a basic element of a democratic society	<p><u>No. of people from Romania informed about the topic through the festival of diversity, the essay contest, the public debates</u>            1504 (<b>150%</b>)            4 artists promoting the message of non-discrimination            600 participants to the fair /DiversiFest organized in Bucharest, involved in the fair of the NGOs, the graffiti contest, audience to the concerts, etc            900 participants at the debates as audience that received the information and the arguments presented in the debates</p>
To support direct reflection of information about various minorities in Romania	<p>Grantee indicator  <u>No. of schools participating in the project</u>            At least 40 schools involved in the project, by having debate clubs supported by the teachers  <u>No. of people from Romania informed about the topic through the festival of diversity</u>            600 participants to the DiversiFest organized in Bucharest, involved in the fair of the NGOs, the graffiti contest, audience to the concerts, etc – no. is difficult to measure  <u>Weight of participants that considered the event useful, that their information on the topic increased etc.</u></p>

Nine out of ten participants considered the event either useful or very useful, whereas less than 5% considered it little useful or completely useless. 78.2% of the respondents declared that their knowledge of the topic increased by participating/attending the event. Moreover, 2 out of 5 respondents declared that their perception of the topic changed profoundly. Probably, this is the best indicator of the fact that the program achieved its goals.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Evaluation of the “Youth Against Discrimination Project” done for Romani Criss By Marius Wamsiedel  
 CEE Trust – Evaluation of projects funded 2010 – Ancuta Vamesu

**4. Activities / outputs (results as in the application form) –**

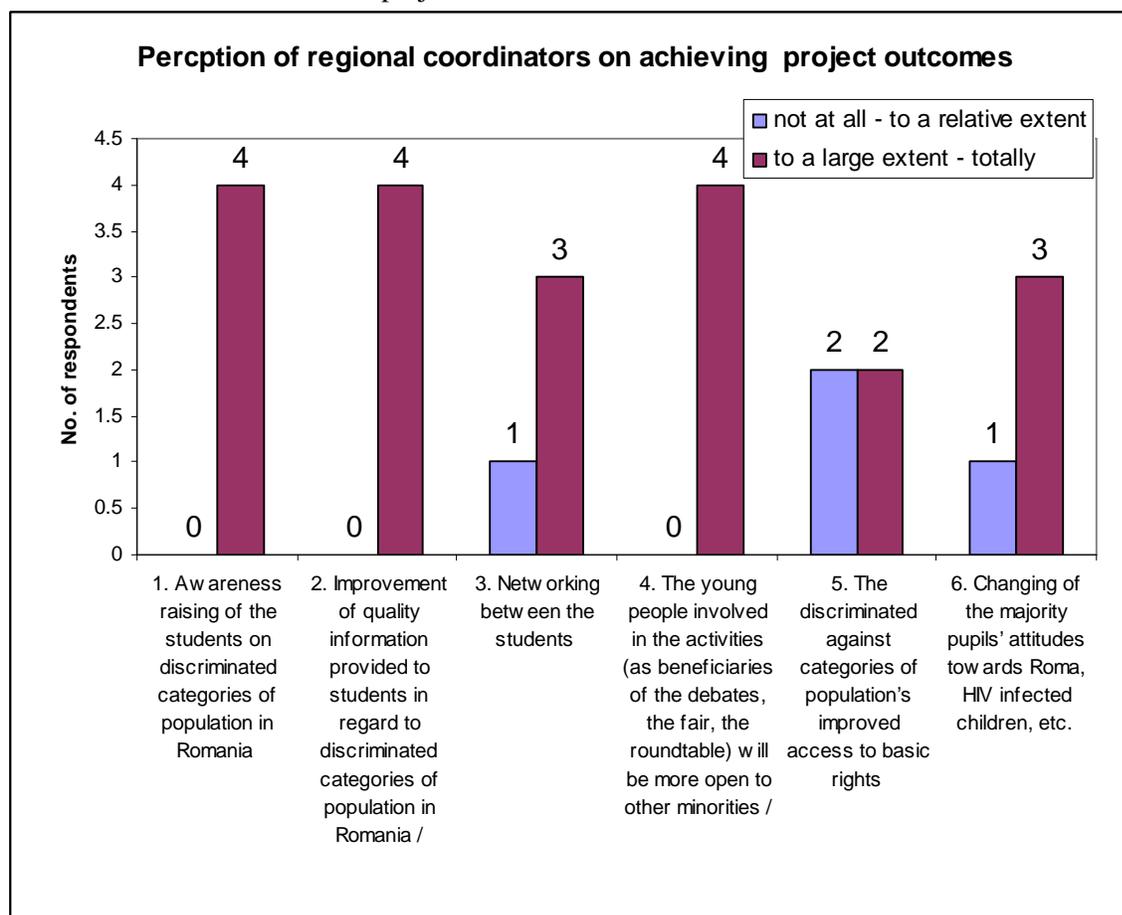
*Have activities been carried out, have expected results been achieved, do they respond to the identified issue(s) and the goal(s) of the project;*

All activities have been carried out as planned.

<b>Activity planned</b>	<b>Activity carried out</b>
1. Organizing 37 debates in Romanian High-schools at local, regional and national level.	- 30 local debates (competitions) - 6 regional debates (competitions) - national competition at Mamaia
2. Organizing an essay contest	<i>An essay contest was launched for students who might be expressing themselves better in writing the 25 essay submitted for the contest, according to the following criteria: originality, personal contribution, convincing argumentation, and absence of discrimination and stereotypes. As result of the assessment, 4 prizes and 21 special mentions were awarded, consisting of diplomas.</i>
Elaborating and disseminating a kit of best practice on debates in the field of anti-discrimination	<i>As a DVD containing the following materials: information on debate, in general (in order to promote it), on various discriminated categories (the Roma people, the HIV-AIDS infected people and the refugees), on antidiscrimination in general and on the project and its activities, implementers and financing body, including photos. 3500 copies of the kit were realised of which 2000 were distributed to 30 high school across the country (see annex 35 - list of high schools) and 400 to the partners.</i>
Organizing a public debate in the field of education	<i>on April 7<sup>th</sup>, it was organized a roundtable/ a debate in the field of education, specifically on nondiscrimination and diversity in education and Romanian society, with the participation of the Ministry of Education – direction Education for Minorities, the National Council of Combating Discrimination (NCCD) and the Information Office of Council of Europe (BICE) and approximately 25 high schools students participating in the project. The institutions present offered their support for future debate in this field.</i>
Organising a Fair of Inter-Culturality/ Diversity	<i>The Fair of Diversity (entitled DiversiFest) was a complex event, consisting in a series of activities and 29 partners (embassies, institutions, organizations): open space concerts of Vita de Vie, Connect-R, Sarmalele Reci and Amaro Del (Serbia), percussion and African dance with Gloria band, folk dance with Bogáncs band, children dance, fashion parade – costumes from Africa and Asia, photo and portrait exhibition, graffiti contest, African accessories and clothes exhibition, rasismmeter, projection of photos, movies and clips, library. The most successful activities were the graffiti contest, the concerts and the library set up in 4 tents. Posters in the subway stations. Two media partners joined the event: Hotnews student and Radio Dance. Approximately 600 people attended the fair.</i>

	<b>Results proposed by the grantee</b>	<b>Results achieved (rate of achievement)</b>
1	37 debates in Romanian High-schools at local, regional and national level (30 public debates, 6 regional competitions and 1 national competition)	37 debates in Romanian High-schools at local, regional and national level (30 public debates, 7 regional competitions and 1 national competition) – according to self-assessment report <b>100%</b>
2	An essay contest	1 essay contest – 25 participants <b>100%</b>
3	a kit of best practice on debates in the field of anti-discrimination	3500 copies of a kit of best practice on debates in the field of anti-discrimination <b>100%</b>
4	a public debate in the field of education	a public debate in the field of education attended by 20 students and representatives of the Ministry of Education, Research and <b>100%</b>
5	a Fair of Inter-Culturality/ Diversity	a Fair of Inter-Culturality/ Diversity 29 partners (NGOs, state institutions and embassies), 4 artists promoting the message of non-discrimination 600 participants to the fair <b>100%</b>
6	1500 students and teachers involved in the project	1700 students and teachers involved in the project <b>113%</b>
7	networking between the students Foreseen: 6 regional debates competitions and 1 national competition	6 regional debate and 1 national competition <b>100%</b>
8	1 audit report and 1 evaluation report	1 audit report and 1 evaluation report 10% of the target group questioned (approx 150 debate participants: students, teachers) <b>100%</b>

We have also looked at how the project outcomes have been achieved.



In addition the project had a significant impact on ARDOR the partner organizations. It increased the organisation's visibility. "this was one of our biggest projects. We ran some debates in high schools that did not have a debate club and now they are asking to establish one."

**5. Visibility** and effectiveness of efforts to:<sup>6</sup> - reach out to the citizens; win public support; work with the media;

The festival was quite visible in Bucharest – it had posters in the subway – agreement with Metrorex. Main concerts were promoted in all magazines that publish cultural news.

#### **6. Vision for the future and strategy of the organization**

Plans for continuation, replicating or expanding of this project. Prospects for continuation and integration of the project within the overall future strategy of the organization / Donors, public authorities or private institutions interested on further engaging in supporting the organization and the problem area addressed. /

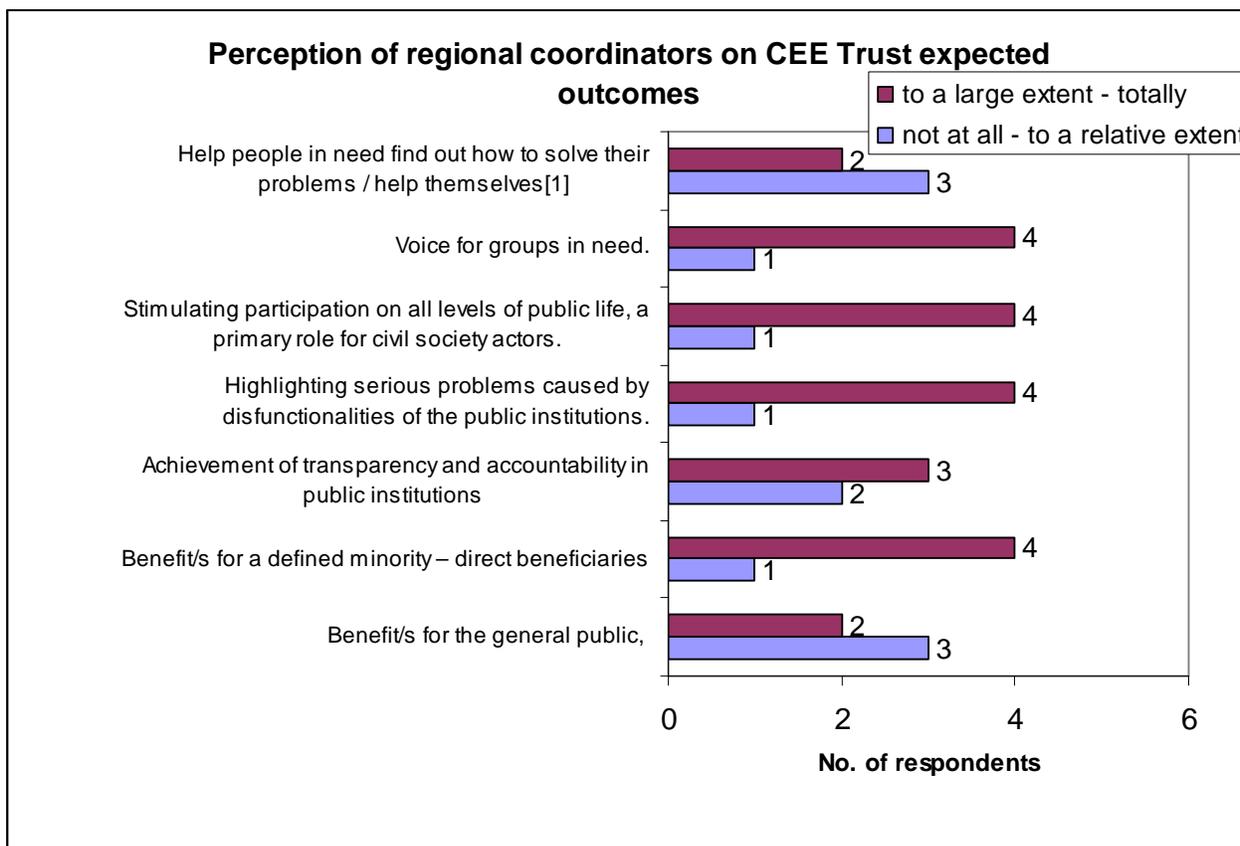
This project is part of a strategic direction of the activity of Romani CRISS – raising awareness among majority non-roma about roma rights. It will continue under a strategic project funded under POSDRU and they run annual campaign for affirmative measures in education.

ARDOR has gained visibility through this project and is currently engaged in a project with Agentia Impreuna and Ministry of Education for teacher training for debates on roma issues.

<sup>6</sup> A critical element referred to as such in CEE Trust's selection criteria

**CNCD (Consiliul National pentru Combaterea Discriminarii – National Council Against Discrimination)** has made a financial contribution towards the national competition and has supported the promotion of the project activities by posting an on-line banner on its site.

**7. Outcomes / impact – CEE Trust desired types of impact, impact for beneficiaries (direct and indirect)** What are their benefits? Where they an integral part of the project development and implementation process, etc.?



<b>Type of impacts under CEE Trust grants</b>	<b>Has your project yield this kind of benefits?</b> <b>Yes/no</b> <b>Provide data and facts to support this type of impact</b>
Benefit/s for the general public,	<b>Limited</b> The general public was reached by the Festival of Diversity, It could have increased with more activities designed in the target schools, communities of these schools, some direct interaction with Roma communities in their neighborhoods
Benefit/s for a defined minority – direct beneficiaries	<b>Significant</b> <i>The direct beneficiaries of the project are the 1700 high school students involved in the debates (public and regional and national competitions) and the essay contest. According to the evaluation conducted within the project their awareness on the issues related to minorities have increased significantly.</i>
Achievement of transparency and accountability in public institutions	<b>Limited</b> <i>The public institutions involved in the project, indirectly, are the schools, where the students attend and prepared the debates and where the public debates took place. Impact on the schools was not measured</i>
Highlighting serious problems caused by disfunctionalities of the public institutions.	<b>Limited</b> <i>Problems and disfunctionalities were topics for debate – less for action Strategic debates - students had to develop a strategy to improve Roma children’s access to quality education, for instance. Other topics addressed by the debates were inspired by the schooling environment and system such as religious symbols in public institutions, people with HIV/ AIDS or disabled people as class mates, the lack of information about national minorities in the history textbooks, access way built for physically disabled people (in wheelchairs), etc.</i>
Stimulating participation on all levels of public life, a primary role for civil society actors.	<b>Limited</b> <i>Students that have attended debates for at least one year become prepared to discuss upon critical issues, to have an informed opinion, to present argument, to have a stand on the issue and, ultimately, to get involved in solving the problems of the society. Debating is an activity for people who participate (or become participants) to the public life. In the strategic debates they proposed plans for solving issues, suggestions for improvement. An opportunity to present a part of the disfunctionalities and problems was the meeting with the Ministry of Education organized in the project.</i>
Voice for groups in need.	<b>Limited but innovatory</b> <i>Through the debates, the students became advocates for the groups in discussion – a case when the majority is a voice for the minority... to general public, this is a plus to listen to arguments, considered more objectives as they do not come from the group in need. The advocating role transcends the debating activity into the life of the people, because the critical thinking and need for accurate information become a way of life. A concrete example for the “voice for groups in need” example is the meeting with the authorities at the end of the project, where majority students spoke about the minorities they’ve learned about.</i>
Help people in need find out how to solve their problems / help themselves <sup>7</sup>	<b>Limited</b> The students involved in the project - a group whose voice is not heard in the institutions, were helped to solve their problems (indentifying sources of information, documenting, finding solutions) and be heard in a concise, argued and convincing manner.

<sup>7</sup> CEE Trust application guideline

- Lessons learnt by the grantee

*Taking into consideration the current statistics (end of 2009), the problem addressed by the project is still valid in case of majority population in Romania. However, in terms of our specific target group, the project has had an impact during the one-year-implementation and, if extended, as method, would be useful in the case of students in schools. But, for a larger impact on all the schooling population, for instance, in Romania, it would need to be backed up by changes in initial training curricula of the teachers (which, at their turn, are not properly informed on these discriminated groups and do not know how to approach the subject or to adapt their methods to cultural diversity and with cultural sensitivity) and in the mainstream curriculum of the schools (in textbooks, to include reference to diversity and nondiscrimination and to include specific topics on these two subjects).*

*The project taught us, as organization, that activities with young people are more than useful; that they need to be done in an active manner, to involve the beneficiaries directly and that change can happen. If to repeat the project, we would include at least two days of festival, a budget for a promotion in the press of the activities and a component of “recruiting” human resources for the non-governmental sector.*

## Conclusions and recommendations

### Project design

- Overall problem was well identified – but not strictly related to the target groups and target regions in the project (no data is available on the situation of minorities in the particular communities, schools, on the perception and attitudes of high school students, teachers on these issues, atmosphere in schools, etc); issue of discrimination was dealt with more in “theoretical terms” not applied to the immediate realities in which the children are living
- Objectives were too specific (more related to activities and outputs) – they do not give a sense of the broader outcomes and the overall vision of the initiative
- The project activities were well designed for a pilot project aiming at initiating majority students about minority issues

### Project implementation

- The project activities were precisely implemented as planned.
- Expected results were achieved.
- The grantee had the initiative of conducting its own impact evaluation through questionnaires among students participating in the project.

### Project impact

- The project had a significant impact on the students involved as shown by the evaluation conducted by the grantee.
- ARDOR will continue on this direction working with Agentia Impreuna and the Ministry of Education for teacher training.