

DEAR in Czech Republic 2020 Context and project observations



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Development Education & Awareness Raising (DEAR) Support Team

The DEAR Support Team is a project of the European Commission:

- Supporting the Commission in the implementation of the EU DEAR Programme, including through
 - Programme Analyses and Studies, Database management, Communications about the Programme
- Supporting EU DEAR projects in the implementation and learning from their work, including through
 - Workshops and Exchanges, Communications about the projects, Learning from and between projects

As part of the work of the Team a series of ‘country studies’ have been commissioned to investigate the context in which DEAR projects operate in different EU Member States. Details of the country studies that have been published to date can be found at

<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/dear/news/dear-programme-reports>.

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Summary

This report provides insight into the context and work of DEAR projects in the Czech Republic. It is based on reviews of policy documents, on interviews with project actors involved in EU grant-funded DEAR projects (carried out during June-July 2020) and on consultations with the Czech Forum for Development Cooperation (FoRS). Interviews and consultations aimed to gather information, examples, perspectives and experience of the project actors concerning the opportunities and challenges for DEAR project implementation in the national context.

The first part of the report looks at how conducive the national context is to DEAR. Concerning the current public, political and media opinion project actors pointed out trends such as decreasing engagement of citizens in the international development issues and populist political narratives that avoid facing and addressing complexity. Independence of a large share of the media space is considered as compromised by belonging to a media-holding owned by a ruling politician. However, one global issue has been gaining weight in the eyes of the Czech public and engaging young people in actions in the streets and classrooms. That has been the topic of climate change.

The report gives an overview of existing national policy documents relevant to DEAR, many of which were initiated in the previous progressive years as a part of the Czech contribution to the implementation of the SDGs and provide a solid background for the development of DEAR. However, one of the main findings of the study is that in 2020 there is a considerable lack of political will to support the development of DEAR at the national level. This has been manifesting in the form of gradual cuts of the national budget for DEAR that now threaten future possibilities of smaller and medium Czech CSOs to be part of the European consortia, to sustain their work and maintain their capacity built over the years. Interestingly, this decrease of funding contrasted with findings of an external evaluation commissioned by Czech MFA that assessed its granting scheme providing co-finance to EU grant-funded DEAR projects as an excellent tool that would make good use of higher budget.

The second part of the report looks closely at what concrete learning stems out of the DEAR projects' implementation. Project actors shared a wealth of experience on how to engage with their audience and reach out beyond them, responding to the challenges perceived in the national context. For example, by introducing complex issues through well-profiled themes that are locally relevant and attract broad public (like climate change or drought that Czech citizens are already concerned about). By crafting awareness-raising campaigns that can reach the "hesitating majority". By experimenting with new framings of topics that are polarising in the Czech context, such as migration. Or by systematic work with media, calibrating the way DEAR issues are being portrayed and providing media feedback and quality data.

The final part of the report offers an overview of the main achievements of the projects interviewed and as insight into what project actors experienced as the main blockages of their performance and what their suggestions for future DEAR projects would be.

1. Is the national context conducive to DEAR?

The DEAR sector in the Czech Republic has been developing for more than 15 years. The first National Strategy for Global Development Education was created in 2011 by active CSOs actors organized in the Czech Forum for Development Cooperation (FoRS). Together with a stable level of DEAR funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, these conditions were allowing a steady development of the DEAR field. However, this trend changed during the last four years as multiple changes at the political and institutional level have crystallized into an increasingly challenging environment.

The current Czech government, led by the Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, is manifesting populist and nationalist narratives. Since the new government came to power in 2018, a series of changes at the political level have started to compromise the status quo. For example, from 2018, the position of a Minister for Human Rights was cancelled. As well a number of progressive steps at national policy level initiated in the previous years in relation to the Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030, a policy document that reacts on the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda as a Czech contribution to the implementation of the SDGs, had lost their political priority.

A dramatic change for the DEAR sector came with a cut of national funding that from 2020 equals to 1/3 of what it used to be in 2016. These unprecedented changes have left many DEAR actors with a blurred future horizon. At the same time, current data on public opinion relating to global issues indicate that Czech society would need even more DEAR than ever.

1.1 Public, media and political opinion relating to international development issues

1.1.1 PUBLIC OPINION RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

In June 2019 Eurobarometer conducted interviews focused on the relation of EU citizens to development cooperation. Even though more than 2/3 of the Czech respondents (68%) believed that it is important to provide support to the developing countries, compared to other EU countries, it was the second-lowest number. When it came to other indicators, such as, e.g. solutions to poverty issues or implementation of sustainable development, Czechs were among those who perceived support of the developing countries to be least important.¹

In July 2019 a research of public opinion focused on awareness of SDGs in the Czech population was conducted with the result that 3 out of 10 Czechs have ever heard of SDGs. The goal that the population sample found the most relevant was Health and Quality Life. And even though for a sustainable future, the SDGs should be understood holistically, questions of poverty, hunger, inequalities or partnership for reaching the goals were lower ranking in terms of priority.²

OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) regularly publishes a Better Life Index that includes 11 indicators. In the Index from 2017 that was comparing 35 economically developed, democratic countries, the Czech Republic indicated a shallow level of civic participation and engagement.³

According to Pathways to Prosperity: Migration and Development in the Czech Republic report, the word „migration“ has become a hot-tempered word in the Czech context after the so-called migration crisis, connected to negative emotions such as fear and the feeling of vulnerability. The majority of public debates, where the word „migration“ is mentioned, quickly turn from facts to impressions and many categorical judgements are made.⁴

According to reflections of the interviewed project actors, the following factors that negatively affect DEAR can be noted:

- Awareness of the SDGs in the broad public is rather low.
- There is an overall decline of interest in the DEAR issues, increasing negative sentiment.
- Compared to 2005, when work with the MDGs started, the broad public was more interested back then. Over time, and especially during the last couple of years, or from the time of the migration crisis, the sensitivity of the Czech public has taken a negative direction. And the sentiment of worries of migration remains.
- Reductionist perspective: Why should we care about what is happening in the world? Important is what is happening here.

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- Decreasing interest and more negative sentiment is reflected as well at a low level of motivation and willingness to engage and volunteer in campaigning activities of the CSOs. What is perceived as a clear exception to this trend is the issue of climate change, as described below.
 - Increasing conservatism among young people – secondary school and university students incline more towards conservative values.
 - Hesitance to back up DEAR values among peers – peer pressure phenomenon among young people

Amongst the factors that positively support DEAR are:

- Czech experience with longterm drought makes climate change related challenges in the South more relatable, although intensity/extremity-wise it is incomparable, Czechs are already concerned, and interest in these issues is increasing. . Climate change is an issue that resonates with a significant number of young people who are actively engaging in climate movements, taking part in climate strikes (Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion Czech Republic) and initiating school projects and larger discussions.
- And when it comes for example to fair trade, Fair Trade ČR/SR had observed a fundamental difference compared to campaigning and awareness-raising efforts in the recent past when fair trade products were hardly available in the Czech shops. At the moment, Fair Trade has strong visibility in media as well, thanks to an increasing presence of FT products in a variety of shops. Consumers can easily buy them even randomly, looking for a specific product, but intentional demand keeps growing too (thanks to the visibility of the FT in the media space, exhibitions and awareness-raising activities)

1.1.2 POLITICAL OPINION RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The political environment changed utterly between 2016 – 2020 and, from the DEAR perspective, this created a significant change of the context, for example, for advocacy work. „Projects written in 2016 assumed that the Government Council for Sustainable Development would be functioning, there would be ongoing progressive steps that started with the Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030, that the Czech Development Agency would not collapse. And due to the change of the government, none of this came true..“

Based on a decision of the new government, Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030 was removed from the Office of Government to the Ministry of Environment. This significantly weakened its relevance for implementation at the governmental level. Despite the vast scope of goals of the Agenda 2030, these steps reduced it to environmental issues.

The Ministry of Environment doesn't seem to have tools to activate other Ministries therefore, its level of engagement with the Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030 is considered as rather formal. What remains positive is that the CSO actors observe an overall level of consensus among policymakers and officers of the Ministries, so issuing new proposals is not considered to be a problem. However, they see that the recommendations are being blocked at the highest level.

The current political reality is illustrated by the fact that the Prime Minister is suspected of clashes of interest as the owner of a food, chemicals and media-holding company that received EU subsidies, and faces police charges over another issue involving EU subsidy fraud.

Further observations of the project actors:

- Activities that used to be well on track are now stuck. Czech contribution to the Green Climate fund was supposed to increase compared to the previous years. But in fact, the latest proposal of the Ministry of Environment was half of what it used to be, and the Prime Minister blocked it entirely

referring to COVID crises as „not a good moment to share funds with the developing world when it’s needed here“.

- When it comes to sustainability-related policies, in the Czech context, requests or pressure coming from the civil society and public space don’t seem to influence policy making level.
- It is difficult to advocate for an issue that is not sufficiently recognized at the national level (for example, Business and Human Rights legislation isn’t yet an established topic in the Czech Republic). Hence only a few policymakers are focusing on this issue. And the overall tendency among politicians is to wait for a European position towards the legislation before any national position is adopted; not the other way round (the more nation-states would take the policy, the easier the negotiations could be at the European level)
- „I often feel that it is easier to achieve goals at the European level or the local municipal level, but at the national level, it is complicated. The fact that the EU is sending us impulses and measures is our sake, so at least something needs to be implemented at the national level.“

Populist political rhetoric is deepening contradictions (the case of migration)

- According to the project actors focusing on the issue of migration, in Czech politics, narrative interconnecting development cooperation, migration and integration was stopped in 2008. And since then these two areas have been kept separate. Development cooperation has been communicated separately from migration and integration even though it should be complementing each other.
- The CSOs pointed out a large contradiction between Czech politics that is being talked about and Czech politics that is being done, pointing out that among top politicians, populist claims such as „we won’t accept any migrants“ are common (the Czech Republic hasn’t accepted any refugees during the period of the migrant crisis). But at the same time, politicians are creating massive programs of economic support to attract hundreds of thousands of foreign workers.
- However, if we attract foreign nationals to perform the less popular jobs only because it is economically convenient for the Czech Republic, there’s not enough space for integration. And what lacks is a public discussion about the fact that more than 500 000 people of foreign nationalities live and work here.
- So the CSOs try to explain these contradictions and share it with the public. However, they conclude that the non-profit, non-governmental sector is compensating for the state institutions, or even working on their behalf, in a position of being easily blamed by the public, without being publicly backed by the state.

DEAR is not a political priority (a case of the DEAR funding)

- Project actors observe an abrupt decrease of support from the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since 2019, the MFA has stopped co-financing the EC funded DEAR projects (DEAR was taken away from the Trilateral grant scheme). Bilateral grant scheme budget has radically decreased.
- According to the project actors, the Czech MFA tends to argue that the development cooperation needs to be done directly in the partner countries, suggesting that global development education and awareness-raising are not related to the field of development cooperation.
- Even though aiming at a change directly in the priority countries of the development cooperation policies makes sense, the question can be whether cutting the national funds for the DEAR isn’t a way to restrict projects that would be coming up with suggestions what local politicians should do.

Assisting factors:

- The new working group „Climate Change Education“ was created within a 2-year long project on the SDGs agenda run by the Czech Ministry of Environment (collecting data on barriers and gaps that a government aiming at good governance should target)
- At the national level, the functioning of platforms (such as Czech Forum for Development Cooperation) is essential as they act on behalf of the CSOs.
- There is a number of other active CSO platforms: Green Circle, Social Watch, Climate Coalition, Forum 50:50, Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organizations, Standing Conference of Educational Associations (SKAV)
- Compared to the national level, the regional level is more accessible to advocacy work – local politicians, municipalities. Cooperation with municipalities relies on active clerks in the municipal offices, on enthusiastic teachers at the schools. Their decisions may have limited impact, but project actors find it meaningful.
- Experience of some CSOs shows that political level is accessible through personal connections to political parties, through politicians supporting the SDGs for example.
- In the absence of political openness at the national level, the CSOs turn towards the MEPs and keep sharing briefing papers and suggesting positions for the national level.

1.1.3 MEDIA OPINION RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Since a significant part of the Czech mainstream print and on-line media space currently belongs to the media-holding owned by the Prime Minister, more genuine allies of the DEAR issues and the CSOs space tend to be found within the remaining independent media space.

Project actors interviewed shared a perspective that media opinion primarily reflects the political view. This mutual interconnection was illustrated by a negative public image of the topic of migration. According to the CSO representatives, this perception will not change unless politicians would start to talk about it in an objective manner which would subsequently translate into more objective media discourse.

- In the public space data on migration are entirely missing. Even though they would be available, neither journalists, nor the public have them. So it is possible to publicly claim complete nonsense and nobody minds because there are only a few experts that understand the context.
- Media don't even do that intentionally – they lack information and are often quite grateful to get access to it. (CSOs try to adjust media perception and improve their level of knowledge so that they could circulate more objective articles based on data and numbers.)
- One of the interpretations of the reasons behind this lack of quality information on migration is the existence of populist frameworks crafted by politicians to enable them to describe reality as black and white.
- Media space is interested in the level of inequalities at the national level (gender), but rarely gives space to the global perspective.

Assisting factors:

According to the project actors, interest of the Czech media in the DEAR issues tends to be mediated by:

- resonance at the political level,
- interest in specific themes (e.g. sustainable fashion),
- interest in a level of emotions.

Example from a DEAR campaign on decent work conditions: framing such as Child Work in Bangladesh was attracting media to communicate about corporations that don't fulfil their commitments, about principles of sustainable fashion and environmental impacts of the fashion industry.

1.2 Global Learning/Campaigning-Advocacy multi-stakeholder, governmental and national CSO network policies or strategies

A concept of Global Development Education (GDE) has been systematically developing in the Czech Republic since 2005. An important milestone was the adoption of the **National Strategy for GDE**. Creation of the Strategy was coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and it was implemented between 2011 – 2015.⁵

The key actors for the realization of the GDE have been since the very beginning the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS), with the MFA funding of GDE projects through the Czech Development Agency.⁶

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) has been responsible for quality embedding and development of the GDE in the formal and non-formal education from early education to the life-long learning level of education. In practice, the engagement of the MEYS was happening mainly through activities of state institutions such as National Institute for Education and National Institute for Further Education (that recently merged into National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic). MEYS hasn't been reaching out towards the CSOs directly, activities of its institutions were providing methodical support to teachers and educators implementing cross-cutting topics of the national curricula, part of which includes DEAR issues.⁶

A continuous dialogue between DEAR stakeholders from state institutions (MFA, MEYS, CDA), organisations directed by the MEYS (National Institute for Education and National Institute for Further Education), universities and the CSOs, have been stimulated and facilitated by the civil society sector.⁶

The National Strategy (NS) enabled the design of a joint framework for the GDE and the start of closer cooperation among civil society organizations, institutions and schools. Among its goals was the integration of GDE in all levels of the formal education curricula. To increase awareness of the DEAR topics among relevant target groups, mainly through the DEAR projects implemented by the CSOs and funded by MFA / CDA and the European Commission. And to guarantee to fund for the GDE, to develop cooperation among the GDE stakeholders and increase the quality and efficiency of the GDE.⁶

As part of the results, principles of the GDE were incorporated in several cross-cutting topics of the national curricula for elementary and secondary schools. However, this wasn't enough to embed the GDE at all levels of the Czech educational curricula. The weak point was a lack of indicators that would enable continuous evaluation of the implementation of the NS. Later the National Strategy was actualized and extended from 2016 to 2017.⁶

In 2018 the National Strategy for GDE was replaced by a **Strategy of Global Development Education and Awareness Raising on Global Issues**, valid from 2018 to 2030. It is based on current strategic documents at the national level, and it resonates with their aims. The main goal of the Strategy is: „to ensure that all the citizens of the Czech Republic have access to information about global development, to motivate them to take an active approach towards solving of global challenges and to equip them with competences needed to be able to contribute to sustainable development of our world“.⁷

Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030 – a policy document that reacts on the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda as a Czech contribution to the implementation of the SDGs. The goal set for the area of education is: „Education develops the individual potential of learners and their ability to both manage and influence changes; education supports cohesive society oriented towards sustainable development“.⁸

The Strategy of the Czech Educational Policy till 2020 – one of its four main goals is defined as: „development of active citizenship creating dispositions for solidary society, sustainable development and democratic governance“.⁹

Foreign Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic (2018 – 2030) – considers as an essential factor for its implementation: „strengthening the visibility of development issues in the formal and non-formal education sector through DEAR and more effective translation of the topics of sustainable development into the educational system, including respective methodical and didactic support for educators“.¹⁰

The Main Directions of the Educational Policy ČR 2030+ - defines as a strategic goal: „focus education more on acquiring of the competencies needed for active civic, professional and personal life“.¹¹

1.2.1 CHALLENGING FUTURE OF FUNDING FOR DEAR

DEAR has been funded from both national and international sources. The only institution providing longterm and regular funding for DEAR has been the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Program of International Development Cooperation of the Czech Republic.

As one of the project actors remembered, historically one of the initial reasons for the foundation of the Czech Development Agency (CDA) was to provide support to the Czech CSOs so that they were able to take part in the European project consortia. And till recently, the CDA was providing the primary source of funding for the projects realized at the national level (bilateral cooperation), as well as the primary source of co-financing for the EuropAid DEAR projects (trilateral cooperation).⁶

Recent DEAR budget cuts (bilateral cooperation)

Granting scheme Global Development Education and Awareness Raising has been an essential source for the DEAR funding since 2004. Recently it decreased dramatically to approximately 300 000 euro per year estimated for 2020, 2021 and 2022. For comparison, the annual budget was about 1.000.000 euro in 2016; 770.000 euro in 2017; 540.000 euro in 2018 and 385.000 euro in 2019. ⁶

Recent DEAR budget cuts (trilateral cooperation)

Program of trilateral cooperation was co-financing projects implemented by Czech subjects that were awarded a grant from the EC or other European donors. Till 2015 the funding oscillated between 260 000 – 400 000 euro per year. That enabled Czech CSOs to enter into cooperation with international partners and join larger consortia. Representatives of the CSOs and the project target groups gained know-how and new experience needed. Czech society was enriched by new methods, good practices and knowledge coming from abroad. Since 2016 this support started to decrease. According to the MFA, the intention was to fund direct support in the priority countries of the Czech Republic, not any further work on the national level. Since 2019 the DEAR activities implemented at the national level are no more eligible for funding from the trilateral cooperation. ⁶

This leaves the CSOs with the sole possibility to apply for co-finance in the shrinking pool of resources that remained in the budget for bilateral cooperation for all the projects realized at the national level. As a result, it is clear that chances of small and medium-size Czech CSOs to become lead or partner organization in the upcoming DEAR calls have been essentially threatened. The current situation is challenging for the sustainability of the CSOs and continuity of their activities. And there is a risk that the DEAR capacity created the within the Czech CSO sector thanks to the EuropeAid projects will get gradually lost if the Czech CSOs will have to let their experienced project staff go due to the decrease of national funding.

Many organizations look for funding in calls that are not explicitly focused on DEAR and GDE, but still can support the development of new methodologies and further dissemination. For example, the Operational Programme Research, Development and Education managed by Ministry of Education (European

Structural Funds). Another source of funding can come from municipalities, private funds and foundations. But these grants usually don't support the development of longer-term projects.⁶

Without sufficient funding, further development of the DEAR activities, neither continuity of the gained know-how, experience and partnerships can be guaranteed. Therefore it is contradicting with the responsibility to keep increasing awareness of the broad public about global challenges and to keep strengthening a sense of global citizenship among Czech citizens. And as current research of public opinion in the Czech Republic shows, this kind of work might be needed more than ever.

1.2.2. EVALUATIONS AND MONITORING RELEVANT TO DEAR IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Before DEAR was taken away from the Trilateral funding scheme, an external evaluation of this scheme commissioned by Czech MFA, came with a finding that it was an excellent tool and it would make good use of more modalities and a higher budget. The evaluation was highlighting a financial leverage effect that was particularly high in case of DEAR projects (for every Czech Crown invested from the national funding there would be activities worth more than 6.7 of its value realised between 2016 and 2018).⁶

Data gathered for this evaluation by Czech Forum of Development Cooperation provide a glimpse look at what the EC funded DEAR projects brought to the Czech society:

- Compared to CSOs from the EU13, Czech CSOs were highly successful in the EU DEAR calls. In the period 2014 – 2016 the Czech applicants were the most successful Lead Applicants from the EU13 countries.
- DEAR projects financed from the EC have been the main engines of the GDE implementation into the Czech curricula, and they enabled a number of innovations of the educational system.
- Modern pedagogical approaches such as Global Storylines, storytelling, Global Curriculum Model, Global Schools, methods of impact assessment, methods of work with the SDGs, are present at the Czech educational scene thanks to the DEAR projects.
- Czech NGOs have become respected partners at the international level (connected to North-South Centre, GENE, CONCORD) as well as lead agencies of DEAR project consortia.
- Cooperation at the pan-European level brought significant benefits to the field of policy and advocacy work.
- Impact of cutting the Trilateral budget scheme down would force the CSO actors to change the whole structure of their funding – and step out of the DEAR project and other projects that require co-finance.

Another set of findings comes from monitoring done by the Czech School Inspectorate (focused on cross-cutting topic Education in Global and Development Context during the school year 2015/2016). Data showed that more emphasis was given to environmental/ecological topics compared to other issues (from the area of education for sustainable development and global development education). And only a small share of schools was applying activating and participatory learning methods. So the recommendations from the Czech School inspection were¹²:

- Dedicate more attention to themes related to the topic of the interconnection of the world, actual news and issues of development
- Use more of activating methods of learning.
- Establish a position of coordinator for the integration of global and development topics at schools

At an academic level, research on the relationship of young people to active citizenship was conducted between 2015 – 2018 by Masaryk University Brno in cooperation with several European universities. Researchers suggested that low active engagement can be caused by an inability to orient oneself in

current public and political issues, which is connected to with perceived lack of information at the side of both the young people and their teachers. Level of participation positively correlated with factors such as: being more informed and being interested in political, global, European, environmental or social issues. According to this research, the level of youth activity can be negatively impacted by a fear of self-expression and a sense that „nobody is interested in our opinion“. ¹³

In the Czech context, it's generally educators and schools who provide proof of the positive impact of GDE on both students and the broader community. According to a research conducted by member organizations of Czech Forum for Development Cooperation (FoRS), teachers consider GDE to belong to a foundation of education for the 21st century, and they can perceive the benefits on both personal and more substantial social level. ⁶

2. Major challenges and opportunities for DEAR projects, and their responses to this context

2.1 Projects' interpretation(s) on various DEAR dimensions

INTERPRETATION OF "QUALITY DEAR"

According to the interviewed project actors, quality DEAR for a target group of teachers and educators would consist of a combination of the following elements:

- awareness-raising about the DEAR issues
- tools for implementation of the GDE, methodical materials
- presence of non-Eurocentric perspectives
- self-assessment tools (students can evaluate change of their attitudes)
- support of progress of the teachers
- cooperation with the whole school and local community
- measuring the impact of GDE: based on the impact of the activities of students (GDE translated into the interests and skills of students)

For a target group of the wider public:

- Complex issues, such as the SDGs, are introduced through well-profiled themes, that are based on a research of public opinion so that it attracts large public (climate change or drought that Czech citizens are already concerned about)
- Global interconnection explained on a locally relatable model example
- Making DEAR topics feel as close as possible
- Attractive information (personal story „hook“) to open up the door for objective information and facts
- No guilt-tripping, following ethical codex and code of conduct on images and messages
- Positive communication, accurate description of the context
- Quality data enabling to always back claims by factual information
- Contracted media coverage, and not only traditional media (campaigns on Instagram etc.)
- Simple and understandable communication style

For policymakers:

- Focus on efficiency, constructive solution-oriented approach that can create more impact

-
- ability to network and create partnerships
 - an integrated sense of responsibility for the situation in the South

INTERPRETATION OF “PUBLIC AWARENESS”

- If something is said to be supportive of the people in the South - how exactly it works?
- Willingness to pay a fair price to the smallholders in the South (asking for accountability within the whole supply chain)
- Sensitivity to a level of complexity, ability to challenge habitual stereotypes
- Awareness of interconnection between our lives and the lives of people around the world
- Openness to explore what needs to be changed to contribute to sustainable development locally and globally
- Critical reflection about the complexity of the current world instead of buying into quick fixes and simplistic solutions

INTERPRETATION OF “CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING”

- Needs to point out deeper inequalities (e.g. responsible consumption – responsibility shouldn't be expected to come primarily from consumers, there are complex issues of purchase power, income)
- SDGs Awards – examples of good practice coming from the corporate sector considered as a greenwashing by some of the project actors
- A suggestion of a shift towards social solidary economy to relate to the SDGs from a critical perspective – embedding fair trade in a context of food sovereignty, community-supported agriculture, degrowth, cooperatives, democratization, development at the local level
- Alternative economic models (cooperatives, community-based examples) need to first cope with the negative historical connotation and experience from the communist era if they are to be introduced as generative alternatives challenging the hegemony of global shareholder capitalism.

2.2 Communication approaches, engagement of audiences, and dissemination beyond the audience

2.2.1 HOW DO DEAR PROJECTS COMMUNICATE WITH IMMEDIATE AUDIENCES/TARGET GROUPS?

- Massive awareness-raising campaigns to reach the broad public, particularly the „hesitating majority“: on social media, in classical media, in public space
- The assumption that the way how the DEAR issues are communicated has an impact on the „hesitating majority“ because the issues are not of key concern to them
- Awareness-raising campaigns should reflect marketing processes. Messaging well-adjusted to the target groups. Social media posts built on stories (picture and short text). Longer texts focus only on the target group of experts.
- A supportive factor is if experts in media communication are included in the project staff.

For some projects, adopting a **central concept** was useful. In such case the campaign template would be prepared by a PR agency cooperating with the lead agency and adjusted by partners in cooperation with local PR agencies; Helps to „set a tone“, for example by offering templates for the posts.

Several projects developed **awareness-raising and capacity building activities for journalists**, which among other goals can contribute to establishing longterm relations with respective media:

- Workshops for students of journalism (how to write about migration)
- Press trips for journalists have a large impact on the media outcomes, on quality partnerships with the journalists.
- Media packages for journalists offering primary data on the issues are welcome by the media.

One project actor recommended **media monitoring** as a longterm strategy to offer systematic feedback to the printed and social media, calibrating their understanding to respective topics by providing them with suggestions of an adjusted version of their messages.

Cooperation with a PR agency can be a huge benefit that helps to focus the communication outcomes better. A precondition of a successful experience:

- own data and quality monitoring reports, accurate indicators and stories from the concrete people
- the right level of understanding between the CSOs and the PR agency (finding PR professionals personally interested in the issues)
- a lot of time invested in external communication experts being able to perform independently, requiring less supervision from the CSOs (worth long-term type of cooperation)

What is being communicated?

Examples of ways that helped project actors to communicate complex issues (such as the SDGs) and sensitive issues (such as migration) to the broad public:

- Introduction of complex issues, such as the SDGs, is more natural through well-profiled themes and model examples that are locally relevant.
- Czech experience with longterm drought makes climate change related challenges more relatable, Czechs are already concerned, and interest in these issues is increasing.
- Other suggested entry points for more complex development issues: the responsible consumption, food sovereignty, climate and agriculture
- Persisting economic (among others) inequalities between the Western and Eastern Europe as an entry point to social solidary economy, which is rather a new concept in the Czech CSO space relating to a variety of SDGs (environmental, economic, social perspective),
- Experience with dividing the SDGs into the 5Ps (people, planet, prosperity, peace, partnerships)
- Concrete stories of concrete people shared with suggestions of solutions, ability to describe conditions in the supply chains and problems of the farmers in the South; and suggest how to consume responsibly

Framing of polarising topics

- Migration in the Czech context is a polarising theme (the Czech Republic hasn't accepted refugees). „If there were many refugees in the Czech Republic, we would speak about it regardless if it was popular or not. But since the situation is different, we look for what framing is relevant.“
 - The migration doesn't refer just to refugees (social mobility, pointing out work migration)
 - Climate change makes people move (climate migration)
 - Interconnection with sustainable development
 - Migration and development: „Since the Czech consensus is to help migrants where they are so that they don't come here, we wanted to show that help provided directly in the countries of origin makes sense, but it's important to support integration.. and relate these topics.“

Human stories first: photography exhibition of human portraits by a recognised Czech artist, accompanied by short stories, anyone can imagine themselves in the shoes of their protagonists (migrants)

Hope-based communication:

- Message: There is more of what connects us than what divides us.

- Foreigners are not anonymous groups of people, and everyone knows someone who is a foreigner („...but this one is an exception..“). So suddenly, there is a considerable sum of exceptions.
- Example of a strategic shift in communication: „ our first campaigning video was illustrating how each of us is different, pointing out that it doesn't matter. But the main focus there was on difference and subsequent misunderstandings or conflicts. And we realized that the audience had no one to identify with. The current campaigning video is targetting the „undecided majority“ (I'm not a racist, but..), enhancing the perspective of what relates us. And this learning changed as well our approach to activities (workshops, events for youth), not only the style of articles and campaigning videos. The goal is self-reflection, re-assessment of one's attitude.“
- description of the situation comes hand in hand with suggestions of solutions and good practice

2.2.2. HOW DO DEAR PROJECTS COMMUNICATE WITH WIDER AUDIENCES?

- Engaging not like-minded media: tabloids that likely reach the target groups CSOs usually don't reach (controversies around the Czech export of military industry)
- Useful to contract extensive media coverage (not only traditional media) to balance the rhetoric of the mass media.
- Impactful interviews in the on-line TV (though this format was described as attracting personal attacks by haters)
- Choice of space for awareness-raising exhibitions in a public area: railway stations, shopping centres, summer festivals, reaching out from the capital to the regions
- Human stories mediate connection with diverse audience well (exhibitions raising awareness on conditions of workers in the shoe industry in public parks at 70 places)
- Communication specialists were trying to reach out to television and other „popular and mainstream media spaces.“
- Focusing on target groups that are on the extreme side of the spectrum considered as not a cost-efficient orientation
- Focus on the hesitant majority provides more chance to contribute to changes; Main focus on the youth within this target group.

2.3 Making Change: How does the project make a change (given the national context)?

Opportunities and limitations of achievement

2.3.1 MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGES

Fair Trade ČR/SR: [Trade Fair Live Fair](#)

Visits of representatives of producers from fair trade cooperatives from Mexico and Ivory Coast:

- press conferences, meetings with local business representatives, visits to schools
- successful media coverage (appearance in several TV programmes)
- support of relationship building with journalists and local businesses engaged in the FT

Caritas Czech Republic / [MIND \(Migration. Interconnectedness. Development.\)](#)

[Pathways to prosperity: Migration and development in the Czech Republic](#)

Czech national report contributing to [Our Common Home](#) series of publications that are articulating a vision on migration and development based on the experience of the Caritas network working with migrants and refugees. Offering a perspective that migration and development in Europe and other

regions of the world are more closely linked than commonly believed, this series of publications aims at promoting a more balanced and evidence-based debate at a time when migration has become a deeply contentious issue in Europe. Mainly, it raises awareness about the positive aspects that migration can have at the global level and its relation to sustainable international cooperation.

Wontanara / [Make Europe Sustainable For All](#)

Most significant media impact had a [press conference in the United Nations Information Center in Prague, introducing the new IPPC report](#). This event focused on enhancing interconnections between food security, climate change and sustainable agriculture enjoyed the high interest of media and high attendance of journalists (80 media outcomes, 30 different media)

[Hungry Planet exhibition](#) caught the attention of a wide range of target groups (large public, students in both capital and regions) as it managed to frame the SDGs agenda in a relatable way and engage people into the conversation about the SDGs, sustainability of agricultural production, inequalities on the regional and global level and inequalities between Global North and Global South.

Another captivating exhibition in this project was presenting artworks painted by migrants in creative corners of refugee camps: [Pictures on the Run](#)

Diakonie / SDGs and Migration – Multipliers and Journalists Addressing Decision Makers and Citizens in the EU

[The Faces of Migration](#) campaign challenges the current views on migration by a [series of videos](#). Hearing and understanding people's stories allow for more complex perspectives on people's lives and why they migrate. The aim of the campaign is to change public dialogue and policies from "us vs them" to the human beings affected by inequalities that are structural and pervasive.

NaZemi / [Coherent Europe for sustainable development](#)

Managed to engage different groups of stakeholders in capacity building workshops and round tables. A round table on Business and Human rights explaining the impact of the Business and Human rights legislation on the private companies managed to gather wide range of stakeholders, including representatives of big companies, CSOs, representatives of the Office of Government and several Ministries.

ADRA / [GET UP and GOALS!](#)

A Global History of Humanity - [The first global geo-history textbook for students across Europe!](#)

Get up and goals! project provides history teachers of students with an innovative school textbook on geo-history based on global history, (or world history) approach. The textbook will be made available for school classes in 12 countries and will have in each country the same content in terms of text and maps and layout. (The geo-history textbook is currently being tested by the teachers of the 12 European countries involved in GET UP AND GOALS! The final version will be available for free download in September 2020.)

Ekumenická Akademie / [Citizens for financial Justice](#)

[Series of videos](#) contributing to a campaign and awareness raising on development finance issues, introducing effective financing for development (FfD) as a step towards a financial system that works for all and is democratically controlled. Czech subgrantees were focusing on the issue of debts of developing countries, debt crisis and discharge from debts. Organized events were recorded for further use, such as following „Round table: development cooperation, global debt and sustainable development. What is the role of the Czech Republic?“ ([link](#))

Refugee Help Czech Republic / Snapshots from the Borders

Sub-contracted initiative Refugee Help Czech Republic contributed to mobilisation efforts for October 3rd to become the European Day of Memory and Welcome (symbolic date reminiscent of the day when, in 2013, 368 people lost their lives in a shipwreck off the coast of Lampedusa). Project actors created an awareness-raising program for students and the broader public in the city of Brno addressing a „type of mistrust of otherness that prevails in the Czech Republic“ by insight into the lives of refugees and volunteers from countries where coexistence with refugees is not a taboo.

2.3.2 WHAT ARE THE MAIN BLOCKAGES/CHALLENGES?

Some project actors reported a trend of decreasing possibility of open communication of some DEAR issues (gender, migration) in public and risk for the CSOs and their employees of becoming a target of hate messages.

CSOs working with gender topics had to face a lot of intentional disinformation related to the issue of ratification of the Istanbul Convention, that has been supported by the leading church representatives and many politicians. They responded by trying to explain and de-mythicise the issues for the politicians, for example, by holding a round table on gender inequities. But conditions for CSOs focusing on gender issues were reported as increasingly tricky given the political pressure and lack of funding.

Several challenges were connected to the functioning of the DEAR consortia. How to interconnect contexts of many partner organizations, so that it made sense for the whole consortium and at the same time was relevant for each of the countries? And difficulties to implement ambitious activities when human resources allocated in the project are not adequate.

Some project actors pointed out challenges of inter-organisational type: „The largest obstacles are internal ones: with the external ones we have the strength and motivation to fight with.. but if the internal environment of the CSO isn't supportive, in terms of having of a shared vision, the DEAR project teams have to cope with a lack of interest of other departments, and eventually they have to figure out a lot on their own, which is additional work.“

According to some project actors, it is not uncommon that within large CSOs migration is part of a different agenda than development cooperation. And CSOs with the more traditional background in development cooperation may experience contradicting opinions between experts on migration in the organization and the higher management. So some project actors admitted that it was a genuine surprise that they managed to convince their organization to be part of a DEAR project focused on awareness-raising and migration. And they faced a need of sensitisation inside their own CSO, where the overall opinion was slightly negative, despite the values promoted. They named it as „a problem of a lack of courage“ to admit that they help even to communities that are not among the „popular“ ones (seniors and single mothers vs Roma community and migrants)

Difficulties in cooperation with other CSOs appeared in the interviews with an example of how competition over resources can impact willingness to cooperate on joint issues (when donors are formally not compatible)

Some project actors observed that there was low interest in workshops at schools as schools seemed to be already saturated by the GDE programs, likely because the offer of the workshops for schools at the side of CSOs exceeded the current demand. So they concluded that creating a new program and training for trainers would be redundant and turned towards work with informal education target groups.

Among project actors involved as subgrantees, there was an experience of being contracted at the last minute, which then put stress on their capacity to prepare and produce the outcome. So they would have appreciated earlier planning. And they would have preferred if, with the same budget, the period for

implementation of their activities could have been longer. Because as a very small CSO, already the administrative burden related to their role absorbed a lot of their capacity.

COVID19 related challenges translated into the project performance mainly in the form of delays and postponing of events. Many projects had to extend their implementation period.

Pandemic related worries were connected to the impact on the social, political and economic level locally (crisis revealed problems in health care and social sector, housing crisis, the problem of executions in the Czech republic..) and globally (e.g. global debt enhanced by COVID crises, impact that logistic challenges to supply chains had on smallholder farmers in the South..).

The overall experience provided as well an impulse to adjust strategies by re-imagining ways of functioning as civil society actors and educators in less and less predictable future.

3. Similarities and Differences in respect to Campaigning and Advocacy & GE projects

Most of the projects interviewed included awareness-raising, campaigning and advocacy components. Project actors were developing each of the areas based on their assessment of what was the most meaningful and cost-efficient strategy in the national context. For example, one project with a primary focus on policy and advocacy work shifted their activities more towards educational, and awareness-raising edge with the aim to make the issues recognized among a larger scale of relevant actors first. There was only one project with a dominant focus on GE, and even there the advocacy, campaigning awareness raising elements were present in the work of the consortia

4. Other observations

Many project actors were sharing what based on their experience would be meaningful suggestion for the next DEAR calls. To be able to respond to the public sentiment, they would consider useful to focus not only primarily on youth, but as well on other target groups and various age groups. To change the political opinion, it seems that more capacity for advocacy and policy work would be needed, so the question would be how to keep a balance between GE/advocacy and campaigning.

Given the decrease of the national funding, the more critical it will be for the Czech CSOs to be able to join European project consortia. And having a lot such as the EU13, that recognises the context of Central-Eastern European countries as weaker member states, is supportive. And in terms of the size of the projects, there is a constant preference for smaller consortia. However, there is a recognition that the background of large pan-European consortia with experienced partners can be a real benefit for some parts of the DEAR work, particularly in case of the advocacy work.

List of interviewed projects:

- Citizens for financial Justice - <https://citizensforfinancialjustice.org/>
- Change the Power - (Em)power to Change - <http://overdeveloped.eu/en/background/dear-project-change-the-power.html>
- Coherent Europe for sustainable development - <https://www.nazemi.cz/en/coherent-europe-sustainable-development>
- SDGs and Migration - <https://tvaremigrace.cz/o-nas/>; <https://gcap.global/faces-of-migration/>
- Make Europe Sustainable for All - <https://makeeuropesustainableforall.org/>
- Trade Fair Live Fair - <https://www.fairtrade.net/about/projects/trade-fair-live-fair>
- Get up and Goals! <https://www.getupandgoals.eu/>; <https://getupandgoals.cz/>
- Make ICT Fair <https://bankwatch.org/project/make-ict-fair-improving-electronics-supply-chain>
- MIND <https://www.caritas.eu/mind/>; <https://www.caritas.eu/whatishome/>
- Snapshots from the Borders <http://www.snapshotsfromtheborders.eu/snapshots-project/>

List of resources

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