

Women's empowerment

Learning trajectory group

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The Goal

- To deepen our understanding of processes through which Roma women can empower themselves;
- To understand the role of intermediaries in this process;
- To make proposal to improve SDC programming in this area;

What did we do?

- 7 meetings from October 2015 to May 2016;
- Sharing of articles and various documents;
- Sharing impressions from field visits;
- Sharing findings after holding interviews with Roma and Non Roma people on how they understand the empowerment of Roma women;
- Very valuable to have a reflection session with peers after a field visit;

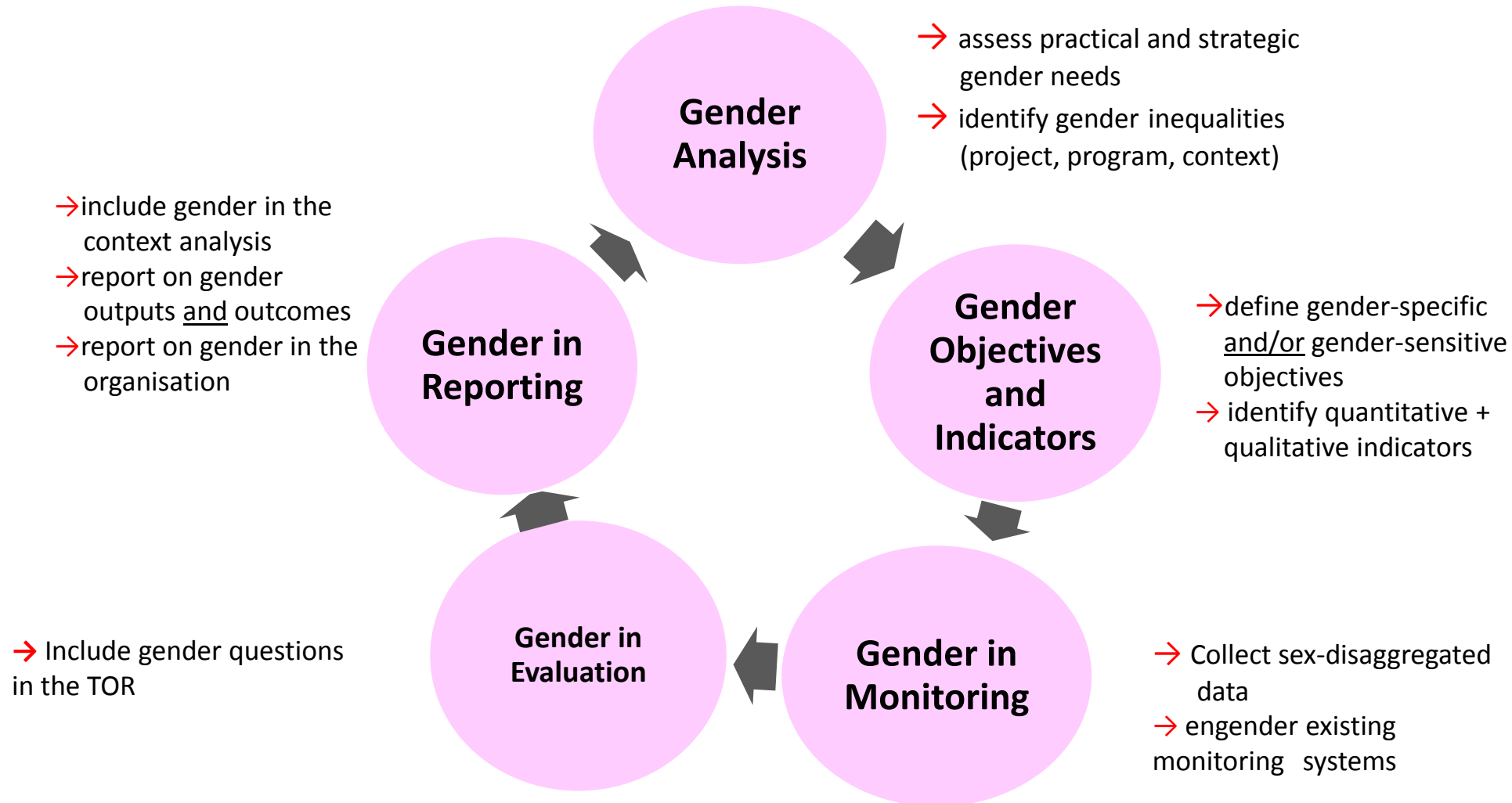
What and how did we learn?

- The use of word “Empowerment” - *self-reliance; you are the change; be the change!*
- Roma women are facing intersecting inequalities: city or village; how power operates at different levels: at home, in the community and outside the community; it is complicated to be Roma, but much more to be Roma and woman;
- The importance of building confidence of individual women and girls;
- To work with men and mother in laws;
- The need to develop tools to measure qualitative change at programme level;
- In order to have sustainable and transformative empowerment=>To look at empowerment transversally rather than only at project level

How far is gender mainstreamed ?

- **Doing a gender analysis** asking about gender-specific discriminations, inequalities, obstacles, risks and opportunities
- **Equal participation** in planning & design, monitoring, evaluation and reporting
- Collecting **sex-disaggregated data**
- Being responsive to **gender-specific needs** & interests, gaps & obstacles in all programs
- **Gender-specific interventions** – reducing gender gaps: targeted interventions to reduce inequalities and discrimination between men and women

How far is gender mainstreamed ?



There is a lack of gender focus in much work with Roma: Insights

- tendency to engage with Roma women as 'mothers'
- women are often leaders in Roma community organisations, active in advocacy and pushing for change. They can be catalysts for improvements in Roma inclusion
- **Need to work with men:** transformation of unequal power relation requires working with both women and men
- Gender norms - embeded in educational content and teacher resp. parents attitudes - perpetuate inequality between women and men.
- Education mediators can play an important role (but not state funded in Bulgaria)

NEXT STEPS

- To continue the reflection on Roma women's inclusion as thematic area and identify overall specific issues to address;
- To provide/receive direct support to country programs which are working with Roma women as target group;
- To monitor our programs using a framework which enables us to analyze our theory of change around Roma women's empowerment;
- To use participatory methods to engage with Roma women in identifying indicators of change;
- To organize a Roma inclusion seminar with a specific focus on gender;

And instead of conclusion:

Empowering Roma women means giving them the capacity to define their own choices in life and to pursue their own goals.

It also means generating change in the whole community and not only in its female population.