

# **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;

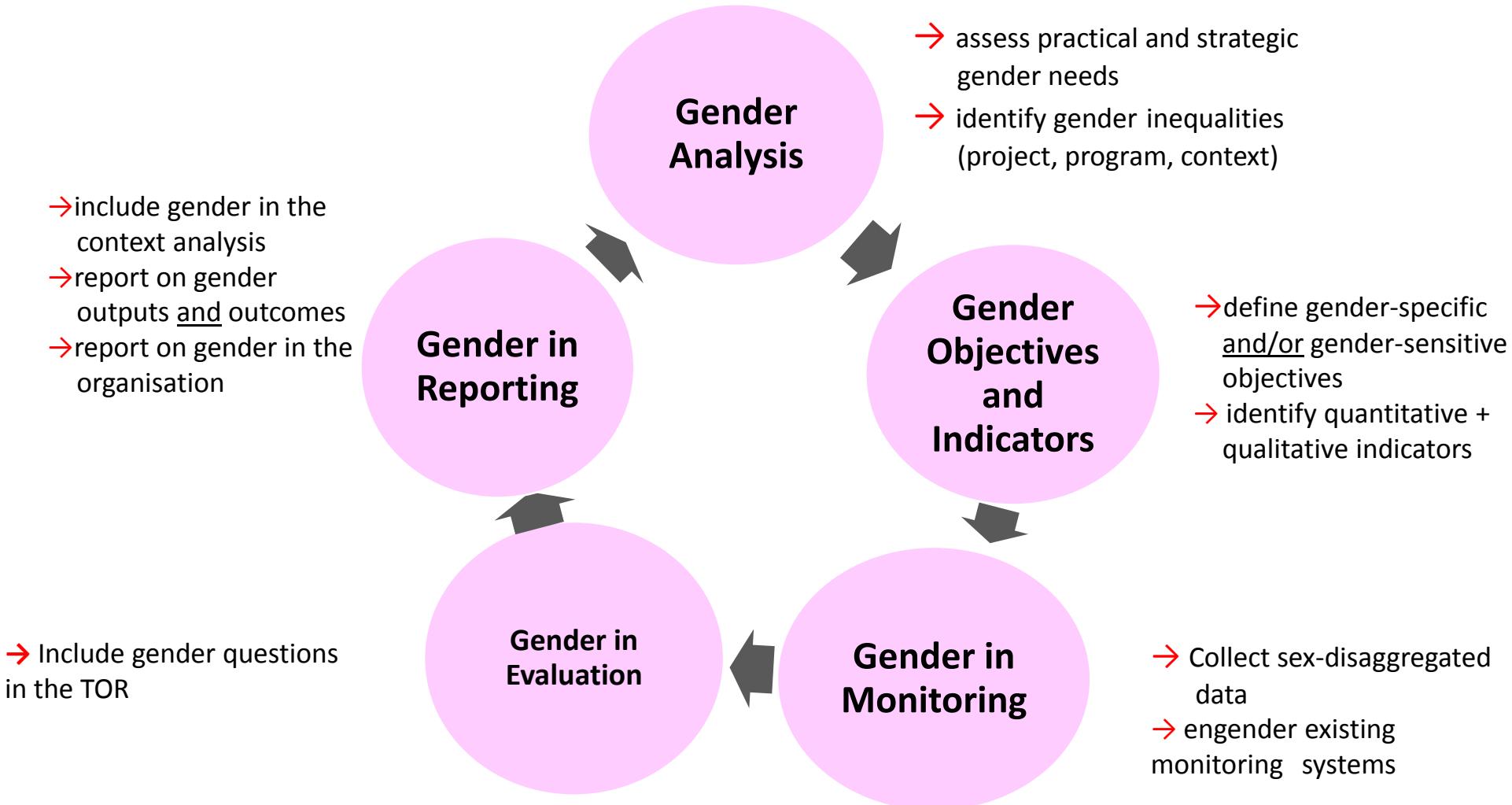
# What and how did we learn?

- 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.*