Performance Evaluation of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme Financed by the State Budget (Results and Contribution)

Final report

Commissioned by: Society Integration Foundation

Provided by: Foundation "Baltic Institute of Social Sciences"

Baltic
Institute
of Social
Sciences

Riga
January 2025

Content

Abbreviations

BISS – Baltic Institute of Social Sciences

etc. – et cetera (and other similar things)

EU – European Union

NA – no answer

NGO – non-governmental organizations

SIF – Society Integration Foundation

List of tables

List of pictures

Executive summary

The purpose of the evaluation study was to investigate whether and in what way with the implementation of the projects in 2020-2023 the goal of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme has been achieved. The purpose of the programme was to promote community cohesion, mutual solidarity and intergenerational cooperation, social trust, reduce prejudice against and between ethnic groups and expand the environment for using the Latvian language. To evaluate the performance of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget (results and contribution), three research activities were carried out: (1) analysis of documents (including analysis of the regulations of the 2020-2023 tenders of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme and the analysis of project applications received in the program tenders for 2020-2023); (2) a quantitative online survey of ethnic minority NGOs, including both beneficiaries of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme and those who did not receive program funding; (3) in-depth interviews with project implementers.

The evaluation of the implementation of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget shows that a total of 30 projects has been implemented within four years. Although in these four years the project tenders had slightly different defined goals, as well as the conditions regarding the target groups of the projects were different, in general the projects have promoted all aspects defined in the goals of the program, giving more attention to the target groups of Latvian and minority children, young people and their families.

Out of the 30 financed projects, all projects have been successfully implemented, and the total number of target groups reached exceeds the planned: in total, in four years, it was planned to reach 6068 representatives of different target groups (unique persons), but 7140 persons have been reached (these are indicators related to with the accounting of personally involved target groups, without counting such indicators as the number of viewers of videos prepared in the project). Considering the fact that both Latvians and Latvian minorities were mostly equally involved in the project activities, the projects have generally promoted cooperation between minorities and Latvians.

The online survey conducted in the evaluation reveals that 53% of project implementers believe that their project has definitely contributed to the cohesion, solidarity and cooperation of Latvian society, 41% of project implementers believe that their project has rather contributed to the cohesion, solidarity and cooperation of Latvian society, 6% the respondent chose the answer "hard to say". 59% of project implementers believe that their project has definitely contributed to reducing prejudice against and between ethnic groups, 41% believe that it has rather contributed to reducing prejudice against and between ethnic groups. 59% of the project implementers believe that their project has definitely increased the understanding of the project participants about the diversity of society, 41% of the project implementers believe that their project has rather increased the understanding of the project participants about the diversity of the society.

The evaluation shows that the implemented projects also have a positive impact on the cooperation of minority generations. 59% of project implementers believe that their project has promoted the cooperation of minority generations in all activities, 35% have noted that this has happened in some of the activities. No project implementer has given a negative answer, but 6% have no specific opinion. 53% of project implementers believe that the project has certainly contributed to meeting the needs of the identified target groups, while 47% believe that the project has rather contributed to the satisfaction of the needs of the identified target groups.

In-depth interviews with the project implementers reveal that working together in various project activities greatly promotes cohesion and cooperation among the participants of the activities. The positive atmosphere and usefulness of the projects is also illustrated by the fact that the participants of the activities invite the project implementers to organize similar events.

The research shows that the majority of both applied and implemented projects offered various types of educational events (lessons, workshops, educational games, seminars, excursions, etc.). This approach resulted both from the target groups of the project tenders and also from the conditions of the tenders. The evaluation revealed a tendency that the more diverse the range of educational activities offered in the project application, the higher the chances of the project getting funding, compared to those projects that offered uniform activities, for example, organizing only one camp or only sports events. Regarding the interest of ethnic minorities to participate in various project activities, it can be seen that, in general, the project implementers had no difficulty in attracting representatives of the target group. This is also shown by the results of the survey of minority organizations: in general, 88% of organizations believe that ethnic minorities in Latvia are interested in participating in various project activities, 6% expressed a negative opinion on this issue, and 6% did not give a specific answer.

Although several project applications emphasize that their activities are aimed at expanding the environment for the use of the Latvian language and that all project activities are organized in the Latvian language (this is well demonstrated by the selected examples of good project practice), the survey of the project implementers and in-depth interviews show that the strengthening of the Latvian language is still a very urgent task that should be emphasized in the next tenders of the program projects. This is shown by the following survey data: more than half of the organizations used mainly or only the Latvian language in project activities (53%), 35% indicated that they used both Latvian and Russian in project activities.

The evaluation of the recognition of the program revealed that, in general, minority organizations are well informed about the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget: 71% of organizations have heard of it, 20% have not heard of it, and 9% chose the answer "hard to say". In the answers on the open questions of the survey, the opinion was expressed that there was a lot of information about this program, including on the websites of local governments. Therefore, it can be concluded that the chosen methods for promoting the program work well. Aspects of the program such as the accessibility and comprehensibility of the program also received a positive rating: 77% of minority organizations that have heard of the program believe that it is accessible (10% gave a negative rating), while 85% of organizations believe that it is understandable (negative rating was given by 8%).

The opinion of minority organizations identified in the research about the future activities of the social cohesion program revealed that their recommendations largely overlap with the already implemented approach to support projects with diverse educational activities that promote being together and doing things together among the target groups; to implement projects whose target groups are children, young people, their families and seniors; to maintain the requirement that Latvians and minorities make up about half of the target audience, as this promotes interaction and overcoming various negative stereotypes.

1. Description of the methodology for the performance of work tasks

In order to evaluate the performance of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget (results and contribution), three research activities were carried out:

1) an analysis of documents (including analysis of the regulations of the 2020-2023 tenders of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme and the analysis of project applications received in the program tenders for 2020-2023);
2) a quantitative online survey of ethnic minority NGOs, including both beneficiaries of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme and those who did not receive program funding;
3) in-depth interviews with project implementers.

The analysis of the documents provides an insight into the differences in the regulations of the 2020-2023 project tenders, the characteristics of the applied and supported projects, as well as a summary of the results of the project activities. The in-depth interviews provide a deeper understanding of the main results and achievements of the specific projects, while the survey provides a broader and more representative view of the project results and evaluation of the programme.

1.1. Document analysis

The following tender documents of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme 2020-2023 are included in the document analysis:

1) 2020-2023 tender regulations;
2) Project applications received in the 2020-2023 tenders;
3) Lists of projects approved in the 2020-2023 tenders;
4) Final reports of the projects implemented in the 2020-2023 tenders.

In total, 68 project applications were analysed, including two project applications that were submitted repeatedly. Taking into account the fact that 30 projects were implemented as a result of the specific four project tenders, 30 project final reports are also included in the analysis (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of applications and funded projects in project competitions 2020-2023.

Program tenders in which the surveyed organization has implemented its project	Number of applications	Funded projects
2023. "Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme"	25	9
2022. "Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme"	19	9
2021. "Minority and Latvian Youth Cooperation Programme"	16	6
2020. "Minority and Latvian Youth Cooperation Programme"	8*	6*
Total	68	30

* The projects applied by two organizations were approved and funded after re-submission of the projects.

1.2. Online survey among ethnic minority NGOs

In order to identify the experiences and opinions of various organizations that have implemented the projects of the programme, applied to the tenders of the programme or could potentially apply to implement the projects, an online survey of NGOs was organized. Both organizations that have implemented projects in 2020-2023 and organizations that had submitted their project applications, but whose projects did not receive funding were invited to participate in the survey, as well as other minority non-governmental organizations. Two contact databases were used to organize the survey. One NGO contact database was created based on information about applications in the 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 tenders. This contact database contained 53 unique organization contacts (excluding those that applied for projects multiple times), of which 19 organizations had received funding for project implementation, and 34 organizations had not received funding.

The second database of contacts was a refined database of minority organizations of the Ministry of Culture, which was updated as part of the 2022 study. After its refinement, the second database of contacts contained 237 contacts with e-mails. In those cases when an organization was in both contact databases, the organization was included only in the first contact database (2020-2023 project applicants). A total of 290 individual survey links were prepared and sent out, but the mailing process showed that many of the organization's contact emails were no longer active and used (~10%).

The NGO's online survey was conducted between November 6 and December 5. Two reminders were sent to potential survey participants asking them to fill out the survey questionnaire. As a result of the survey, 55 NGO responses were obtained (completely filled questionnaires), of which 28 organizations were surveyed from the first contact database (2020-2023 project applicants), and 27 organizations from the second contact database (minority organizations).

The survey data show that, in total, 71% of the surveyed organizations had heard the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget, 36% had submitted their applications for the program competition, and 31% or 17 organizations had received project funding in the program (Picture 1) . This shows that, in general, the most responsive organizations in filling out the survey questionnaire were those that had received funding from the program (17 out of 19 on the contact list).

Picture 1. Characteristics of surveyed organizations: submitted and funded applications. %
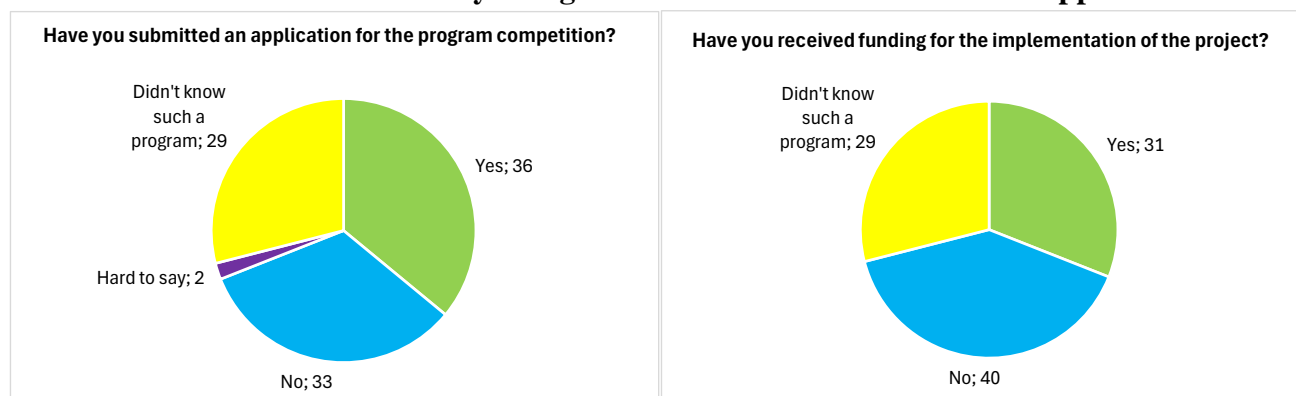
% of all organizations surveyed, n=55.

The distribution of the surveyed organizations according to the project tenders in which they have submitted their application shows that the organizations that submitted and implemented their projects as a result of the 2023 tender (12 organizations) participated most actively in the survey. Eight organizations of the 2022 project tender have participated in the survey, and two organizations from the 2020 and two organizations from 2021 project tenders (Table 2).

This is not a surprise, because some organizations from the oldest project competitions are no longer active, many organizations have had personnel changes, and project managers who implemented the projects of this programme no longer work in the organization. This could be confirmed during the survey process, when certain e-mails were inactive, or the representative of the organization indicated that the specific person no longer works in the organization.

Table 2. The number of surveyed project implementers in different years of program competitions

In which program competitions has your organization submitted its application? (Multiple answers are possible!)

Program competitions in which the surveyed organization has implemented its project	Number of surveyed project implementers *
2023. "Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme"	12
2022. "Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme"	8
2021. "Minority and Latvian Youth Cooperation Programme"	2
2020. "Minority and Latvian Youth Cooperation Programme"	2

* Several organizations have received funding in several competitions.

1.3. In-depth interviews

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the main results and achievements of specific projects, as well as difficulties in project implementation, five in-depth interviews of minority NGO representatives were conducted in the evaluation. They also helped to select five projects implemented in the programme in 2020-2023, which could be considered as examples of good practice. In-depth interviews were conducted between December 13 and 17, 2024. A list of participants of in-depth interviews with project implementers is attached in the Supplement 4.1.

Potential interviewees were selected based on information obtained from the document analysis and quantitative survey. All interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the interviewees. A transcript of the audio recording of each interview was prepared for subsequent qualitative data analysis. Insights from the in-depth interviews are integrated into the analysis section and conclusions of the report.

1.4. Detailed summary of tasks and research methods used

According to the conditions of the Technical Specification, the purpose of the study was to investigate whether and in what way with the implementation of the projects in 2020-2023 the goal of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme has been achieved. The purpose of the programme is to promote community cohesion, mutual solidarity and intergenerational cooperation, social trust, reduce prejudice against and between ethnic groups and expand the environment for using the Latvian

language. A detailed summary of the tasks and research methods used is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Research task and research methods used

Nr.	Research task	Research methods used	Corresponding report section
2.1.	Which ethnic minority NGOs have applied for tenders, their main operational goals and which ones have received funding, including a breakdown by region.	Document analysis	2.3. Statistical characteristics of project applicants
2.2.	What and how many ethnic minority NGOs are there in Latvia, how many of them have applied for the 2020-2023 program competitions. per year (including) and whether they are the dominant ethnic minority NGOs in Latvia.	Document analysis	2.3. Statistical characteristics of project applicants
2.3.	Has the NGO identified the needs and interests of ethnic minorities during the preparation of the project application, how did the identification of these needs take place, and did the project activities manage to satisfy these needs.	NGO survey, in-depth interviews	2.6. The needs of ethnic minorities and their identification
2.4.	What is the interest of ethnic minorities in participating in activities, was it a self-initiative, or was there a need to be specially addressed to participate in activities.	NGO survey, in-depth interviews	2.7. Interest of ethnic minorities to participate in project activities
2.5.	What kind of events were implemented in the projects, their attendance. Have there been new innovative measures, activities and how do they affect inter-institutional cooperation?	Document analysis	2.9. Description of the activities of the applied and implemented projects
2.6.	How is cooperation between minorities and Latvian residents promoted?	Document analysis	2.11. Examples of good practice among the implemented projects
2.7.	The use of the Latvian language in minority events and project activities.	Document analysis, NGO survey	2.12. The use of the Latvian language in events and project activities
2.8.	Cooperation of minority generations and youth involvement in project activities.	Document analysis, NGO survey	2.11. Examples of good practice among the implemented projects; 2.13. Evaluation of the impact of implemented projects

Nr.	Research task	Research methods used	Corresponding report section
2.9.	As a result of project activities, has it been possible to reduce prejudices against and between ethnic groups.	Document analysis, NGO survey	2.13. Evaluation of the impact of implemented projects
2.10.	What are the benefits for the project's target group or the wider society from the activities implemented within the projects and the capacity of the implementers for activities related to the achievement of the programme's goal.	Document analysis, NGO survey	2.13. Evaluation of the impact of implemented projects
2.11.	What information channels are used to reach the target group of the programme.	Document analysis, NGO survey	2.8. Information channels for the involvement of representatives of minorities in project activities
3.1.	To evaluate the contribution of the projects implemented (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to the achievement of the programme's stated goal, in accordance with the 2020-2023 regulations of the tenders.	Integrated analysis of all acquired data	The entire final report, especially chapter: 3. Conclusions and recommendations
3.2.	To reveal the thematic and territorial scope of the projects submitted in the tenders, including unapproved projects and the total requested funding, make future predictions.	Document analysis	2.2. Analysis of the number of applications and approved projects
3.3.	To identify 3-5 implemented projects, which could be considered as examples of good practice; describe the activities and good practices implemented in them. Maximum amount of description for one project: 290-300 words.	Document analysis, in-depth interviews	2.11. Examples of good practice among the implemented projects
3.4.	To assess the recognition of the program among potential project applicants and beneficiaries of program funding; to what extent information about the program and the project application contests held within it has been available and understandable to potential applicants. To measure the program's awareness of the target audience.	NGO survey	2.4. Assessment of the programme recognition and accessibility
3.5.	To identify obstacles to citizens' participation and measures necessary to prevent them, considering that the target group of the project is children, young people and their families, ensuring that no less than 50% of minority representatives participate in project activities at the same time.	Document analysis, NGO survey, in-depth interviews	2.7. Interest of ethnic minorities to participate in project activities
3.6.	In conclusion, indicate what the project implementers think, what type of activities needs to be implemented through the programme in the future and how exactly this type of activity would contribute to the achievement of the programme's goals.	Integrated analysis of all acquired data	3. Conclusions and recommendations

Nr.	Research task	Research methods used	Corresponding report section
3.7.	In conclusion, indicate whether the implementation of the projects has made a positive contribution to the society as a whole and has promoted cohesion, solidarity, cooperation and promoted the citizens' understanding of the diversity of society.	Integrated analysis of all acquired data	3. Conclusions and recommendations
3.8.	To provide recommendations for improving the programme and improving public communication to more effectively reach potential project applicants and promote their activity and what would be the potentially best information channels for reaching the programme's target group.	Integrated analysis of all acquired data	3. Conclusions and recommendations
3.9.	Provide an analysis of the financial instruments available to minority organizations in the period from 2020 to 2027.	NGO survey	2.5. Financial instruments available to minority organizations in the period from 2020 to 2027
3.10.	To provide the criteria by which minority organizations in Latvia can be identified, what are the most characteristic features of these organizations, and the average period of operation expressed in years.	Integrated analysis of all acquired data	2.3. Statistical characteristics of project applicants
3.11.	To provide conclusions or suggestions for changing the focus of the programme, or justification for maintaining the existing focus of the programme.	Integrated analysis of all acquired data	3. Conclusions and recommendations

2. Evaluation results

2.1. Analysis of the requirements of tender regulations

In 2020 and 2021, the terms of the programme's tenders were oriented directly towards young people, and the name of the program was "Minority and Latvian Youth Cooperation Programme". In 2022 and 2023, the name of the program was "Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme", and in these years the target group of project tenders was slightly expanded (maintaining the approach that the main target group of the project is children and/or young people). The conditions of the programme's tenders were also correspondingly different (Table 4).

In the years 2021, 2022 and 2023, it is stated in the tender regulations that it has been developed in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers' regulations of May 29, 2012 No. 374 "Procedures for allocation, management, supervision and control of co-financing for the promotion of social integration and the implementation of development programs and projects of the non-governmental sector" and taking into account the Guidelines for the Development of a Cohesive and Civically Active Society for 2021-2027, the priority of the National Development Plan for 2021-2027 "Unified, safe and open society", and the priorities defined in the National Security concept established for the prevention of threats to unity of civil society.

In the 2020 regulation, the justification is formulated differently and refers to the sub-goal defined in the 2019-2020 action direction "National identity: language and cultural space" of the National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Implementation Plan for 2019-2020, as well as the priorities set in the National Security concept for the prevention of threats to the unity of civil society, and the National Development Plan 2020 direction of action "People's cooperation, culture and civic participation as the basis of belonging to Latvia", where the need to promote the feeling of belonging to Latvia among residents is indicated, thus strengthening their desire to live, work and raise a family in Latvia.

In the 2023 competition, projects were supported in which the planned activities were educational lectures for children, young people or families, practical workshops and other educational events (including non-formal education events) that promote cohesion and understanding of the diversity of society and expand the environment for using the Latvian language, reducing attitudes towards and between different ethnic groups based on negative stereotypes. The target group of the project was children, young people and their families, ensuring that no less than 50% of minority representatives participate in the project activities at the same time.

In the 2022 competition, projects were supported, in which the planned activities were aimed at promoting the awareness of the population about the diversity of the society, reducing the attitude based on negative stereotypes towards and between different ethnic groups; events that promote a sense of belonging to Latvia; participation of different ethnic groups in the formation of civil society; solving socially sensitive issues in various aspects. The target group of the project was representatives of all age groups, especially children and young people, ensuring that no less than 50% of minority representatives and no less than 30% of Latvian representatives participate in the project's activities at the same time.

In the 2021 competition, projects were supported in which the planned activities were research and reconstruction of Latvian historical events (for example, historical knowledge/research projects, research of archival materials, visits to museums, etc.); research projects on important persons of minorities who have contributed to Latvian art, culture, and sport etc.; participation of minority youth in the formation of civil society (for example, creation of cooperation networks, debate forums, discussion clubs, etc.); learning about cultural heritage, creating a sense of belonging to Latvia and creating a common understanding of cultural and historical issues (for example, Latvian and minority youth joint thematic camps, expeditions, joint creation of video stories, photo stories, productions, interactive games, educational quizzes, presentations, etc.). The target group of the project was the youth of minority and Latvian-language educational institutions, ensuring that an equal number of minority and Latvian youth (50%/50%) from several educational institutions participate in the project activities at the same time.

In the 2020 competition, cooperation projects of minorities and young people from Latvian schools were supported, which are aimed at identifying and nurturing common values, building a common understanding of history, understanding and analysing Latvian social and political processes. One of the conditions of the project was to involve at least 150 minority and equally Latvian school youth, promoting a common understanding of Latvia's history, culture and political developments.

While in 2020, 2021 and 2022, project applicants were invited to plan activities in the entire territory of Latvia, the regulations of the 2023 competition stipulated that all planned activities in the project application must be implemented in Rezekne, Daugavpils, Liepaja or Riga.

Table 4. Comparison of regulations of the program project tenders 2020-2023: target groups and place of implementation

Year and objectives of the program project tenders	Target groups	Place of implementation
2023. The purpose of the programme was to promote social cohesion, mutual cooperation, reduce prejudice against and between ethnic groups and expand the environment for using the Latvian language.	Children, young people and their families, ensuring that no less than 50% of minority representatives participate in project activities at the same time	Rezekne, Daugavpils, Liepaja or Riga
2022. The purpose of the programme was to promote social cohesion, mutual cooperation, reduce prejudice against and between ethnic groups	Representatives of all age groups, especially children and young people, ensuring that no less than 50% of minority representatives and no less than 30% of Latvian representatives participate in project activities at the same time	Latvia
2021. The purpose of the program was to promote the development of dialogue and cooperation between ethnic minorities living in Latvia and Latvian youth, as well as to promote the participation of minority youth in the formation of civil society, to promote recognition of cultural heritage, a sense of belonging to Latvia and a	Young people from minority and Latvian-speaking educational institutions, ensuring that an equal number of minority and Latvian young people (50%/50%) from several educational institutions participate in project activities at	Latvia

common understanding of cultural and historical issues.	the same time. The indirect target group was the parents, guardians and educators of the young people involved in the project activities	
2020. The purpose of the program was to promote the development of dialogue and cooperation between ethnic minorities living in Latvia and Latvian youth, as well as to promote the participation of minority youth in the formation of civil society, to promote recognition of cultural heritage, a sense of belonging to Latvia and a common understanding of cultural and historical issues.	Young people from minority and Latvian-language educational institutions, ensuring that at least 150 minority and Latvian school youth participate in project activities	Latvia

It is important to point out that the conditions of the tenders provided that the project submitter can submit only one project application in the tender. This is determined by specific sections of the tender regulations, for example, section 1.9. of the 2023 tender regulations states that "the project submitter can submit only one project application in the Competition". The funding of the program accounted for 100% of the total eligible costs of the project, which means that non-governmental organizations did not have to seek co-financing of the project. At the same time, it was expected that the proposed activities would foster achieving the programme' goal and would be provided to the target group free of charge.

Comparing the funding available for project tenders, it can be seen that in 2020 and 2021, the available funding for each of the tenders was EUR 31,303, and the maximum funding available for one project was EUR 5,200. While in 2022 and 2023, the funding available for each of the tenders was significantly higher (86,000 EUR), and the maximum funding available for one project was 10,000 EUR (Table 5).

Table 5. Comparison of regulations of the program project tenders 2020-2023: available financing and its terms

Year and name of the program project competition	Available funding for the competition as a whole	Minimum funding per project	Maximum funding per project
2023. "Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme"	86 000 EUR	2 500 EUR	10 000 EUR
2022. "Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme"	86 303 EUR	2 500 EUR	10 000 EUR
2021. "Minority and Latvian Youth Cooperation Programme"	31 303 EUR	-	5 200 EUR
2020. "Minority and Latvian Youth Cooperation Programme"	31 303 EUR	-	5 200 EUR

It should be noted that only those associations and foundations registered in the Republic of Latvia, which operate in the field of minorities or in the field of the development of a united civil society, were eligible to participate in the project competition (in 2020 and 2021, the regulations of the competitions defined that those whose primary purpose of operation, as defined in the statutes, is representation of minority interests and/or development of intercultural dialogue, and which works with children and

young people, including minorities in schools). Employers' organizations and their associations, trade unions and their associations, apartment management associations, religious organizations and their institutions, as well as political parties, party associations and their organizations could not apply for programme's funding. In 2020 and 2021, the participation of at least four educational institutions was an essential condition for the tenders of the program "Minority and Latvian Youth Cooperation Programme".

2.2. Analysis of the number of applications and approved projects

Comparing the results of project competitions in 2020-2023, it can be seen that the least number of applied projects in the program was in the 2020 tender (6), while the largest number of applied projects was in the 2023 project tender (25) (Table 6). Accordingly, the competition for project financing was the smallest in the 2020 competition, when all applied projects received funding, while the largest competition among applicants was in the 2023 competition, when the ratio of financed to applied projects was 36%.

Table 6. Number of applications and funded projects in the 2020-2023 project competitions

Year and name of the program project competition	Number of applications	Number of financed projects	Ratio of financed and applied projects, %
2023. "Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme"	25	9	36%
2022. "Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme"	19	9	47%
2021. "Minority and Latvian Youth Cooperation Programme"	16	6	37%
2020. "Minority and Latvian Youth Cooperation Programme"	6*	6*	100%

* The projects applied by two organizations were approved and funded after re-submission of the projects.

The information collected in Table 7 shows that available and requested funding for the implementation of the winning projects coincides in the best way in 2023 project tender.

Table 7. Available and requested financing for the financing of the winning projects in the 2020-2023 annual competitions

Year and name of the program project competition	Available funding for the competition as a whole	Requested financing for the financing of the winning projects
2023. "Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme"	86 000 EUR	85 988,27 EUR

2022. "Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme"	86 303 EUR	84 292,92 EUR
2021. "Minority and Latvian Youth Cooperation Programme"	31 303 EUR	31 123,10 EUR
2020. "Minority and Latvian Youth Cooperation Programme"	31 303 EUR	31 170 EUR

2.3. Statistical characteristics of minority organizations in Latvia and project applicants

To describe what and how many minority NGOs there are in Latvia, what their goals are, and how many of them have applied for the 2020-2023 programme competitions, including the division by region, this chapter examines the available information on Latvian minority NGO statistics, and then analyses the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme 2020-2023 applications submitted in annual tenders.

The last most relevant research on Latvian minority organizations was conducted in the fall of 2022[1]. One of the tasks of this study was to conduct research on minority non-governmental organizations in Latvia, including the number of organizations, number of members, areas of activity, etc. According to the data of this study, the total number of organizations related to the field of minorities and whose status was "not liquidated" according to the Enterprise Register as of December 1, 2022, is 485 organizations. Of these, 364 organizations were defined as minority organizations, and 121 organizations as affiliated with them.

The places of registration of minority organizations by region are as follows: 59% or 214 organizations are registered in Riga, 13% or 49 organizations are registered in Latgale, 12% or 42 organizations are registered in Kurzeme, 8% or 28 organizations are registered in Pieriga, 7% or 25 organizations are registered in Zemgale, but the smallest number of organizations (only 2% or 6 organizations) are registered in Vidzeme. However, it should be emphasized that the study indicates that the number of active, really operating minority organizations, is significantly lower, and it is 100-120 organizations. This is evidenced, for example, by an indicator such as "minority organizations whose financial activity appears in the 2021 annual report", and there are only 121 such organizations (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2022, p. 2). This study also concluded that the activity of the minority organizations sector is decreasing every year: if in 2016 there were more than 150 active organizations, then in 2022 there were just over 100.

Another significant characteristic of minority organizations is that minority organizations focus more on cultural and amateur art activities, and they are much less likely to implement social, civic or educational activities (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2022, p. 6). Organizations' self-assessments about the intensity of their activity show that only about every fifth organization is regularly working and active. In total, 43% of organizations assess that their activities take place on an as-needed, case-by-case basis, and 26% state that their work takes place a few days a week. The data obtained as late as the fall of 2022 show the aging of minority organizations and a very small number and proportion of

---

[1] Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija (2022) *Pētījums par Latvijas mazākumtautību organizācijām*. Pieejams: https://www.km.gov.lv/lv/media/32253/download?attachment.

newly joined members. 50% of active members are over 55 years old, including 28% over 66 years old. At the same time, only every fifth active member is under the age of 35.

A total of 68 project applications were submitted to the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme 2020-2023 by a total of 53 unique organizations as several organizations submitted their applications several times, besides, in 2020, two organizations clarified their applications and submitted them again. This means that the number of applicant organizations is half or even more than half of the actual working minority organizations in Latvia. In general, this can be considered a good indicator in terms of the coverage of minority organizations. On the other hand, the fact that several organizations submit their applications regularly shows that they are active all the time and are looking for different ways to attract funding and implement their projects, and in a sense, they can also be considered as dominant minority NGOs in Latvia.

In order to obtain information about the main operational goals and regions of the NGOs that participated in the tenders of the program, an analysis of the project applications and final reports was carried out, since the project application documents provided information about the NGOs that prepared their applications, while the final reports allow distinguishing the NGOs that received funding and implemented projects from other NGOs, as well as providing accurate information about the locations of project implementation. It is important to emphasize that the places and regions of the project implementation are included in the analysis, not the places of NGOs registration, as this is more important information in the context of the evaluation. While in most cases NGOs implemented projects in the region where they are registered and located, there are also exceptions, for example, an organization from Liepaja, which operates in the Kurzeme region, has implemented a cooperation project with the Latgale region, therefore the places of implementation of this project are the Kurzeme region and the Latgale region (Liepaja and Daugavpils).

The objectives of the NGO activities of the project applicants were coded using three codes: (1) organizations that are minority societies or cultural societies; (2) organizations that are not considered minority associations, but whose main purpose of activity is related to promoting social cohesion, including education and teaching the Latvian language; (3) organizations whose main purpose is related to work with youth, youth organizations.

The results of the coding show that out of 68 project applicants over four years, 28 organizations are minority associations, 30 organizations have operational goals related to the promotion of social cohesion, while 10 organizations are considered as youth organizations (Picture 2).

Picture 2. Main activity objectives of project applicants. Number and %
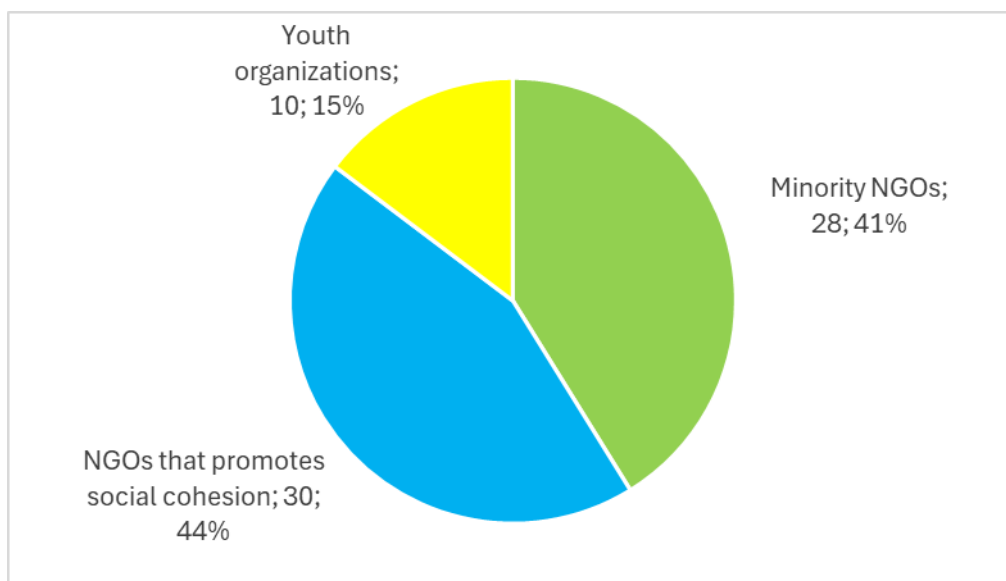
% of all organizations that submitted their project applications; n=68.

Comparing the project applicants in different years of the competition (Table 8), it can be seen that only minority NGOs have received funding in 2020 and 2021, and this is according to the rules of the competition, because in these years it was stipulated that projects can be submitted only by minority associations and foundations registered in the Republic of Latvia. More diverse organizations have received funding in 2022 and 2023, because in these years the tender conditions stipulated that the project applications can be submitted by any associations or foundations registered in the Republic of Latvia, which has been continuously working in the field of minorities or the development of a cohesive civil society for the past two years. For example, in the 2023 competition, three minority associations, five organizations that promote social cohesion and one youth organization have received funding.

Table 8. Main activity objectives of project applicants and implementers, broken down by tender years. Number

Year	Minority NGOs	NGOs that promote social cohesion	Youth organizations	Total
From all organizations that submitted their project applications; n=68				
2023	7	16	2	25
2022	4	13	2	19
2021	9	1	6	16
2020	8	0	0	8
Total	**28**	**30**	**10**	**68**
From organizations funded by the programme; n=30				
2023	3	5	1	9
2022	1	7	1	9
2021	6	0	0	6
2020	6	0	0	6
Total	**16**	**12**	**2**	**30**

Comparing the project applicants whose projects were financed and the project applicants whose projects were not financed, according to their operational goals, it can be seen that the projects applied

by minority associations have more often won project tenders, therefore their share among the funded organizations is higher (Picture 3).

Picture 3. The main activity goals of the project applicants in the breakdown, whether funding has been received. Number and %
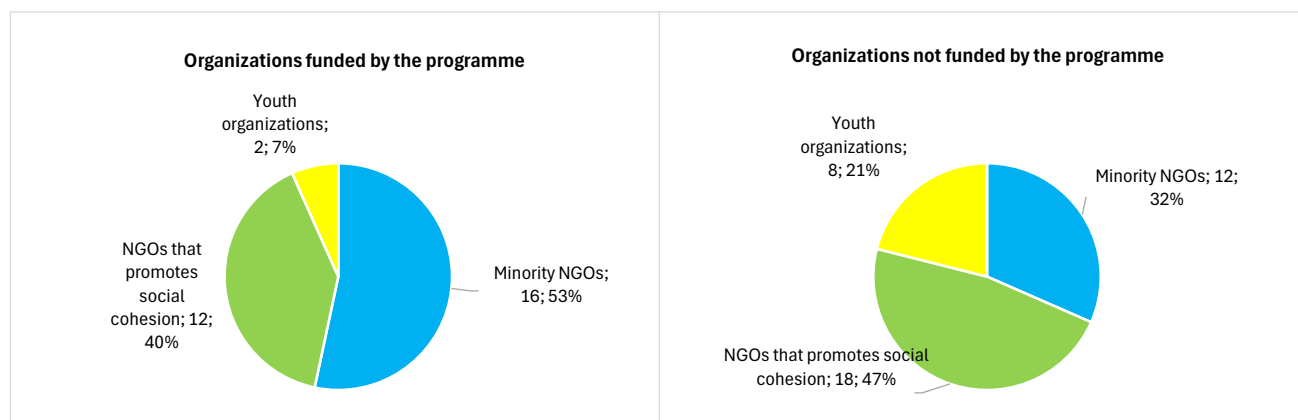
Organizations funded by the programme, n=30.

Organizations that have not been funded by the programme; n=38.

The division of project applicants by region shows that the largest number and proportion of submitted projects planned their activities in the Riga region (21 projects; 31%). The second place in terms of regions is the Latgale region with 11 project applications, while 8 project applications were directed simultaneously to both the Riga region and the Latgale region. In general, this shows that a distribution of applications is appropriate to the situation in Latvia, because the Riga and Latgale region has the largest proportion of Latvian minorities (Picture 4). It should be noted that project applications, where the region is not specified, but the label "the whole of Latvia" is used, are those applications where the places for activities are so diverse that it is difficult to fix one region.

Picture 4. Project applicants by region. Number
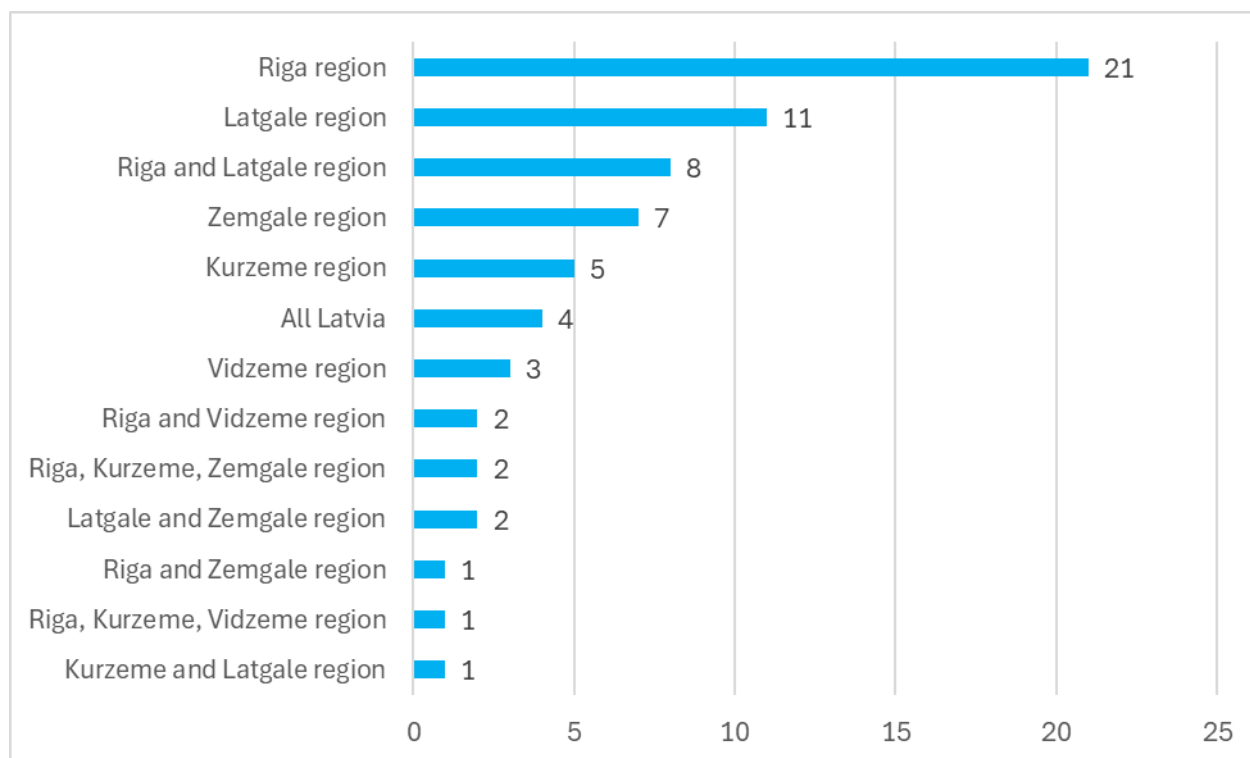
From all organizations that submitted their project applications; n=68.

Also, among the project implementers regarding the distribution of regions, the tendency remains that the largest share of implemented projects is in Riga and Latgale regions (respectively 9 and 5 projects; a total of 14 projects or 47%), at the same time a significant part of projects (7 projects or 23%) has been implemented in several regions (Picture 5).

Picture 5. Project implementers by region. Number
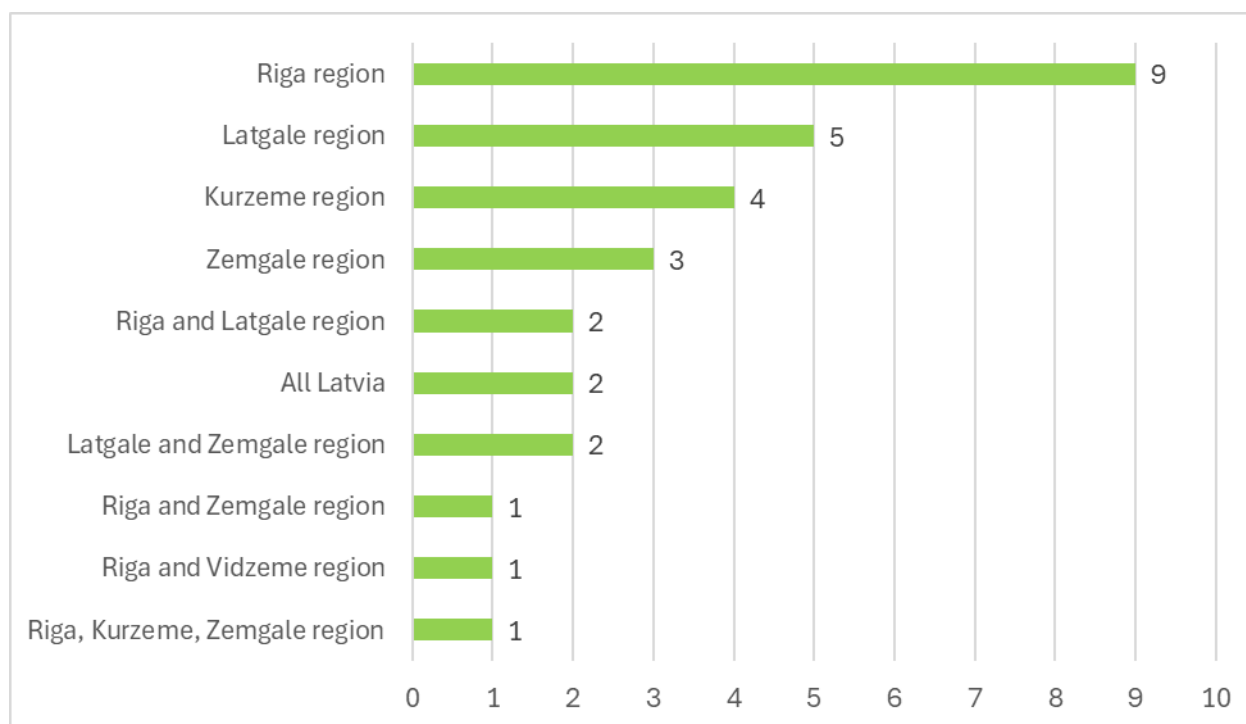
From organizations funded by the programme, n=30.

In general, regarding the compliance of the project applicants and project implementers of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme 2020-2023, the following conclusions can be drawn. Minority organizations are different, because among them there are both organizations that act as minority cultural associations, and organizations that by their nature are not considered minority organizations, but rather organizations whose purpose is to promote social cohesion, including promoting intercultural dialogue. Among the project applicants, it can be seen that in 2020-2021 competitions, funding has been received by organizations that are minority cultural societies, as this was a condition of the competition regulations, which limited the participation of other organizations. While in the 2022 and 2023 tenders, organizations that are more diverse in terms of their goals and activities have received funding, but all of them have been active in the field of the development of a cohesive civil society for the past two years. Considering the purpose of the programme and the condition that not less than 50% of minority representatives participate in the project activities at the same time, and a significant part also consists of Latvian participants, a more open approach to the requirements for the project implementers is more relevant to the programme and Latvia's situation in the field of social cohesion. Namely the requirement that the project applications can be submitted by any associations or foundations registered in the Republic of Latvia, which for the past two years has been continuously operating in the field of minorities or in the field of the development of a cohesive civil society is recommended to be used. We recommend this approach to be used in the future, as it is not only justified from the point of view of the programme's goals and conditions, but also increases competition among NGOs and thus promotes the selection of the best projects for implementation.

2.4. Assessment of the programme recognition and accessibility

To assess the recognition of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme 2020-2023 among potential project applicants and recipients of program funding, NGO survey data are used. They show that 71% of the respondents have heard about the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget, 20% have not heard about it, and 9% chose the answer "difficult to say" (Picture 6).

Picture 6. Recognition of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget. %

Have you heard about the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget?
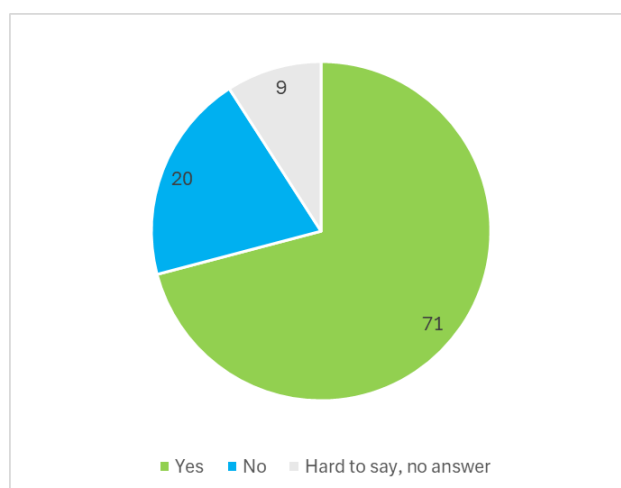
% of all organizations surveyed, n=55.

Of those surveyed who have heard about the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget, 36% of the organizations believe that it is very accessible, 41% believe that it is rather accessible, 10% believe that it is rather inaccessible, but 13% chose the answer "difficult to say" (Picture 7).

Picture 7. Assessment of the programme's accessibility. %

How do you assess to what extent information about the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget and the project application contests held within it has been accessible to your organization?
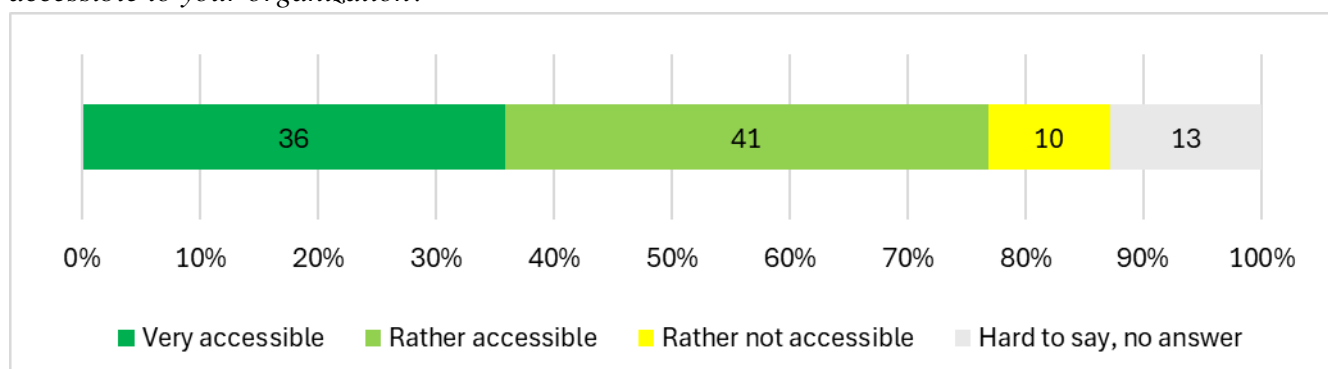
% of organizations that have heard of the program, n=39.

The opinion about the comprehensibility of the program among the surveyed organizations is as follows: 31% of the surveyed organizations consider it very comprehensible, 54% consider it rather comprehensible, 8% consider it rather incomprehensible, and 8% chose the answer "difficult to say" (Picture 8).

Picture 8. Assessment of the programme's comprehensibility. %

How do you assess to what extent the information about the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget and the project application contests organized within it have been comprehensible to you?
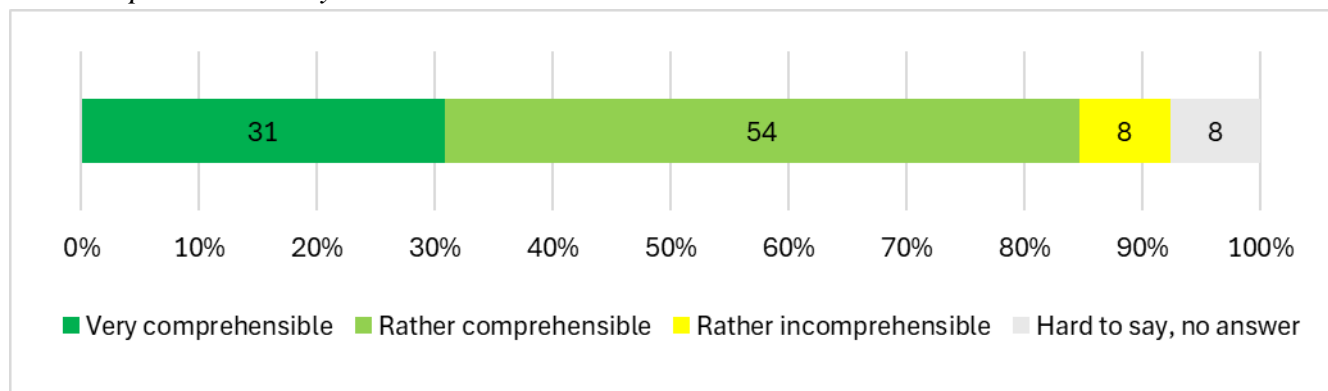
% of organizations that have heard of the program, n=39.

The surveyed organizations were also asked to explain why the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme funded by the state budget and the project application tenders held within it were understandable or incomprehensible. Those who positively evaluated the comprehensibility of the available information noted that, first, the information in the regulation was well understood, because "everything was well explained, and each section mentioned what needed to be described", "the defined objectives were understandable", "the outline was understandable". Comprehension was facilitated by "detailed information on the submission of project applications, we also listened to an informative seminar that provided answers to unclear questions", "there was a lot of information, everything was correct", the rules of the competition were "very clear, in understandable language", also "the support team provided very professional answers to the questions that have arisen".

It was especially highlighted that, compared to other project competitions, the regulations of this program are very clear: "Everything was clear. We have a lot of experience in implementing projects, the conditions of this program were simple and understandable". One of the organizations also stated that "the SIF has simplified applications and reporting" in recent years.

One of the survey participants stated that "the regulation was clearly understandable. It's hard to understand about their 50/50 split, because we're all equal, we don't discriminate", revealing that organizations had problems ensuring the ethnic proportions of event participants.

Another survey participant stated that, in general, "the information was understandable, but there were quite a lot of bureaucratic twists and turns, which made the process sometimes difficult to understand". This means that although the terms of the tender were clear, there were enough administrative procedures to follow.

Among those who were more critical in their evaluations, one indicates that, in his opinion, these competitions have a "narrow program, ineffective, do not promote contemporary forms". Other states that "the financial section of the application was very confusing and complicated, which ultimately

deterred us from applying". Another one pointed out that the funding for projects in this program is small, at the same time the information was widely distributed: "The information about this small, insignificant funding was spread all over Latvia and local governments in a senseless wide way". In general, it can be seen that the evaluation of organizations is influenced by their experience in project implementation.

2.5. Financial instruments available to minority organizations in the period from 2020 to 2027

To obtain information about the financial instruments available to minority organizations in the period from 2020 to 2027, both survey data and document analysis were used. In the survey, NGOs were asked about what financial resources or financial instruments they had at their disposal in the period from 2020 to 2024. This approach was chosen to avoid "hard to say" answers, as it is difficult for NGOs to estimate what financial resources will be available to them in two or three years. A general summary of the financial resources of NGOs is available in Picture 9, and it shows that for 51% of organizations their financial sources are formed from the organization members' money, for 40% their financial sources are formed from donations.

Picture 9. Financial resources of organizations in the period from 2020 to 2024. %
Please indicate which financial resources or financial instruments your organization has had in the period from 2020 to 2024?
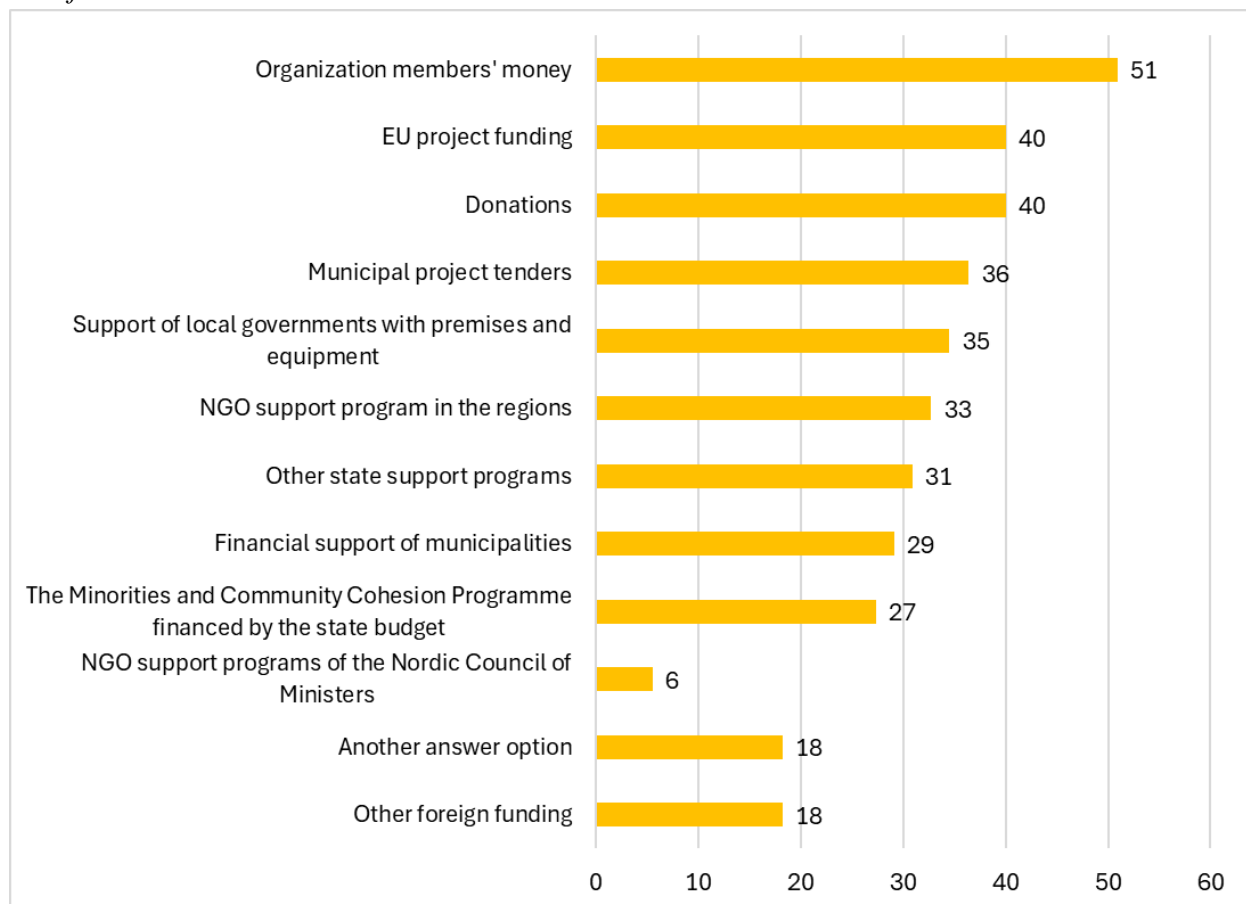
Multiple choice question. % of all organizations surveyed, n=55.

Turning to the funding of the state and local governments, it can be seen that 29% of organizations receive financial support from local governments (for example, in the case of the Riga city municipality, it can be obtained through a tender procedure, applying to implement projects on certain topics). 35% of organizations also receive support with premises and equipment from the municipality. 33% of organizations receive funding from the NGO support program in the regions.

Other state support programs have been used by 31% of the surveyed organizations (among them, the support received in the competition of the Ministry of Culture, support for minority associations, state budget funds to support work with Ukrainian civilians, the State Cultural Capital Fund are mentioned). 27% of organizations have received state budget funding in the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme.

Among the foreign funding, the most significant is EU project funding, received by 40% of organizations. The following programs are named in connection with EU funding: Erasmus+, ERDF, ESF, AMIF, European Union minority representation grant program, LEADER project competitions, "European Solidarity Corps" program, "Creative Europe" program and others. 18% of organizations received other foreign funding. Such supporters as various programs of the USA and Great Britain, the US Embassy's small grant program for work with the Roma community, as well as Polish and Lithuanian state funding, are mentioned there.

6% of the surveyed organizations received funding from the NGO support program of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The support of the Active Citizens Fund is particularly highlighted here. Among the other answer options indicated by 18% of the organizations, such answers as revenues from consultations, procurements or other types of economic activities are mentioned.

Regarding the time period from 2025 to 2027, the following provides a brief summary of the funds available to minority NGOs, not from the perspective of individual organizations obtained from the survey, but based on a document analysis of what funding sources and mechanisms might be available to NGOs. Firstly, NGOs will still have access to financial sources such as money from members of the organization and donations, depending on the approach and activities of the organization itself. Secondly, some NGOs will still have access to local government support with premises and equipment, in specific cases also local government financial support and the opportunity to participate in local government project tenders. The availability of this support depends on the specific policy of the local government in supporting NGOs and on the financial possibilities of the particular municipalities.

For example, the Riga City Council provides the following project competitions every year: a project competition for the promotion of citizens' civic participation and mutual cooperation, a project competition for the promotion of the civic participation of newcomers, a project competition for neighbourhood initiatives to promote the participation and belonging of citizens, a project competition for activities that promote cultural exchange, the acceptance of diversity, mutual understanding and reduction of intolerance; support of NGOs for the preservation and promotion of the cultural identity of minorities, including NGO events and amateur art collectives of minorities[2]. In other municipalities, both the number of minority organizations and the support provided by the municipality are mostly significantly lower.

---

[2] Baltic Institute of Social Sciences (2024). *Rīgas pilsētas Sabiedrības integrācijas pamatnostādņu 2019.-2024. gadam un tās īstenošanas rīcības plānu 2019.-2023. gadam izvērtējums*. Not publicly available.

Thirdly, during this period, minority organizations have access to funding from such state programs as 1) the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme; 2) NGO Found, the aim of which is to support NGOs with state funding, thus strengthening the sustainable development of civil society and democracy in Latvia. It should be noted that the maximum amount of funding available for one project has been increased in the NGO Fund competition: for micro-projects up to 13,000 EUR (in 2024 it was 11,000 EUR), and for macro-projects up to 40,000 EUR (in 2024 it was 36,000 EUR) and 80,000 EUR (2 *40,000 EUR) for macro-projects up to 22 months, the implementation of which is planned in 2025-2026.

Among the international programs, grants are available for minority NGOs in the NGO program for the Baltic Sea region "Prosperous Future" (https://www.ncmprosperousfuturegrants.org/), as well as the NGO program of the Nordic and Baltic countries, which aims to promote cooperation between non-governmental organizations of the Nordic and Baltic countries, to strengthen civil society and to support new sustainable initiatives (https://norden.lv/lv/grantu-programmas/ziemelvalstu-un-baltijas-valstu-nvo-programma/).

The EU project funding for minority NGOs is potentially available in the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV, 2021-2027), which aims to build and maintain an open, democratic, equal and inclusive society based on the rule of law. The directions of the CERV programme are:

1) Equality, Rights and Gender Equality – promoting rights, non-discrimination, equality (including gender equality), and advancing gender and non-discrimination mainstreaming;
2) Citizens' engagement and participation – promoting citizens engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union, exchanges between citizens of different Member States, and raising awareness of the common European history;
3) Daphne – fight violence, including gender-based violence and violence against children;
4) Union values – protect and promote Union values, namely, pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail, with focus on protecting, promoting and raising awareness on rights by providing financial support to civil society organisations active at local, regional and transnational level in promoting and cultivating these rights, thereby also strengthening the protection and promotion of Union values and the respect for the rule of law and contributing to the construction of a more democratic Union, democratic dialogue, transparency and good governance.

Preliminary information on current and planned CERV programme project tenders is available on the website of the Ministry of Culture: https://www.km.gov.lv/lv/cerv-konkursi-0.

ERASMUS+ project tenders are available for those minority organizations operating in the field of youth and education, including in the field of adult education (https://www.erasmusplus.lv/).

Depending on the type of activity and the skill of making contacts, minority NGOs can also be cooperation partners in other EU programs, and it is also possible to attract funding from various foreign embassies (for example, the United States, the United Kingdom, etc.). At the same time, these sources of funding are difficult to predict, as they are mostly issued through tenders as grants for certain activities.

2.6. The needs of ethnic minorities and their identification

To answer the question raised in the evaluation whether NGOs have recognized the needs and interests of minorities during the preparation of the project application, the project implementers were asked a relevant question in the survey. The NGO survey data shows that most surveyed NGOs that have implemented program projects have conducted a feasibility study at the application preparation stage and identified the needs and interests of the project's target group (Picture 10).

The organizations surveyed were also asked to explain how they identified the needs of the target group. Several of the surveyed organizations state that they are well aware of the needs of the minority target group, because they work with them all the time on a daily basis: "When working with minorities on a daily basis, their needs are heard".

Picture 10. Identification of the needs of minorities during the preparation of the project application. Number of NGOs

When preparing the application, did you conduct a feasibility study and identify the needs and interests of the target group of the project?
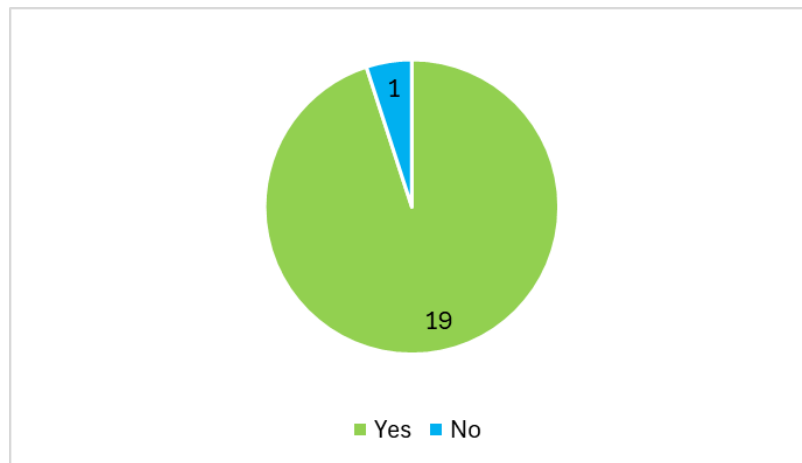
From those organizations that have provided answers about the implemented program projects, n=20.

NGOs also indicate that they identify the needs and interests of minorities by contacting members of their association:

> *"The society has a very large number of representatives of minorities, with whom it has been possible to establish good contact. People share their problems and interests and based on these interests a program was created".*

> *"We work in the field of interest representation, and regular work with target groups helps us understand their needs".*

> *"The target groups were deliberate, because every year we work with minorities and cohesion issues. In this case, they were young people from schools who speak Russian or other foreign languages on a daily basis".*

> *"The needs of the target group are identified in daily work and communication with representatives of different groups".*

> *"We have been working in this environment for 36 years".*

Others have familiarized themselves with studies devoted to minority issues. Several interviewees also state that they have conducted surveys within the framework of other projects: "We conducted surveys, and while operating in other projects, we used the experience gained", "We conducted a survey on the streets, we went to create environmental objects that reflect the feelings of the residents of the neighbourhood. We mapped the habits of the population".

Considering the fact that in 2020 and 2021 the aim of the program was to promote the development of dialogue and cooperation between Latvian youth and minority youth, as well as to promote the participation of minority youth in the formation of civil society, NGOs involved schools in their applications. Therefore, also during the application preparation stage, organizations clarified the opinion of school educators on how to better organize work with young people and involve them. This experience is well described in the following narrative:

> *"We identified the needs of the target group, taking into account previous experience in organizing civic participation activities and camps. Analysing the composition of the participants, we noticed that representatives of minorities and students from certain schools often do not participate in activities. To better understand this situation, we spoke to school management and support staff to discuss potential challenges and seek solutions. During the discussions, it was concluded that it is necessary to organize special activities and projects that would promote the socialization of representatives of minorities and more active participation in public activities".*

In general, it is not surprising that the surveyed organizations believe that the project implemented by them has contributed to meeting the needs of the identified target groups. In the 2022 and 2023 tenders, where the final reports have to state to what extent the project objectives have been achieved, the majority of project implementers have noted in the final reports that the project objective has been fully achieved (16 out of 18 project implementers).

Looking at the survey data, of the organizations that have given answers about the implemented program projects, 53% have given the answer that their project has "certainly contributed" to fulfil the needs of the identified target groups and 47% answered that "it has rather contributed" (Picture 11).

Picture 11. Evaluation of the implemented projects in terms of meeting the needs of the target groups. %

What do you think, has your project contributed to fulfil the needs of the identified target groups?
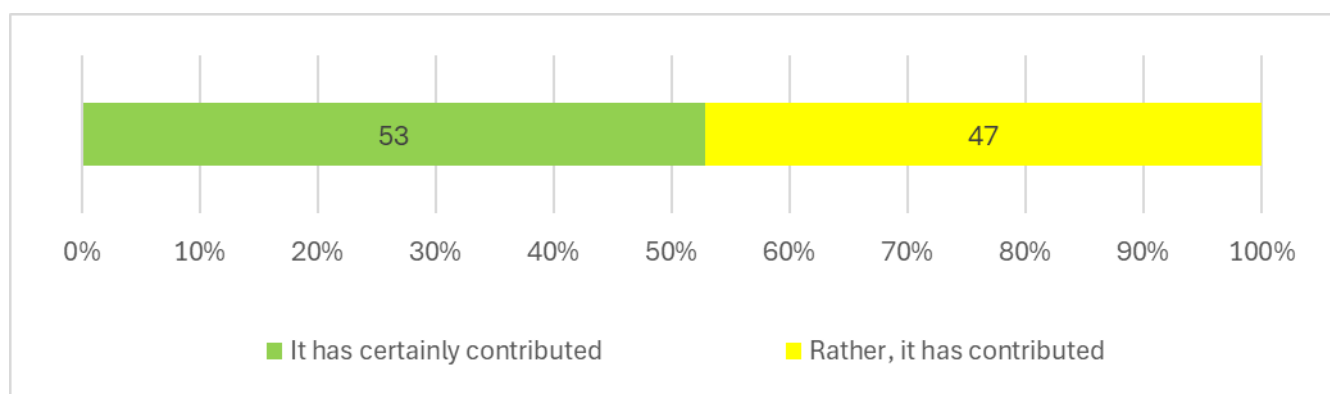
% of those organizations that have provided answers about the implemented program projects, n=17.

2.7. Interest of ethnic minorities to participate in project activities

To find out the interest of minorities in participating in project activities, such a question was also asked in the conducted online survey. The results of the survey show that 44% of the surveyed minority organizations believe that minority representatives are very interested in participating in various project activities. An equally large number, or 44%, believe that representatives of minorities are "rather interested" in participating in various project activities. More sceptical on this issue are 3% of organizations who believe that minority representatives are rather not interested in participating in various project activities, while 3% believe that minority representatives are not interested in participating in various project activities at all (Picture 12).

Picture 12. Evaluation of the interest of minority representatives to participate in project activity. %

In your opinion, how interested are representatives of ethnic minorities in participating in various project activities?
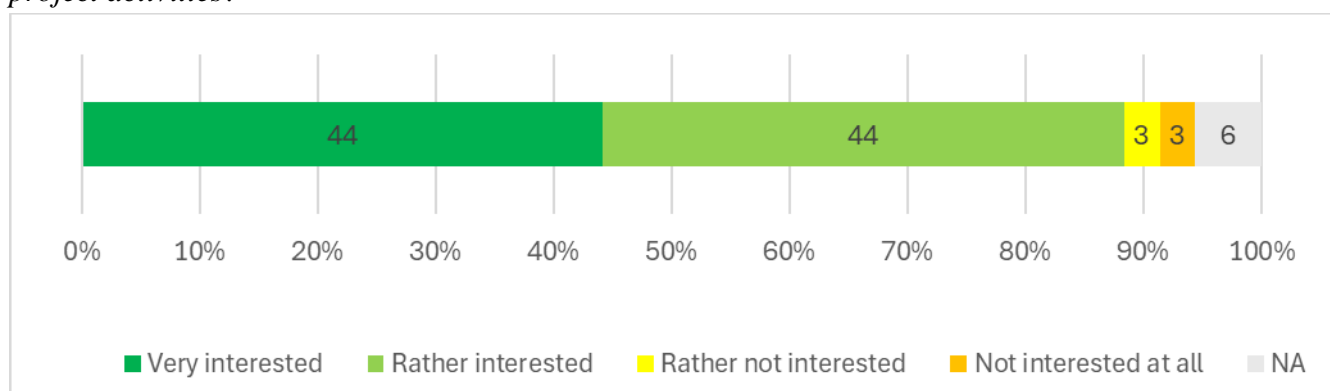
% of all organizations surveyed, n=55.

The analysis of documents (project applications and final reports) shows that to involve representatives of target groups in project activities, it is necessary to invest work. Thus, in most cases, the participation of minorities in projects cannot be considered as a self-initiative, but as a result of the project's activities, because it is necessary to specifically appeal to the representatives of these groups to participate in the activities (as a minimum, informing them about such a possibility).

Picture 13. Assessment of the complexity of ensuring the participation of at least half of minority representatives in the project. %

Did your organization face difficulties in ensuring that at least 50% of minority representatives participate in project activities?

| 12 | 47 | 41 |

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Yes ■ Rather no ■ No
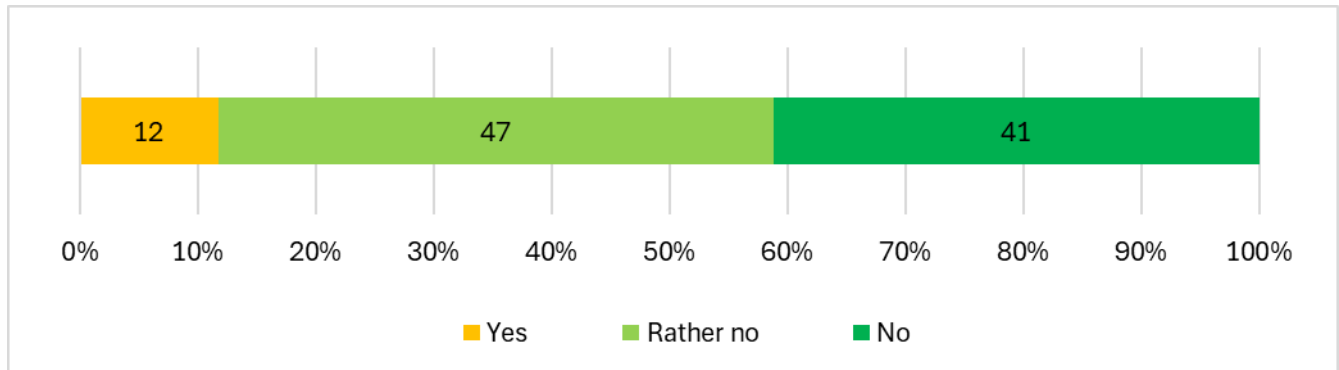
% of those organizations that have provided answers about the implemented program projects, n=17.

In the survey, project implementers were asked whether their organization faced difficulties in ensuring that at least 50% of minority representatives participate in project activities (which is one of the requirements of project tenders). The results of the survey show that this did not cause difficulties for most project implementers, as the answers "rather not" and "no" make up 88%. At the same time, it was a problem for some organizations (Picture 13).

In general, it can be concluded that there are no significant obstacles to the participation of Latvian citizens in projects of this type, which are implemented within the framework of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget. There is no reason to believe that there would be difficulties in involving Latvian or minority children, young people or their families in the events, especially if you take into account that the projects are relatively small and all the projects of the program reach an average of two to three thousand unique persons during the year (see more details in the chapter 2.10 Target groups planned and achieved in the projects).

In terms of reach, these target groups cannot be considered difficult compared to, for example, the long-term unemployed, persons who have suffered violence, etc. However, it can be noted that the projects have faced difficulties in attracting the same group of people to the project activities for a long time, for example ensuring that 10 families will participate in all project activities and that all family members will be represented. NGOs must take this aspect into account when planning new projects, as well as respect the principle of voluntary participation of activity participants, that is, participation in the project should not be defined as an obligation, it should be of personal interest.

2.8. Information channels for the involvement of representatives of minorities in project activities

The answers to the survey question about what information channels the project implementers used to reach the target group of the project show that absolutely all surveyed organizations that received funding and implemented projects used social media to reach the target group. The second most frequently mentioned answer is "contacts of members of the organization" (Picture 14). More than half of the organizations also used the contacts of other project participants.

The survey participants were also asked to specify which social media they have used, and the answers given show that these are: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, WhatsApp, Telegram and organizations' websites. It should be noted that according to the analysis of documents an important

channel for the involvement of minority youth in projects was educational institutions, but in the survey, this answer option is probably not so common, because project implementers do not always associate educational institutions with information channels, and such an answer was not offered among the answer options.

Picture 14. Information channels for the involvement of minorities in project activities. %

What information channels did you use to reach the target group of the project?
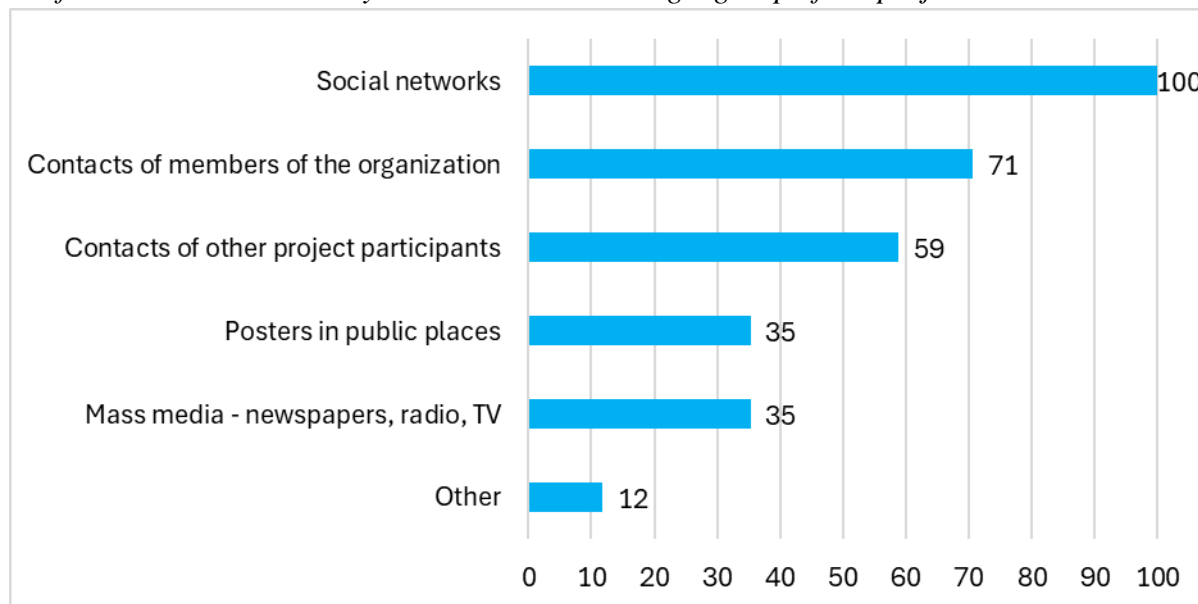
Multiple choice question. % of those organizations that have provided answers about the implemented program projects, n=17.

Not only project implementers, but all surveyed organizations were asked an open-ended question about how they involve minority representatives in their project activities. The provided answers reveal that representatives of minorities are involved both in an active format (participating, for example, in workshops, master classes, sports classes, game evenings, amateur art groups), and in passive ways (as spectators or visitors to concerts, events, excursions, festivals, exhibitions). Children and young people are involved in various competitions and events through cooperation with schools. Seniors are invited in cooperation with libraries and seniors' associations. Informing about the events mostly takes place using social networks, members' phones, also e-mails to reach other organizations, as well as by choosing places for project activities, where it is already typical for minority residents to gather: "We organize activities in places, in their communities. It significantly facilitates engagement". The greatest difficulty in reaching representatives of minorities is in rural areas, where they are few in number, while "inhabitants of rural villages are interconnected, problems between different nationalities are not so acute". Among the answers, the opinion should be highlighted that only active participants participate in the various events, and those who do not participate cannot be persuaded to participate either.

The answers of the representatives of the surveyed organizations to the question, what are the potentially best information channels for reaching minority children, young people and their families, show that the experiences and opinions of the organizations are different. There are those who unequivocally as the best information channels for reaching minority children, young people and their

families consider various social networks: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, WhatsApp. Others suggest that personal appeal is most effective.

These differences of opinion are probably related both to the fact that children, young people and their families are also different target groups, and also to the fact that reaching the target group may have different tasks. If the task is to inform about an event, then more suitable information channels are social media. On the other hand, if the task is to motivate someone to participate in the event, a more effective approach could be a personal appeal: "Contacts - personally. Because information conveyed in a personal conversation is best perceived"; "Individual approach and direct addressing - visiting families or schools". It is certainly easier to reach young people in schools by cooperating with educational institutions: "Schools and educational institutions - cooperating with educators and administration to inform about opportunities". To reach children and teenagers, survey participants recommend using Instagram and TikTok. On the other hand, to reach adults and families it might be possible on the Facebook pages of the neighbourhood and municipality. It is essential to take into account the diversity of target groups, the need to use several information channels and the purpose with which this particular target group is addressed.

2.9. Description of the activities of the applied and implemented projects

To obtain information about the most characteristic activities of the projects, coding and analysis of the project application and closing documents was carried out, because the project application documents provided information about the submitted projects and the activities planned in them. While the final reports provided detailed information about the activities implemented in the projects. It is no surprise that the majority of both applied and implemented projects offered various types of educational activities (lessons, workshops, educational games, seminars, excursions, etc.). This approach resulted both from the target groups of the project tenders and also from the conditions of the tenders, because, for example, the 2020 and 2021 tenders already had a list of recommended events and activities, which are mostly all considered educational activities. It should be noted that in those cases where, among several activities of an educational nature, one of the activities is of a different type, for example celebrating a holiday, the code "Educational activities (lessons, workshops, educational games, seminars, excursions, etc.)" is used. The code "Celebration of holidays" was used in cases where it was indeed the main or central activity of the project. The same applies to other codes. In general, a trend can be observed that the more varied the range of activities marked with the code "Educational activities (lessons, workshops, educational games, seminars, excursions, etc.)", the more likely the project was to obtain funding, compared to those projects, who offered only the organization of one camp or only sports events (Table 9).

Table 9. Types of activities of the applied and implemented projects in 2020-2023 project competitions

Types of activities	All submitted project applications	Supported and implemented project applications
Educational activities (lessons, workshops, educational games, seminars, excursions, etc.)	44	25
Celebration of holidays	3	2

Outdoor activities (excursions, hiking, orienteering)	4	1
Organizing the camp	6	1
Research	2	1
Sports events	4	0
Latvian language conversation clubs	1	0
Support measures for Ukrainian families to alleviate war trauma	1	0
Publicity events (video and media programs)	3	0
Total:	**68**	**30**

The in-depth interviews with project implementers reveal that there were also projects in which event participants so responsively accepted the project idea and proposed activities that they supplemented them with their own initiatives (in the specific example, cultural activities and room design), and this gave everyone even more joy and satisfaction:

> *"We didn't have a big project. It didn't have a lot of activities. There were four community-based workshops and two cooperation events. These cooperation measures really succeeded. One was so Latvian both in terms of territory and content. It was November's covenant, a national holiday, Lacplesa day. We put a lot of thought into the visual design, the set of events. To have the atmosphere of Latvian holidays. The second event was Meteni traditions and February Slavic traditions. An extremely beautiful and successful event, too. I was very pleased that the Russian-speaking community invested so much in the visual design of the event. And a lot of things were included that were not planned in advance: exhibitions, concerts. People were extremely receptive to what was offered, and we ourselves had a great satisfaction".*

In-depth interviews also reveal that participants enjoy activities such as creative workshops or master classes, as well as excursions or outdoor outings. People are less interested in participating in events where they have to express their opinion, participate in a discussion.

When studying the project applications and final reports, it should be noted that it is not typical for the projects to offer something very innovative, as the description of previous experience shows that similar projects have already been implemented. On the other hand, if an organization has found working methods that work well and offers activities that people like, this is also a very good achievement, because the participants of the events are changing.

The analysis of project final reports shows that, in general, organizations with experience have established their own network of cooperation, which is based on mutual interest in cooperation and positive previous experience. It can be seen that the organizations very successfully cooperate with educational institutions, libraries, cultural centres, municipalities, and other NGOs in the implementation of projects.

2.10. Target groups planned and achieved in the projects

To obtain information about the numerical characteristics of the target groups planned and achieved in the projects, coding and analysis of the implemented project applications and final reports was carried

out, which allowed to compare the extent to which the projects have reached the intended target group. Coding was possible only in terms of overall indicators and not for individual target groups, because different tenders used a different accounting system for the planned and achieved target groups, there were different target groups in different tenders, and the project implementers did not always consistently follow the principles of transparent reporting. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the project implementers have generally tried to comply with the principle that an equal number of minority and Latvian target group representatives participate in the project activities at the same time. It should also be noted that coding basically takes into account the indicators related to the registration of personally involved target groups, as far as possible, indicators such as the number of video viewers prepared in the project are not included, as these indicators have a great impact on the number of the target group reached.

The results of project document coding (Table 10) show that, in total, 6,068 representatives of different target groups (unique persons) were expected to be reached in four years, and 7,140 persons were managed to be reached. As shown by other project indicators, in general, the number of projects where the planned number of the target group has been exceeded is 20 projects out of 30, while there are 7 projects where this has not been achieved. In general, it shows that the project implementers have successfully reached the target group of the planned activities and that the number of people reached in general is higher than planned. Taking into account the fact that both Latvians and Latvian minorities were equally involved in the project activities, the projects have generally promoted cooperation between minorities and Latvians.

Table 10. The number of target groups planned and achieved in the projects by year

Years of tenders	Planned number of target group	Reached number of target group	Number of projects where the planned number of the target group was not reached	Number of projects where the number of the target group was exceeded
2020.	1387	1383	2	3
2021.	649	732	2	2
2022.	1927	2128	3	6
2023.	2105	2897	0	9
Total	6068	7140	7	20

Also, in the in-depth interviews with the project implementers, the satisfaction and even surprise of the activity organizers was expressed that people came so responsively and participated in various events and are looking forward to new events again: "What surprised you the most in this project? - Exactly the number of participants, because we wrote the minimum number of participants. But the participants kept coming. We had almost twice as many people at some activities. They are curious and like to learn and learn something new. It can be said that all generations like it".

2.11. Examples of good practice among the implemented projects

Examples of good practice to illustrate project activities were selected based on both document analysis (study of applications and final reports) and in-depth interviews with project implementers. The main

criteria in the selection of the selected projects were as follows: 1) successful implementation of the project, ensuring all planned activities and reaching the planned target groups; 2) original activities implemented in the project; 3) projects represent different regions; 4) projects implemented in the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme 2020-2023.

In total, five projects were selected as examples of good practice, a brief description of which is given below.

Project title: **"We live in Latvia" ("Mēs dzīvojam Latvijā")**

Project number: **2023.LV/MTSP/01**

Project implementer: **Association "Cooperation Platform" (Biedrība "Sadarbības platforma")**

Place and time of the implemented project: **Bolderaja, Riga and Rezekne, Latgale region. 15/11/2023 - 31/05/2024**

Project activities: **The main activities of the project were (1) a role play about tolerance, which gave the participants the opportunity to get to know their own and others' values, beliefs and attitudes about sensitive topics better; (2) performance - sketch "We live in Latvia", which was prepared in Rezekne and then also shown in Bolderaja; (3) the cultural educational afternoons of three nations (Latvian, Slavic and German), which were organized in Bolderaja, and facilitated getting to know different cultures; (4) animation "Friends in Latvia", where children worked on the task to show how, in their opinion, representatives of different nationalities live together in Latvia with the help of animation; (5) project closing event.**

Good practice: **The project is an example of good practice, as it provided interesting events in which both Latvian and minority children, young people and representatives of their families participated. A total of 150 children and young people and 432 of their family members and other viewers were reached. Compared to other projects implemented, this is a large number of target groups reached. The good practice in the project was to mainly use Latvian in communication.**

Benefit from the project for the target group and society in general:

The target groups of the project were Latvian and minority children, young people and their families. One of the main target groups defined in the project was representatives of minorities whose family language is Russian. The project contributed to the cohesion of the society, because in the activities of the project Latvian residents from different ethnic groups worked together, showing respect and understanding towards each other. The project also promoted knowledge of the Latvian language and daily use skills, as in the project all activities were basically conducted in Latvian, only in case of necessity providing a translation into Russian, so that the representatives of the target group could understand what was said. The project promoted the integration of representatives of minorities whose family language is Russian into Latvian society, as well as mutual tolerance and cultural exchange, as the project participants got to know both the culture of Latvians and several minorities, involving the participants themselves in the study of various cultural traditions.

Project title: **"Unity in Diversity" ("Vienotība dažādībā")**

Project number: **2023.LV/MTSP/15**

Project implementer: **Association "Shelter for the family" (Biedrība "Patvērums ģimenei")**

Place and time of the implemented project: **Liepaja, Kurzeme region, 01/12/2023 - 31/05/2024**

Project activities: **The main activities of the project were (1) physical activity classes (six); (2) culinary activities (three); (3) body scrub preparation master class; (4) soap making master class; (5) Latvian language promotion activities (creation of a dream board; Latvian language day; (6) presentation skills and public speaking training (in front of a video camera and audience); (7) acting art promotion activity; (8) board game night; (9) activities for children under the age of 9 10) family trip to Bernati.**

Good practice: **Using diverse and interesting non-formal educational activities, the project promoted the cohesion of Liepaja's minorities and Latvian families, the strengthening of the Latvian language in communication, as well as the involvement of minorities in the cultural, political and socio-economic processes taking place in the city and the country, and in public life in general. In total, 112 representatives of the target group were reached.**

Benefit from the project for the target group and society in general:

The project helped minority families from Liepaja to more effectively include the Latvian language in their everyday life, strengthening their belonging to both the city and the country of Latvia, as well as promoting their involvement in the cultural and civil society activities taking place in Latvia. The project promoted understanding, cooperation and coexistence, as well as reduced existing negative stereotypes. Part of the project participants were Ukrainians who, fleeing the war, have recently entered Latvia. The project facilitated their integration in Liepaja, learning the Latvian language and provided positive emotions.

Project title: **Cultural marathon: Germany and Latvia with all the senses (Kultūras maratons: Vācija un Latvija ar visām maņām)**

Project number: **2023.LV/MTSP/20**

Project implementer: **Association "ERFOLG" (Biedrība "ERFOLG")**

Place and time of the implemented project: **Daugavpils, Latgale region. 01/11/2023 - 31/05/2024**

Project activities: **The main activities of the project were (1) non-formal education school for minorities and Latvians "Children's University KINDERUNI", where classes were held during school holidays; (2) The cycle of events "Kitchen that speaks..." provided an opportunity to get to know Latvian and German cuisine by participating in Latvian and German cooking masterclasses, reading old cookbooks and discussing the origins of various recipes; (3) The non-formal education event "Neimanis can inspire" provided an opportunity to learn about the work of the Baltic German architect and art scholar V. Neimans in Latvia; Publication of the educational-informative calendar "Vilhelms Neimanis: an excellent example of cooperation between Latvians and Germans"; (4) non-formal education events for minority families "Stories in the language of flowers" gave the opportunity to learn about prominent botanists Reinhold Kupfer and Jānis Ilster, learn about the symbolic meaning of flowers and flowers in folklore (folk songs, fairy tales, riddles) and participate in a flower painting master class; (5) the event "My dedication to Latvia in the language of flowers", where a flower bed dedicated to Latvia was created on the day of the restoration of Latvia's independence on May 4.**

Good practice: **The project implemented an interesting approach: introducing the customs of different cultures using several senses: taste, hearing, touch, sight and smell. In total, 780 representatives of the target group were reached (minorities: Russians, Belarusians, Germans, Poles, Ukrainians, and Latvians - children and young people, families). Compared to other projects implemented, this is a large number of target groups reached.**

Benefit from the project for the target group and society in general:

The project introduced the children, young people, adult family members and other interested parties of the city and county of Daugavpils to German and Latvian culture, promoting the public's understanding of the diversity of cultures and their place in the multi-ethnic environment of the city. Working together, for example in cooking workshops, contributed to the cohesion of Latvians and minorities.

Project title: **"Covenant with your land" ("Derība ar savu zemi")**

Project number: **2022.LV/MTSP/4**

Project implementer: **Association "Watermarks" (Biedrība "Ūdenszīmes")**

Place and time of the implemented project: **Selija, Latgale and Zemgales region, 01.08.2022. - 28.02.2023.**

Project activities: **The main activities of the project were (1) Training seminars in four communities, which addressed the following topics: municipal and state functions; how we can reach our municipality and country; working group "How to formulate your needs and make them understandable?"; opinions and vision of community representatives about the identity of their community, its symbols, desired directions of development, opportunities for cooperation with the municipality. (2) Identity palettes for four communities, which includes the identification of community uniqueness and identity, as well as the preparation of a concept, description and sketch of a community identity sign; (3) Preparation of the video clip "I am telling the story of my community", which was created by the youth of the communities and which tells the story of four communities. (4) Community cooperation event "November covenant", which took place on the theme of traditional November holidays. (5) Community cooperation event "Light of the Year in the East", the event of which was created in the spirit of Meteņi/Maslenica, a calendar holiday similar to the Slavic and Baltic peoples.**

Good practice: **The project is interesting in that it is aimed at developing the civic participation of the inhabitants of Selija, strengthening the identity and cooperation between different, including eastern and border communities where ethnic minorities live, promoting cooperation between ethnically different rural communities. In total, the project reached 164 representatives of the target group, mainly rural residents.**

Benefit from the project for the target group and society in general:

Considering the fact that the people of Selija from many different communities of Selija participated in the project, the project has contributed to the strengthening of the identity of the people of Selija and cooperation between these communities. Participants from the following locations participated in the project: Pasuliene community, Saliena community, Kaplava community, Eglaine community, Vecsaliena/Chervonka community, Medumu community,

Demenes community, Ilukste community, Subate community, Bebrene community, Kaldabrunas community, Viesite community, Selpils community, Elksnu community, Rites community, Sunakste community, Erberges community, Dignaja community, Zasa community, and Birkineli community. The project strengthened cooperation between ethnic groups and the idea of the historical land of Selija.

Project title: **"Together we can and we do" ("Kopā varam un darām")**

Project number: **2022.LV/MTSP/9**

Project implementer: **Association "Jelgava Association of National Cultural Societies" (Biedrība "Jelgavas nacionālo kultūras biedrību asociācija")**

Place and time of the implemented project: **Jelgava, Zemgale region, 08/08/2022 - 30/11/2022**

Project activities: **The main activities of the project were (1) Green day in the forest, where an educational hike was held on the topic of nature conservation and healthy environment. (2) Yellow day at the farm, where pupils of different ethnicities participated together, getting to know the culture and traditions of the Latvian people. (3) Orange day with orienteering competitions, relays and campfire stories. (4) Violet days in Jelgava, where pupils prepared small gifts for seniors, and at the end of the activity, there was a trip to the State Social Care Centre "Zemgale". (4) Brown days, during which pupils prepared the photo exhibition "I am Latvia". (5) Gray Day together with the 52nd Combat Support Battalion of the National Guard, performing activities related to Lacplesis Day. (6) Blue colour day, which was dedicated to water and an excursion to the company "Jelgavas water" was held; (7) The day of red and white colours – the final event, where the program included information about the completed activities, was attended by historian Miks Vilnis and musicians from Jelgava Spīdola State Gymnasium.**

Good practice: **The project told the story of Latvia and its values in an interesting way through colours, offering an engaging program of activities to both Latvian and minority school youth. At the same time, the project's activities provided an idea of the diversity of society, promoted cooperation between young people and seniors, and expanded socialization opportunities for young people of different ethnicities. In total, the project reached 416 representatives of the target group, among them 316 school youth.**

Benefit from the project for the target group and society in general:

The project contributed to the promotion of awareness of the diversity of society among Latvian and minority school youth in Jelgava, reducing attitudes towards various ethnic groups based on negative stereotypes, and provided activities that promote a sense of belonging to Latvia. School youth from the following schools were involved in the project: Jelgava Pārlielupe Elementary School, Jelgava 5th Secondary School, Jelgava Centra Elementary School, Jelgava Technology Secondary School and Jelgava Spīdola State Gymnasium.

2.12. The use of the Latvian language in events and project activities

The use of languages in minority events in Latvia is still a very topical issue, which is not always easy to solve. For example, when involving representatives of minorities who are over 50 years old, the lack of knowledge of the Latvian language can cause communication difficulties. At the same time, however, the use of the Latvian language in events of this type is increasingly perceived as the norm.

The experience of the surveyed project implementers shows (Picture 15) that more than half of the organizations used mainly or only the Latvian language in project activities (9 organizations out of 17; 53%). Six organizations, or 35%, indicate that they used both Latvian and Russian languages in the project activities. Two organizations have marked the answer "other". One of them explains that the Latvian and Polish languages were used in the events, while the other states that they used "mostly the Latvian language, as well as Russian and English, which we provided with translation for those who did not understand the Latvian language". It can be concluded that the Russian language is still used in communication, but not only, and interpreters are also involved in the organization of events. It should be positively evaluated that none of the organizations indicated that the project activities would take place "in Russian more than in Latvian" or "in English more than in Latvian".

Picture 15. Use of languages in project activities. Number
In what language were the activities of the specific project implemented? (Mark only one answer!)
Mainly or only Latvian; both Latvian and Russian; both Latvian and English; more Russian than Latvian; English more than Latvian; another answer.
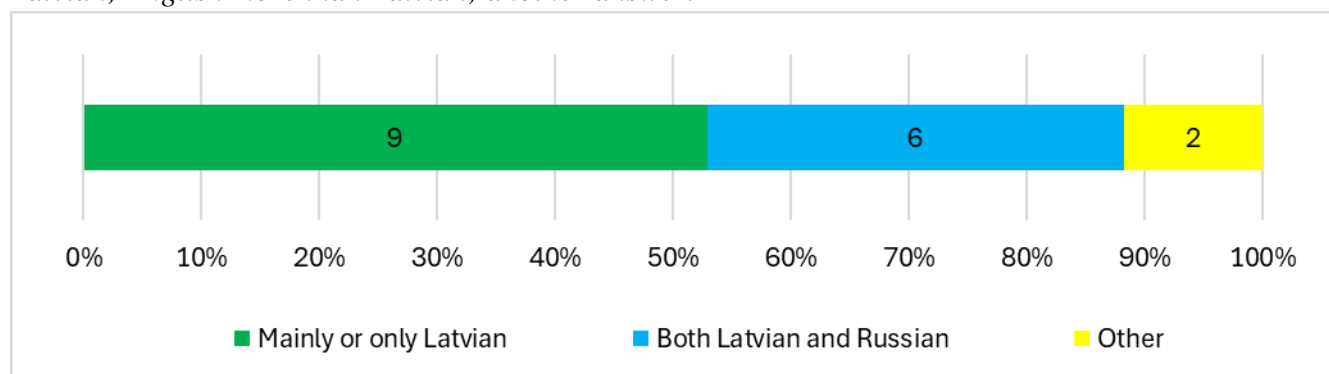
From those organizations that have provided answers about the implemented program projects, n=17.
In-depth interviews with project implementers reveal that the language issue has been problematic in certain projects. For example, one of the project managers says that she was shocked when the local librarian refused to speak Latvian:

> *"In the first seminar, we gathered in the library. A librarian, an intelligent woman, but spoke only Russian. And when we met several times, we found that the librarian is the person who is turning the community backwards, because she emphatically spoke only Russian, although many people of other ethnicities really speak Latvian. That first seminar was an absolute shock to us. At that first seminar, the librarian was speaking Russian while a man in the audience asked, "Why were we speaking Russian?".*

This shows that the implementers of the project are forced to adapt to the specific situation and solve the language issue, at the same time the project manager also points out that the lack of language knowledge is not always related to a negative attitude towards Latvia and Latvians:

> *"What surprised you the most in this project? - The fact that language knowledge is not decisive. It was, of course, unpleasantly shocking that in many places municipal employees have problems with the Latvian language. Yes, it was not pleasant. But on the other hand, despite the fact that they do not know the language, they love Latvian traditions very much. They really love the place where they live. For example, even in such communities where there are problems with the language, their visual presentation of the holiday is extremely Latvian. They are trying very hard. Careful and long-term cooperation is really needed there so that we do not push back and at the same time do not give up and do not speak Russian. It's a very fine*

line. Yes, but it was a surprise that love for one's country does not always come with knowledge of the language".

On the other hand, another project implementer had a very positive experience with the attitude towards learning to speak Latvian from Ukrainians fleeing the war:

"In your opinion, has your project increased the feelings of solidarity, cohesion, and willingness to cooperate among the project participants? - In my opinion, it has increased, because it turned out that some of the participants were Ukrainians who have recently entered Latvia. And so it happened that we are still in contact with them. We see that they like to visit all kinds of events, places and learn a lot. It is also noticeable that they learn the Latvian language very well. They try to speak Latvian".

2.13. Evaluation of the impact of implemented projects

To assess the impact of implemented projects in various aspects, the following indicators were included in the survey questionnaire of minority organizations:

1) The impact of the project on promoting the cohesion, solidarity and cooperation of Latvian society;
2) Impact of the project on reducing prejudice against and between ethnic groups;
3) The effect of the project on increasing the understanding of the project participants about the diversity of society;
4) Impact of the project on the cooperation of minority generations.

The results of the survey show that 53% of project implementers believe that their project has certainly contributed to the cohesion, solidarity and cooperation of Latvian society (Picture 16). 41% of the surveyed project implementers believe that their project has rather contributed to the cohesion, solidarity and cooperation of the Latvian society, 6% of the surveyed chose the answer "hard to say".

In the in-depth interviews with the project implementers, it was also emphasized that working together in various project activities greatly contributes to cohesion and cooperation: "The fact that we all worked together. Not divided by ethnicity or religious beliefs. We all worked together. There were no prejudices or dislikes among the participants. Everyone was friendly". The positive atmosphere and usefulness of the projects is illustrated by the fact that the participants of the activities invite the project implementers to organize similar events: "Now more and more people come to us and are interested. They ask: 'What else will there? When will it be?' Super!"

Picture 16. The impact of the project on promoting the cohesion, solidarity and cooperation of Latvian society. %

What do you think, has the project implemented by you contributed to the cohesion, solidarity and cooperation of Latvian society?

53		41	6

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ It has certainly contributed ■ Rather, it has contributed ■ Hard to say, no answer
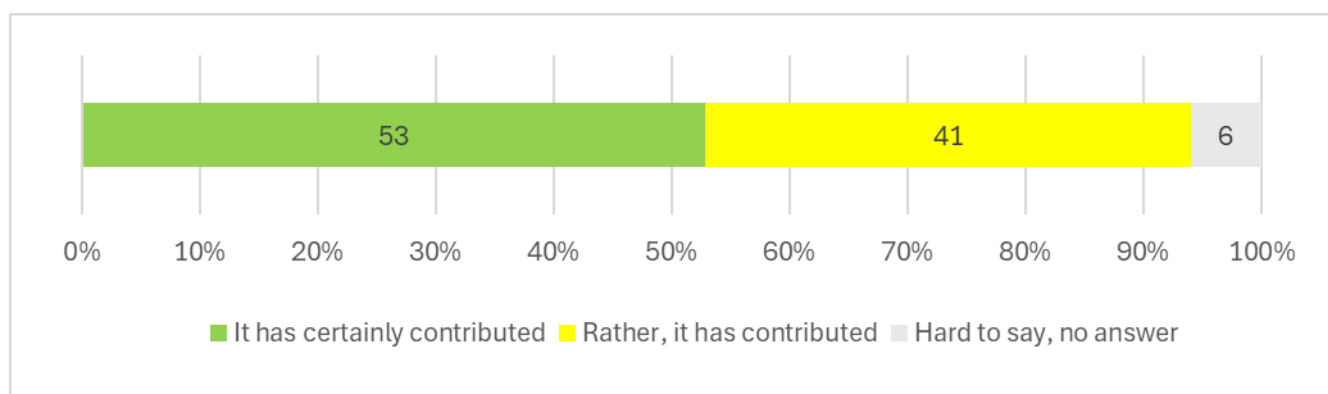
% of those organizations that have provided answers about the implemented program projects, n=17.

The in-depth interviews with project implementers also show that the approach implemented in these projects, when representatives of minorities are personally addressed and involved in activities, is the one that best contributes to the cohesion of society, and involvement in such projects is also very important for Latvians as a core nation (unfortunately, this way it is not possible to reach a very large number of project participants):

> *"If we Latvians as a basic nation feel that we are marginalized, then it is doubly so for the Russian-speaking part of society. [..] To some extent, our great success was also hidden there, because [..] Russian-speaking people felt very happy that they were heard, that they were respected, that they were needed. [..] And human connection formed with joint events and projects".*

> *"Yes, not only for children, but also for adults, it works a lot if there is live contact and live acquaintance. If they know a foreigner, or a person who uses different languages on a daily basis or does not use Latvian at all, it greatly, greatly changes their overall perception. It is no longer some "grey mass", some great evil. In my opinion, it is important to work on an individual, personal level. It reduces division, promotes understanding".*

Regarding the indicator of the impact of the project on the reduction of prejudice against and between ethnic groups, 59% of the surveyed project implementers believe that their project has certainly contributed to the reduction of prejudice against and between ethnic groups, 41% of the respondents have chosen the answer option "rather has contributed" (Picture 17).

In-depth interviews also revealed several examples when the project visibly contributes to reducing prejudices between ethnic groups and increasing awareness of the diversity of society:

> *"I can say that overall, the project was very successful. All activities were successful. Everything we had planned, we managed to do. With a great result, both for the participants and for us, it was possible to try some new forms. [..] Children of different ethnicities had the opportunity to get acquainted with Latvian and German traditions. It was a great pleasure that very different children of different ethnicities were involved - Latvians, Russians, Belarusians, Poles, Roma, Uzbeks, Tatars. Very, very different. It was such a diverse group. Therefore, the activity was really interesting, both for us in terms of experience working with such a diversity of cultures, and for the children themselves. In principle, the children gained both new friends and new knowledge. We really liked that there was a variety of languages."*

"Children have a new experience with representatives of different cultures. It was also a great experience for adults to meet people from other cultures and try to get to know the culture with their senses."

Picture 17. Impact of the project on reducing prejudice against and between ethnic groups. %

What do you think, has your implemented project contributed to reducing prejudices against and between ethnic groups?
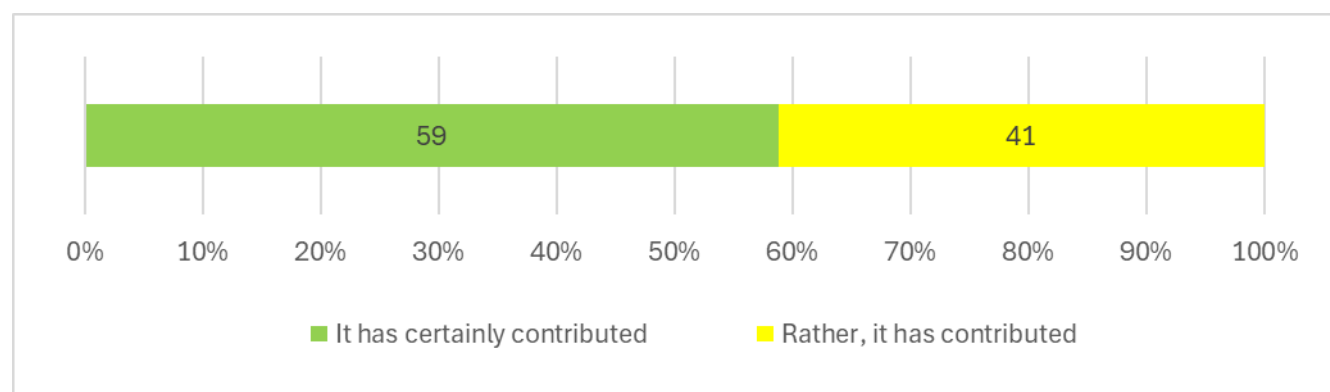
% of those organizations that have provided answers about the implemented program projects, n=17.

Regarding the indicator of the impact of the project on increasing the understanding of the diversity of society among the project participants, 59% of the surveyed project implementers believe that their project has definitely increased the understanding of the diversity of the society among the project participants, 41% of the respondents have chosen the answer option "rather has increased" (Picture 18).

Picture 18. The impact of the project on increasing the awareness of the project participants about the diversity of society. %

What do you think, has the project implemented by you increased the awareness of the project participants about the diversity of society?

% of those organizations that have provided answers about the implemented program projects, n=17.

According to the results of the survey, the implemented projects also have a positive effect on the cooperation of minority generations. 59% of project implementers believe that their project has promoted the cooperation of minority generations in all activities, 35% have noted that this has happened in some of the activities (Picture 19). No project implementer gave a negative answer, but 6% do not have a specific opinion and choose the answer "hard to say".

Positive feedback about the promotion of intergenerational cooperation was also heard in the in-depth interviews with the project implementers. For example, in one interview about the results of the implemented project, it was stated: "Young people are happy, seniors are happy. It is really satisfying that it was such a good move. You write a project, and you get it, and people are happy and grateful for it".

Picture 19. Impact of the project on the cooperation of minority generations. %
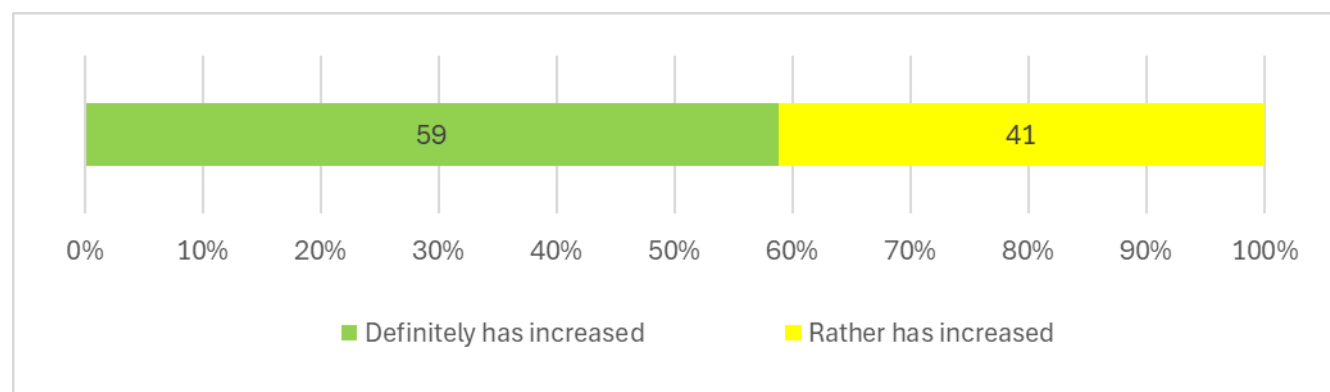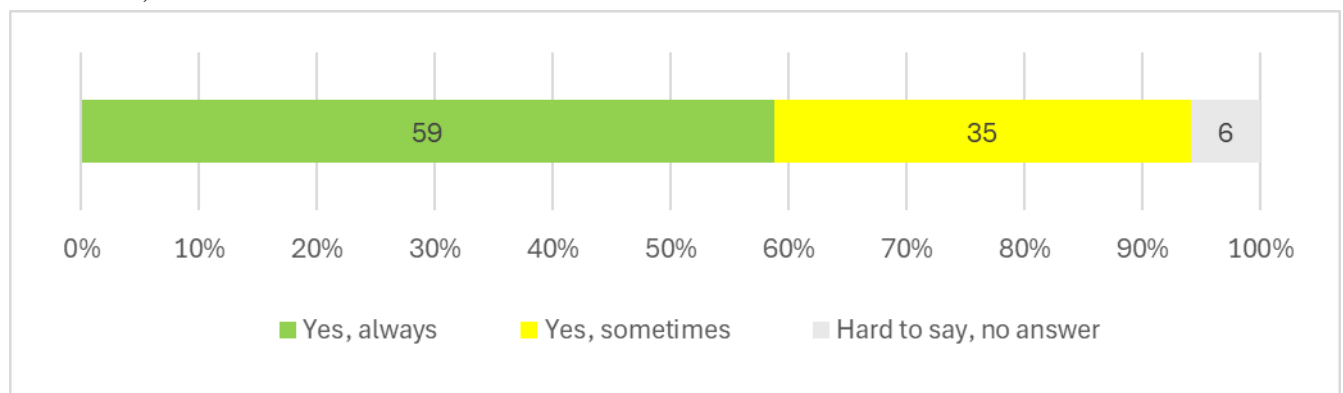*Did your project promote the cooperation of minority generations? Answer options: yes, always; yes, sometimes; no.*

% of those organizations that have provided answers about the implemented program projects, n=17.

Regarding the capacity of the project implementers for activities related to the achievement of the program goal, it should be noted that in the assessment of the project implementers, the projects of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme 2020-2023 financed by the state budget are small, and they are relatively short projects (they last 4-7 months on average). In general, organizations have no difficulty in providing the necessary human resources for such projects, as they have experience with significantly larger projects. The fact that the funding available for the projects is small and the allotted time is very short is also indicated by the representatives of the organizations in the in-depth interviews:

> *"The program is very valuable, it's just a pity that its implementation is so short and the allocated budget is relatively small, because the participants would very much like a continuation. In some of the classes, interested parties had to be refused participation, limiting their number. We are happy that we managed to inspire such a large number of people of different ethnicities to make friends and participate in activities together".*

2.14. General evaluation of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme

All minority organizations that had heard about the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget were asked in the survey how they evaluate this program. The given answers show that 84% of the interviewed minority representatives have a positive opinion about this

program (Picture 20). Only 3% express a negative attitude, while 13% do not have a specific opinion and choose the answer "hard to say".

Picture 20. Evaluation of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme. %

In general, how do you evaluate the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget?
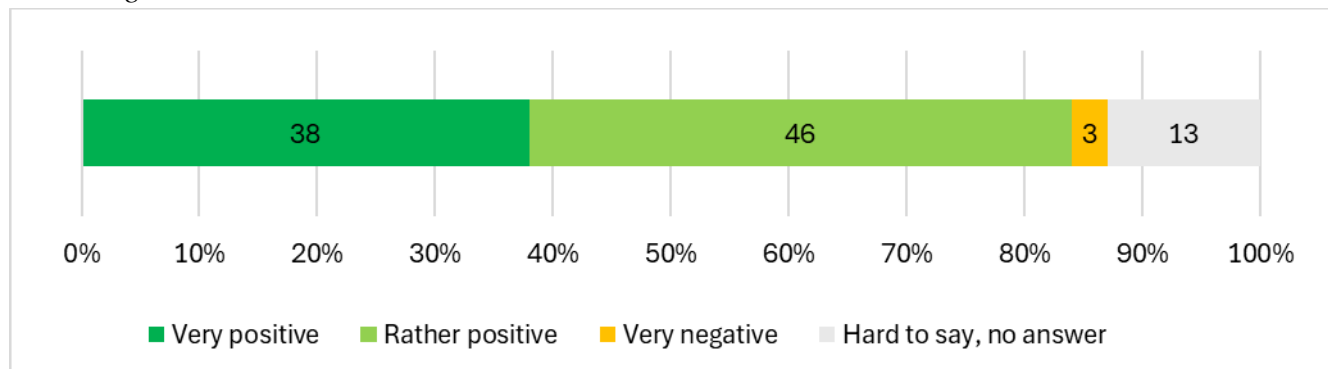
% of organizations that have heard about the programme, n=39.

The surveyed organizations were asked to justify their opinion, why a positive or negative assessment was given. The answers given can be grouped into three groups. Some organizations base their positive assessment on the fact that project tenders were well organized, providing support to project applicants: *"Everything was understandable, and in case of confusion, you could always consult by phone or e-mail".*

The second group of answers focuses on the broader positive impact of the program on society, on the fact that the issues of minorities and social cohesion are very topical in Latvian society, and welcomes the opportunities provided by the program to promote social cohesion and tolerance even a little, as well as the opportunity for Latvian society to get to know other cultures and traditions:

> *"While working in the project, you can get acquainted with the culture and traditions of other ethnicities, compare and look for commonalities".*

> *"A great opportunity to unite representatives of various minorities, to give them an insight into Latvian traditions and culture. Reduce stereotypes of minorities and residents and build a unifying community".*

> *"Minority-oriented project competitions promote the integration of these groups in society, providing the opportunity to participate in various activities. Such projects help strengthen minority communities, preserve languages and traditions, and promote social equality. They provide an opportunity for both young people and adults to develop skills and become active members of society, thus promoting cultural exchange and social cohesion".*

> *"Positive, because ideas emerged in this project competition that would otherwise not be implemented. Traditionally, minority societies have been supported, but this competition presents ideas that may contribute more to social cohesion (beyond the usual target groups)".*

> *"It is very important to promote cooperation and understanding between representatives of different ethnicities living in Latvia".*

> *"Tolerance towards representatives of various ethnic groups is still low in Latvian society, especially to Roma and citizens of third countries".*

45

"The project was exactly what was needed in our neighbourhood - it opened up opportunities to implement unifying activities".

In the third group, critical responses can be gathered that point to some weaknesses of the program, such as insufficient budget, administrative burden and difficult to fulfil requirements:

"Discriminatory program; it is impossible to organize inclusive events for minorities, separation is encouraged, small budget, bureaucracy".

It should be noted that among those who give a positive assessment, there is some criticism as well. For example, it is criticized that the projects in this program are small (low funding) and have a short period of time, but a long-term approach aimed at achieving long-term results is needed:

"On the whole positive, however, we believe that project activities should be focused on long-term results, and not on some individual one-time measures".

"The funding available for the program was very small, so we no longer participated in 2023 and 2024".

2.15. The opinion of minority organizations on the activities of the programme to be supported in the future

The minority survey questionnaire included several open-ended questions to find out the opinions of the representatives of the organizations on how, in their opinion, the program should develop in the future. One of these questions was: "Please indicate what type of activities, in your opinion, should be supported in the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget in the future in order to promote the cohesion of Latvian society?".

The results of the survey show that minority organizations see the need for many and varied activities. First, there are very traditional calls to support minority organizations, their events, holiday celebrations, concerts, camps, minority art and music festivals. However, it should be stressed that these measures do not contribute to the overall cohesion of the society in the context of the programme's goal, as they are aimed at maintaining the traditions of minorities, not the cohesion of society and the integration of minorities into Latvian society.

More interesting suggestions are aimed at the projects offering "activities that are outside the usual ones of minority NGOs (concerts, folklore, etc.)". Essential and justified are suggestions to support those activities that promote inhabitants of Latvia being together, doing things together and creating together: "Activities in which residents work together, create together. For example, we once involved the Jelgava neighbourhood association in the improvement of yards in a neighbourhood dominated by Russian-speaking residents. Together, Latvians, Russians and representatives of other ethnicities created places for rest".

According to the opinion of several minority representatives interviewed, it is still relevant to maintain the requirement that Latvians and minorities make up about half of the target audience, because it promotes interaction and overcoming various negative stereotypes: "It could be any kind of joint activity (both talks and master classes, both excursions or trips), where the group includes both Latvians and representatives of minorities approximately 50% to 50% in the group. The main thing is that there is cooperation or joint action in the group, during which contacts and conversations can be made".

According to several comments, the target audience of children and young people is still a relevant target group, which should be continued to be a project target group: "Activities for children, because they are our future". In the assessment of some organizations, successful experiences are the exchange of experiences, youth friendship events between different regions of Latvia, because they help to get to know Latvia better and feel belonging to it: "Exchange of young people of different ethnicities between different regions of Latvia". Others think it is important to continue activities to support families: "Festivals, family forums. Something similar to the 3x3 format only on the scale of Latvia and for minorities".

The representatives of the organizations point out that it is difficult to count the participants and record their ethnicity in different events, but it is important to find solutions to the counting difficulties and not to limit the activities of the organizations and their diversity: "Such results are difficult to measure, but on a daily basis these people would hardly cooperate without external interventions and event initiations. Of course, they should not always be only improvement works, but it is important that the program does not limit the chosen methods".

Recommendations are also made to support "activities that would promote the availability of information in various areas of life, because available information provides the opportunity for participation, involvement". Representatives of minorities still want information about what is happening to be available in minority languages: "Support activities that promote information about what is happening in Latvia in the minority language". The recommendation to spread more information about what is happening in Latvia in the language of the minorities, in the opinion of the researchers, is currently not relevant in Latvia, because it does not contribute to the expansion of the environment for using the Latvian language, but quite the opposite. Therefore, the dissemination of information and the organization of events in the Latvian language should be rather supported, for individual representatives of minorities individually translating or explaining the most important things discussed in Latvian.

Another representative of the organization believes that more should be thought about long-term measures, as they would provide a greater effect: "Long-term activity of associations. Events that give results in the long term with a large number of contact hours with the target group, not one-time exhibitions".

Someone else thinks it is important to promote civic participation events, especially among young people: "Civil and political participation lessons. Practical works on participation, how much young people can already influence events at the local, regional and national level. Lessons with the practical application of the Latvian language (camps, hackathons, etc.)".

In general, the recommendations for the further supported activities of the social cohesion program are largely in line with what is already being done in Latvia in various ways and in project competitions, including the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget. At the same time, we would like to highlight those recommendations which, in the opinion of the researchers, are more in line with Latvia's current needs in connection with the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme:

1) to offer activities in the projects that are outside the usual activities of minority NGOs (minority cultural concerts, festivals, etc.), and to pay more attention to community unifying events, which highlight the fact that both Latvians and minorities, as well as various target groups of the project (e.g. young and seniors) participate in them;

2) to offer activities in the projects that promote personal contact between the target groups, because direct communication and human contact is what best opens people to cooperation and tolerance towards each other;

3) organize all project activities, including information about them, in Latvian, providing translation if necessary.

2.16. The opinion of minority organizations on the promotion of participation of ethnic minority children, young people and their families in projects

In connection with promoting the participation of minority children, young people and their families in projects, the open question (without answers) was asked in the minority organisation survey questionnaire: "How, in your opinion, could the participation of minority children, young people and their families be promoted in projects aimed at social cohesion?".

Like the question about the activities of the social cohesion program to be supported in the future, here too the answers are different, and it is not possible to single out only one type of activity. The following will list all the mentioned activities:

- ✓ Support activities related to sports or recreation;
- ✓ Outdoor events in summer: sports activities, children's parties;
- ✓ Hold contests more often;
- ✓ Invite them to make publications in different languages (Russian, English and others);
- ✓ Different types of activities, practical workshops and other non-formal education events; to teach the Latvian language in depth;
- ✓ Food, music, getting to know the environment, conversations;
- ✓ Engage in voluntary work;
- ✓ Organize games, master classes;
- ✓ Organization of joint annual traditional holidays, organization of summer children's camps, organization of minority Sunday schools;
- ✓ Up-to-date content, new knowledge, building contacts and cooperation;
- ✓ Events during summer (camps, day camps, day workshops), events during spring and autumn vacations;
- ✓ Create 3x3 format events for minorities living in Latvia;
- ✓ Offer activities that are appealing and interesting;
- ✓ Create projects that meet the interests of today's youth;
- ✓ Interesting event programs. Mixed groups. Understanding and cooperation.

The only advice that came out in the form of what not to do is: "Don't invite to poetry evenings!". This suggestion should probably be taken as a joke, because there may be representatives of the target group that are interested in poetry, but it will certainly not be the majority, and it is always necessary to ensure that the activities offered to the specific target group are interesting for them.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

The evaluation of the implementation of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget shows that a total of 30 projects has been implemented within four years. The activities of these projects were focused on the implementation of the program's goal of promoting community cohesion, mutual solidarity and intergenerational cooperation, social trust, reducing prejudices against and between ethnic groups and expanding the environment for using the Latvian language. Although in these four years the project tenders had slightly different defined goals, as well as the conditions regarding the target groups of the projects were different, in general the projects have promoted all aspects defined in the goals of the program, giving more attention to the target groups of Latvian and minority children, young people and their families.

This is evidenced by the following indicators used in the evaluation:

1) Out of the 30 financed projects, all projects have been successfully implemented, and the total number of target groups reached exceeds the planned: in total, in four years, it was planned to reach 6068 representatives of different target groups (unique persons), but 7140 persons have been reached (these are indicators related to with the accounting of personally involved target groups, without counting such indicators as the number of viewers of videos prepared in the project). Considering the fact that both Latvians and Latvian minorities were mostly equally involved in the project activities, the projects have generally promoted cooperation between minorities and Latvians.

2) The self-assessment of project implementers shows that 53% of project implementers believe that their project has definitely contributed to the cohesion, solidarity and cooperation of Latvian society, 41% of project implementers believe that their project has rather contributed to the cohesion, solidarity and cooperation of Latvian society, 6% the respondent chose the answer "hard to say".

3) 59% of project implementers believe that their project has definitely contributed to reducing prejudice against and between ethnic groups, 41% believe that it has rather contributed to reducing prejudice against and between ethnic groups.

4) 59% of the project implementers believe that their project has definitely increased the understanding of the project participants about the diversity of society, 41% of the project implementers believe that their project has rather increased the understanding of the project participants about the diversity of the society.

5) The evaluation shows that the implemented projects also have a positive impact on the cooperation of minority generations. 59% of project implementers believe that their project has promoted the cooperation of minority generations in all activities, 35% have noted that this has happened in some of the activities. No project implementer has given a negative answer, but 6% have no specific opinion.

6) 53% of project implementers believe that the project has certainly contributed to meeting the needs of the identified target groups, while 47% believe that the project has rather contributed to the satisfaction of the needs of the identified target groups.

7) In-depth interviews with the project implementers reveal that working together in various project activities greatly promotes cohesion and cooperation among the participants of the activities. The positive atmosphere and usefulness of the projects is also illustrated by the fact that the participants of the activities invite the project implementers to organize similar events.

The research reveals that the majority of both applied and implemented projects offered various types of educational events (lessons, workshops, educational games, seminars, excursions, etc.). This approach resulted both from the target groups of the project tenders and also from the conditions of the tenders. The evaluation revealed a tendency that the more diverse the range of educational activities offered in the project application, the higher the chances of the project getting funding, compared to those projects that offered uniform activities, for example, organizing only one camp or only sports events.

Regarding the interest of ethnic minorities to participate in various project activities, it can be seen that, in general, the project implementers had no difficulty in attracting representatives of the target group. This is also shown by the results of the survey of minority organizations: in general, 88% of organizations believe that ethnic minorities in Latvia are interested in participating in various project activities, 6% expressed a negative opinion on this issue, and 6% did not give a specific answer.

Although several project applications emphasize that their activities are aimed at expanding the environment for the use of the Latvian language and that all project activities are organized in the Latvian language (this is well demonstrated by the selected examples of good project practice), the survey of the project implementers and in-depth interviews show that the strengthening of the Latvian language is still a very urgent task that should be emphasized in the next tenders of the program projects. This is shown by the following survey data: more than half of the organizations used mainly or only the Latvian language in project activities (53%), 35% indicated that they used both Latvian and Russian in project activities.

The evaluation of the recognition of the program revealed that, in general, minority organizations are relatively well informed about the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget: 71% of organizations have heard of it, 20% have not heard of it, and 9% chose the answer "hard to say". In the answers on the open questions of the survey, the opinion was expressed that there was a lot of information about this program, including on the websites of local governments. Therefore, it can be concluded that the chosen methods for promoting the program work well.

Aspects of the program such as the accessibility and comprehensibility of the program also received a positive rating: 77% of minority organizations that have heard of the program believe that it is accessible (10% gave a negative rating), while 85% of organizations believe that it is understandable (negative rating was given by 8%).

The opinion of minority organizations identified in the research about the future activities of the social cohesion program revealed that their recommendations largely overlap with the already implemented approach to support projects with diverse educational activities that promote being together and doing things together among the target groups; to implement projects whose target groups are children, young people, their families and seniors; to maintain the requirement that Latvians and minorities make up about half of the target audience, as this promotes interaction and overcoming various negative stereotypes.

Recommendations for improving the programme

Reason for recommendations

Taking into account the fact that both minority organizations in general and project implementers positively evaluate the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget (84% have a positive opinion about it) and believe that the issues of minorities and community cohesion are very relevant in Latvian society, and also welcomes the opportunities provided by the program to promote social cohesion, tolerance and the opportunity for Latvian society to get to know other cultures and traditions, there is reason to conclude that such a program needs to be continued.

The study also reveals that the goal defined for the programme **to promote community cohesion, mutual solidarity and intergenerational cooperation, social trust, reduce prejudices against and between ethnic groups and expand the environment for using the Latvian language** is very relevant to Latvian society and corresponds to the Guidelines for the Development of a Cohesive and Civically Active Society for 2021-2027, the priority of the National Development Plan for 2021-2027 "Unified, safe and open society", and the priorities defined in the National Security concept established for the prevention of threats to unity of civil society.

Recommendations

We recommend maintaining the defined goal, target groups and thematic scope of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget, because it is relevant in society and is favourably evaluated among minority organizations. More specific recommendations for the continuation of the program are as follows:

1) **Maintain the definition of the target group as it was in the 2023 tender regulation of the programme: children, young people and their families, ensuring that no less than 50% of minority representatives participate in project activities at the same time.**

2) **At the same time, we recommend clarifying that the participation of Latvians in the project activities should also be ensured to promote the interaction of different ethnic groups, as a result of which social cohesion, mutual solidarity, intergenerational cooperation, social trust, reduced prejudices against and between ethnic groups and expanded use of the Latvian language are promoted. For this reason, the tender regulation probably still needs clarification that "not less than 50% of minority representatives and not less than 30% of Latvian representatives participate in project activities at the same time", as was the case in the 2022 tender regulation (paragraph 1.7), because it will prevent events from being organized in an ethnically homogeneous environment. At the same time, with regard to the Final Reports, we recommend to be tolerant towards approximate assessments of the proportions of ethnic groups, because in many events it is difficult to assess the ethnic division, but it is important that the NGO ensures the participation of various ethnic groups in these project events.**

3) **When involving young people from educational institutions (schools, vocational education institutions, art and music schools, etc.) in the events, ensure that the events involve young people from different educational institutions in Latvia, if possible, also from different settlements or city neighbourhoods, in order to promote interaction of young people from different backgrounds and common belonging to Latvia.**

4) **In terms of the thematic scope, we believe that it is relevant to support projects whose activities are aimed at the following goals:**
    – **promotes the feeling of belonging to Latvia;**
    – **promotes the participation of various ethnic groups in the formation of civil society;**

- **expands the environment for using the Latvian language;**
- **promotes citizens' understanding of the diversity of Latvian society, reducing attitudes based on negative stereotypes towards and between different ethnic groups;**
- **promotes awareness of Latvian cultural heritage;**
- **creates a common understanding of cultural and historical issues.**

5) **In terms of the activities to be implemented in the projects, we recommend that the following activities be included in the regulation of the programme competition:**
   - **lectures, practical workshops and other educational events (including non-formal education events);**
   - **participation of young people in the formation of civil society (for example, debate forums, discussion clubs, participation in the work of local governments on topics relevant for young people etc.);**
   - **fostering the feeling of belonging to Latvia, learning about Latvian cultural heritage and building a common understanding of cultural and historical issues in various thematic expeditions, hikes, quizzes, educational games, performances, exhibitions, etc., especially highlighting the aspects that Latvia and Latvian people can be proud, so that everyone together resists misinformation and negative stereotypes about Latvia.**

6) **In addition to the above, we recommend keeping the focus on activities that promote personal contact between the target groups, because direct communication and human contact is what best opens people to cooperation and tolerance towards each other.**

7) **In the regulation of the competition, we recommend emphasizing that to expand the environment for the use of the Latvian language, it is preferable to organize all project activities in the Latvian language, providing an interpreter if necessary.**

Recommendations on the requirements set for project applicants for the implementation of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme projects

Reason for recommendation

One of the tasks of the study was to provide criteria by which minority organizations in Latvia can be identified and what are the most characteristic features of these organizations. After evaluating the available information on minority NGO statistics, conducting a survey of Latvian minorities, and also analysing the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme 2020-2023 applications, it can be concluded that there are very different minority organizations in Latvia. On the one hand, there are active and experienced minority cultural societies in Latvia, which apply for and implement the projects within the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme 2020-2023, as well as new organizations, such as associations of newly arrived Ukrainian civilians. On the other hand, beside cultural associations of minorities, there are organizations actively operating in Latvia whose main goals are aimed at social cohesion, but which are not minority organizations in the generally accepted sense of the term (such as Latvian Ukrainian association, Latvian Russian association, Latvian Roma association, Latvian Jews association etc.).

It should also be emphasized that there is no established approach in the legal sense, which public organizations should be considered as minority organizations. From a legal point of view, there are

associations, foundations and religious organizations in Latvia, which may or may not have obtained the status of a public benefit organization (which gives the right to receive tax benefits stipulated by law).

Neither the NACE classification nor the classification of activities of associations and foundations allocates a separate code for the activity of minority organizations. In the classification of the fields of activities of associations and foundations, minority organizations are mentioned in the description of the field of activity "Folk art and intangible heritage" (the indication "Also includes minority cultural associations and foundations").

However, firstly, the activity of minority organizations can be much broader than just cultural association, and secondly, it does not allow to separate minority cultural organizations from other cultural organizations. Therefore, the definition of minority organizations usually depends on each specific context, where it is necessary to identify whether the organization is a minority organization. Most often, the selection of appropriate organizations is based on the name of the organization, the information available in the Lursoft database about the goals of the organization's activities, or the references to the field of activities of minorities appearing in the activities carried out by the organization.

Summarizing the above, it can be concluded that there are relatively clearly identifiable minority cultural organizations in Latvia whose activities are aimed at strengthening the identity and cultural heritage of one ethnic group, but it is more difficult to identify such minority organizations whose goals are broader and aimed at uniting the wider society and creating a dialogue, because here it is more difficult to define clear boundaries, whether it is still considered a minority organization, or whether it is another type of public organization.

Recommendation

Taking into account the defined goal of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme to promote community cohesion, mutual solidarity and intergenerational cooperation, social trust, reduce prejudices against and between ethnic groups and expand the environment for the use of the Latvian language, we believe that limiting the number of applicants and determining that applications can submit only cultural organizations of minorities, is not justified, because the purpose of these organizations is mostly to strengthen the identity and cultural heritage of one ethnic group. Taking into account the condition of the programme that no less than 50% of minority representatives participate in the project activities at the same time, and a significant part is also Latvian participants, a more open approach regarding the project implementers is considered to be more appropriate for the programme and Latvia's situation in the field of social cohesion. Therefore, we recommend keeping the requirement established in the tender regulations of 2022-2023 that projects can be submitted by associations and foundations registered in the Republic of Latvia, which have at least two years of experience in implementing social cohesion projects. We recommend using such an approach also because it increases competition among NGOs and thus facilitates the selection of the best projects for implementation.

Recommendations for project submitters, as well as creators of informative materials and seminars on project competitions

Reason for recommendation

The study compared the activities offered by funded project applications compared to those applications that did not receive funding. It was also evaluated which projects can be considered as program success stories or good examples. The analysis carried out shows that the following project applications were more likely to get funding:

1) <u>For those project applications that have complied with all the requirements of the tender regulations, as well as tried to ensure that the project meets various additional criteria.</u> The following examples can be noted here: (1) In the 2023 tender, the regulations for the evaluation criteria stated that if the application is planned to be implemented in Rezekne, Daugavpils, Liepaja or Riga, then the application receives one additional point. In the overall evaluation, this additional point could have been decisive, but in several applications it was not taken into account; (2) In several applications, the project applicants did not notice that the project competition is not for the support of one minority, but is aimed at mutual cooperation between Latvians and ethnic minorities and promotion of social cohesion. Applications that focused only on the support of one ethnic group (for example, Ukrainian or Roma) had no chance of receiving funding; (3) In several applications, the project applicants did not take into account the conditions regarding the target group of the project, for example, preparing the application only for senior citizens, although the target group of the project competition was children, young people and their families. Such project applications also had no chance of receiving funding.

2) <u>For those project applications that offer new activities that have not yet been implemented.</u> The evaluation reveals that the project applications in general do not offer anything very innovative, as the description of the previous experience of the organizations shows that similar projects have already been implemented. On the other hand, it is understandable that if an organization has established and developed its working methods, it wants to continue to use them. From the point of view of project applications, however, it is recommended to modify and improve the activities, because such project applications, which resubmit exactly the same project application that has already been implemented, have less chance of receiving funding.

3) <u>For those project applications that organize all activities in the Latvian language in order to promote the use of the Latvian language in everyday life.</u> Among the project applications, there were also applications that stated in their offer that "in order to promote the involvement of minority representatives, the programs will be conducted in Russian" and envisage preparing video materials only in Russian. It should be noted that more than 30 years after the restoration of Latvia's independence, the dominance of the Russian language in communication can no longer be considered a good practice, therefore potentially in the future those project applications that emphasize the use of the Latvian language in promoting social cohesion will have greater opportunities to receive funding, assuming that in some cases, when newcomers are involved in activities (for example, Ukrainian civilians who are fleeing the war and have just arrived in Latvia), the project can use the services of an interpreter.

Both the analysis of the final reports and the in-depth interviews reveal that the participants of the project activities most like activities such as creative workshops or master classes, as well as excursions or events in the open air. The evaluation also shows that it is difficult to attract the same group of people to the project activities for a long time, for example, to ensure the long-term participation of all family members in the project activities, because family members may have different interests, as well

as obligations, which do not allow all family members to participate in all activities. but participation in the project should not be defined as an obligation, it should be of personal interest. It can be concluded that in order to more successfully attract the members of the target groups, it is necessary to carefully evaluate which measures will be the most interesting for the target group. At the same time, this research shows that people like to participate in creative workshops and excursions more often.

<u>Recommendations for project applicants:</u>

1) Thoroughly familiarize yourself with the conditions of the specific tender regulations, including the evaluation criteria, and ensure that the content of the application meets all the requirements of the tender regulations, including the place of implementation, target groups and recommended activities.
2) Avoid the situation when an almost identical project application that has already been implemented is submitted again; offer new, innovative activities as far as possible.
3) Plan project activities in the Latvian language to promote the use of the Latvian language in everyday life. In certain cases, when the activities involve newcomers to Latvia (for example, Ukrainian civilians who are fleeing the war and have just arrived in Latvia), it is permissible to use the services of an interpreter.

<u>Recommendations for creators of informative materials and seminars on project competitions:</u>

1) Like how SIF has been doing so far, to continue in informative seminars and materials, emphasize the importance of tender conditions, especially the changes compared to the previous year's tenders. Draw the attention of project applicants to project evaluation criteria, including the place of implementation, target groups and recommended activities.
2) In informative seminars and materials, emphasize that new, innovative activities are expected in project applications, combined with already tested methods, as well as invite project submitters to organize project activities in the Latvian language in order to promote the use of the Latvian language in everyday life.

4. Supplements

4.1. List of participants of in-depth interviews with project implementers

Nr.	Organization	Project title	Interview participant name, surname	Date of interview
1.	Association "Rezekne City Theatre Studio – Yoriks" (Biedrība "Rēzeknes pilsētas teātra studija – Joriks")	"Unity is strength" ("Vienotībā ir spēks")	Inese Rogozina	13.12.2024.
2.	Association "Watermarks" (Biedrība "Ūdenszīmes")	"Covenant with your land" ("Derība ar savu zemi")	Ieva Jātniece	16.12.2024.
3.	Association "Community Cooperation Network Selija Islands" (Biedrība "Kopienas sadarbības tīkls Sēlijas salas")	"Searching for Islands of Belonging" ("Piederības salas meklējot")	Santa Šmite	16.12.2024.
4.	Association "Shelter for the family" (Biedrība "Patvērums ģimenei")	"Unity in Diversity" ("Vienotība dažādībā")	Irina Augustauska	16.12.2024.
5.	Association "ERFOLG" (Biedrība "ERFOLG")	"Cultural marathon: Germany and Latvia with all the senses" ("Kultūras maratons: Vācija un Latvija ar visām maņām")	Olga Jesse	17.12.2024.

4.2. Survey questionnaire

Survey of minority organizations in Latvia

2024

Hello!

We ask you to participate in the evaluation of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget.

You have received this survey link because either the organization you represent has submitted its project application in this program, or your organization can be considered an organization focused on the representation of ethnic minorities or promotion of inclusion in Latvian society.

The survey is carried out by the foundation "Baltic Institute of Social Sciences" on behalf of the Society Integration Foundation. The survey is anonymous, and the survey data will be analysed only in aggregated form.

Your opinion is very important to us in order to evaluate what has been achieved so far and to determine the goals of the next national programs.

V1. Have you heard about the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget? *(Mark only one answer!)*

Yes	1	Go to V2.
No	2	Go to V20.
Hard to say, no answer	9	Go to V20.

V2. Has your organization submitted an application for the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme competition funded by the state budget? *(Mark only one answer!)*

Yes	1	Go to V3.
No	2	Go to V5.
Hard to say, no answer	9	Go to V5.

V3. Has your organization participated in the implementation of the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme funded by the state budget (received project funding)? *(Mark only one answer!)*

Yes	1	Go to V4.
No	2	Go to V5.
Hard to say, no answer	9	Go to V5.

V4. In which program competitions has your organization submitted its application? *(Multiple answers are possible!)*

2020. The purpose of the program was to promote the development of dialogue and cooperation between ethnic minorities living in Latvia and Latvian youth, as well as to promote the participation of minority youth in the formation of civil society, to promote recognition of cultural heritage, a sense of belonging to Latvia and a common understanding of cultural and historical issues	1
2021. The purpose of the program was to promote the development of dialogue and cooperation between ethnic minorities living in Latvia and Latvian youth, as well as to promote the participation of minority youth in the formation of civil society, to promote recognition of cultural heritage, a sense of belonging to Latvia and a common understanding of cultural and historical issues	2
2022. The purpose of the programme was to promote social cohesion, mutual cooperation, reduce prejudice against and between ethnic groups	3
2023. The purpose of the programme was to promote social cohesion, mutual cooperation, reduce prejudice against and between ethnic groups and expand the environment for using the Latvian language	4

A question for everyone who V1. gave a positive answer to the question (v01=1).

V5. In general, how do you evaluate the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget? *(Mark only one answer!)*

Very positive	1
Rather positive	2
Rather negative	3
Very negative	4
Hard to say, no answer	9

V6. Please justify your opinion: why positive or negative? *(Please write your answer!)*

A question for everyone who V2. gave a positive answer to the question (v02=1).

V7. When preparing the application, did you conduct a feasibility study and identify the needs and interests of the target group of the project? *(Mark only one answer!)*

Yes	1	Go to V8.
No	2	Go to V9.
Hard to say, no answer	9	Go to V9.

V8. Please briefly describe how you identified the needs of the target group?
For example, maybe you conducted a survey, talked to representatives of the target group, or the needs were identified while working in other projects or providing support? *(Please write your answer!)*

A question for everyone who V3. gave a positive answer to the question (v03=1).

V9. What do you think, has your project contributed to fulfil the needs of the identified target groups? *(Mark only one answer!)*

It has certainly contributed	1
Rather, it has contributed	2
Rather, it has not contributed	3
It has not at all contributed	4
Hard to say, no answer	9

V10. In what language were the activities of the specific project implemented? *(Mark only one answer!)*

Mainly or only Latvian	1
Both Latvian and Russian	2
Both Latvian and English	3
Russian more than Latvian	4
English more than Latvian	5
Another answer *(write in):*	6
Hard to say, no answer	9

V11. Did your project promote the cooperation of minority generations? *(Mark only one answer!)*

Yes, always	1
Yes, sometimes	2
No	3
Hard to say, no answer	9

V12. What information channels did you use to reach the target group of the project? *(Multiple answers are possible!)*

Contacts of members of the organization	1
Contacts of other project participants	2
Mass media - newspapers, radio, TV	3
Posters in public places	4
Social networks (which?)	5
Other (write in):	6

V13. What do you think, has your implemented project contributed to reducing prejudices against and between ethnic groups? *(Mark only one answer!)*

It has certainly contributed	1
Rather, it has contributed	2
Rather, it has not contributed	3
It has not at all contributed	4
Hard to say, no answer	9

V14. What do you think, has the project implemented by you contributed to the cohesion, solidarity and cooperation of Latvian society? *(Mark only one answer!)*

It has certainly contributed	1

Rather, it has contributed	2
Rather, it has not contributed	3
It has not at all contributed	4
Hard to say, no answer	9

V15. What do you think, has the project implemented by you increased the awareness of the project participants about the diversity of society? *(Mark only one answer!)*

Definitely has increased	1
Rather has increased	2
Rather has not increased	3
Definitely has not increased	4
Hard to say, no answer	9

V16. Did your organization face difficulties in ensuring that at least 50% of minority representatives participate in project activities? *(Mark only one answer!)*

Yes	1
Rather yes	2
Rather no	3
No	4
Hard to say, no answer	9

A question for everyone who V1. gave a positive answer to the question (v01=1).

V17. How do you assess to what extent information about the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget and the project application contests held within it has been accessible to your organization? *(Mark only one answer!)*

Very accessible	1
Rather accessible	2
Rather not accessible	3
Not at all accessible	4
Hard to say, no answer	9

V18. How do you assess to what extent the information about the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget and the project application contests organized within it have been comprehensible to you? *(Mark only one answer!)*

Very comprehensible	1
Rather comprehensible	2
Rather incomprehensible	3
Very incomprehensible	4
Hard to say, no answer	9

V19. Please justify your opinion: why understandable or incomprehensible? *(Please write your answer!)*

Questions for all.

V20. In your opinion, how interested are representatives of ethnic minorities in participating in various project activities?
(Mark only one answer!)

Very interested	1
Rather interested	2
Rather not interested	3
Not at all interested	4
Hard to say, no answer	9

V21. Please briefly describe how do you involve representatives of minorities in the activities of your projects?
(Please write your answer!)

V22. Please indicate which financial resources or financial instruments your organization has had in the period from 2020 to 2024? *(Multiple answers are possible!)*

Organization members' money	1
Donations	2
Financial support of municipalities	3
Support of local governments with premises and equipment	4
Municipal project tenders	5
NGO support program in the regions	6
The Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget	7
Other state support programs (Which programs?)	8
EU project funding (Which programs?)	9
NGO support programs of the Nordic Council of Ministers (Which?)	10
Other foreign funding (Which programs?)	11
Other (write in):	12

V22. Please indicate what type of activities, in your opinion, should be supported in the Minorities and Community Cohesion Programme financed by the state budget in the future in order to promote the cohesion of Latvian society? *(Please write your answer!)*

V23. How, in your opinion, could the participation of minority children, young people and their families be promoted in projects aimed at social cohesion? *(Please write your answer!)*

V24. What do you think might be the best information channels to reach minority children, young people and their families? *(Please write your answer!)*

V25. Please write the name of your organization.

Thank you for your participation in the survey!