EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

⚠ *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
Participant:	ASOCIAȚIA PENTRU LIBERTATE ȘI EGALITATE DE GEN A.L.E.G. (A.L.E.G.)
PIC number:	[925203849]
Project name and acronym:	Iris

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	2
Event name:	Gender Equality Festival
Type:	Workshop, conference
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Romania, Sibiu
Date(s):	7-10 of October 2026
Website(s) (if any):	https://aleg-romania.eu/en/gender-equality-festival-2026-education-and-access-to-public-services-are-essential-for-reproductive-health/
Participants	
Female:	229
Male:	53
Non-binary:	-
From country 1 [Romania]:	265
From country 2 [Italy]:	6
From country 3 [Spain]:	4
From country 4 [Greece]:	3
From country 5 [France]	1
From country 7 [Poland]	1
From country 8 [Germany]	1
From country 9 [Ukraine]	1

Total number of participants:	282	From total number of countries:	9

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The Gender Equality Festival aimed to create spaces for dialogue, information, and creative expression on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), addressing topics such as access to information and health services, as well as the barriers and inequalities that can prevent equal access to these services for everyone. The core objective was to create spaces where young people can explore topics such as human rights, women's rights, and sexual and reproductive health and rights; challenge stereotypes and prejudices; and discover diverse perspectives on gender equality.

The event took place over four days and through panels, creative workshops, theatre, and film, young participants had multiple opportunities to hear different perspectives, ask questions and reflect on their own perceptions. The activities can be grouped into four main areas:

1. Panel discussions, one focused on burning issues at the European level regarding SRHR, and the other on youth and access to information about SRHR. The first panel brought together Romanian, Polish and Italian experts and policymakers, as well as youth, educators and local decision makers, to exchange views and experiences on reproductive rights in Europe. The discussion addressed the systemic and political challenges affecting access to abortion and contraception, the crucial role of effective and inclusive legislative frameworks, and the importance of intersectionality in ensuring equitable access to health services for vulnerable groups.
   The second panel highlighted the experiences of adolescents and young adults regarding the challenges they face in accessing SRHR information and services. From the barriers created by limited access to comprehensive sex education and age-appropriate healthcare services, to the profound impact of social stigma and misinformation, these factors were analysed by psychologists, anthropologists and other experts to see how they shape young people's health and wellbeing. The talks also presented best practices and solutions implemented at Spanish, French and other European countries, including the work of Associacio pels Drets Sexuals i Reproductius in Spain and other civil society organizatons involved in the European Iirs project, that encourage bodily autonomy, promote informed decision-making and build a supportive environment for adolescents' sexual health.
   It also fostered an exchange of experiences among civil society orgaisations from Romania, Italy, France, Spain, Greece and Poland. Alongside the IRIS project partners - Maghweb, ASFAMM, Schedia Stin Poli and Associacio pels Drets Sexuals i Reproductis - participating organisations included Sexul vs. Barza, the Romanian Midwives Association, Iele-Sânziene, the Society for Contraceptive and Sexual Education (SECS), FEDERA and the ASTRA Network for Reproductive Health in Central and Eastern Europe. The involvement of young people and organisations working directly on sexual and reproductive health and rights helped bring youth perspectives into the discussions and connect local experiences with wider European approaches.
   The panels had Romanian-English simultaneous interpretation in order to allow international guests and participants to enjoy all the discussions. After all the insights shared, q&a sessions allowed all the participants to engage in a direct and horizontal conversation with the experts in the panels.

2. Interactive discussions and individual guidance enabled participants to access evidence-based information on SRHR, engage directly with specialists and practitioners, and exchange experiences in an open and non-judgmental environment.
   The "Discussion Corner", which followed a format similar to a brief consultation with a gynaecologist, offered participants the opportunity to ask individual questions and receive reliable, non-judgmental information on sexual and reproductive health from a licensed gynaecologist.
   The seminar facilitated by the 'Sexul versus Barza' association focused on its information and support service. Designed to be as interactive as possible, it helped participants understand how such a service operates in practice, the needs it addresses, and the organisational considerations involved in establishing and maintaining it, from service design to direct engagement with beneficiaries.
   The Living Library has used direct dialogue to bring together people who, in other contexts, might not have the opportunity to meet or share their experiences. Each 'book' told their own story, and 'readers' were invited to listen, ask questions and engage in a dialogue based on respect and curiosity.
   Finally, the discussion group on resilience to disinformation has created an open forum for organisations and individuals working in the fields of health, education, communication and law, amongst others, to share their experiences. It addressed the participants' experiences

on what worked and didn't work, and what solutions we could continue to test. The discussions also explored media literacy, the role of online platforms and how dynamics in the digital environment influence access to information on SRHR.

3. Creative workshops and participatory activities provided participants with opportunities to explore SRHR, gender equality and relationships through artistic expression and collective reflection. The workshop on creating feminist messages for the "*Horizontal Newspaper*", facilitated by a renowned Romanian visual artist and the president of 'Sexul versus Barza' association encouraged participants to turn their ideas on SRHR into powerful messages for public display. Following the workshop, participants joined artist at the Horizontal Newspaper wall in Sibiu, where they wrote their messages directly onto the wall. These messages remain visible in the city today, extending the impact of the activity beyond the project itself and bringing participants; ideas on SRHR and gender equality into the public space. The feminist collage workshop, facilitated by Racolaj, explored themes of bodily autonomy, identity, diversity, sexuality and reproductive health through visual art, with the resulting works presented later in the festival exhibition. Finally, the foresight workshop on the future of dating, facilitated by an expert in foresight, invited participants to imagine how relationships, dating and communication might evolve and reflect on the social norms and values shaping them.

4. Live performances and a film screening used theatre and cinema to address SRHR through personal stories and interactive experiences. The Forum Theater performance "If I Only Knew…", created by A.L.E.G. volunteers under the coordination of an actor and lecturer at the Arts and Letters University from Sibiu, explored issues of abuse, misinformation, consent and reproductive health. Forum Theatre is an interactive form of theatre in which audience members can step into the action, take on a character's role and propose alternative responses to the situations portrayed. This approach encouraged participants to reflect on how abuse can be prevented, how boundaries and consent can be represented, and how different members of the community, including schools, healthcare professionals and local authorities, can work together to ensure young people have access to reliable health information and support in situations of abuse.
   The screening of "Happening" (2021) provided a starting point for discussing abortion restrictions during a conversation with a licensed gynaecologist and the president of the Romanian Midwife Association. Finally, the festival featured "The Vagina Monologue", performed by three renowned actresses from Sibiu, which explored experiences of the body, sexuality and identity through theatre.

   Overall, the festival brought together participants over four days to explore the barriers that prevent people, particularly young people, from fully exercising their sexual and reproductive health rights. Discussions highlighted the gap between rights recognised by law and people's ability to access information, services and support in practice, with inequalities shaped by socio-economic status, geographical location and exposure to misinformation. In Romania, key concerns included limited access to comprehensive sexuality education, gaps in reproductive healthcare and support for young mothers, and the need to strengthen the role of midwives and family planning services. A recurring message from young participants was the importance of reliable, age-appropriate, science-based information alongside confidential, non-judgemental support and greater involvement in shaping educational programmes.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).