



# FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

STRENGTHENED GENDER ACTION  
IN CAHUL AND UNGHENI DISTRICTS  
PROJECT JANUARY 2020 – MAY 2023



Funded by  
the European Union



July 2023

Final Evaluation: “Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts” Project.  
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The evaluators also appreciated the opportunity to interact with the project stakeholders and to gain their insights.

## DISCLAIMER

This project evaluation report presents the view of the evaluation team and does not necessarily fully correspond to the opinions of the UN Women, UNICEF, European Union or other stakeholders referred to in this report.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information given here is correct. Any factual error that may appear is unintended and falls under the responsibility of the evaluation team.

## EVALUATION TEAM

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## ACRONYMS

<b>API</b>	Association of Independent Press	<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>CCF</b>	Copil, Comunitate, Familie	<b>MTR</b>	Mid-Term Review
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention of Elimination of Discrimination Against Women	<b>NSGE</b>	National Strategy on Gender Equality
<b>CNPAC</b>	National Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse	<b>IMC</b>	Institute of Mother and Children
<b>CPD</b>	Center for Partnership Development	<b>IPs</b>	Implementing Partners
<b>CSO/s</b>	Civil Society Organization/s	<b>IVC</b>	Institutum Virtutes Civilis
<b>DV</b>	Domestic violence	<b>PMC</b>	Project Cycle Management
<b>EMG</b>	Evaluation Management Group	<b>RBM</b>	Results Based Management
<b>ERG</b>	Evaluation Resource Group	<b>SC</b>	Steering Committee
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>EVAWC</b>	Elimination of Violence against Women and Children	<b>SOPs</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>FGDs</b>	Focus Group Discussions	<b>Tdh</b>	Terre des Hommes
<b>GAP</b>	Gender Action Plan	<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>GBV</b>	Gender based violence	<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>GE</b>	Gender Equality	<b>UFE</b>	Utilization–focused evaluation
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>GM</b>	Gender mainstreaming	<b>UNDIS</b>	UN Disability Inclusion Strategy
<b>GRB</b>	Gender responsive budgeting	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>GRBs</b>	Gender responsive budgets	<b>UNPFSD</b>	United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development
<b>HRBA</b>	Human Rights Based Approach	<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview	<b>UNW</b>	UN Women
<b>LAG</b>	Local Action Groups	<b>VAC</b>	Violence against children
<b>LNOB</b>	Leave No One Behind	<b>VAW</b>	Violence against women
<b>LPA</b>	Local Public Authorities	<b>VAWC</b>	Violence against women and children
<b>MDS</b>	Multi-disciplinary services	<b>WIN</b>	Welfare Improvement Network
<b>MDT</b>	Multi-disciplinary teams	<b>YMC</b>	Youth Media Center

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**This final evaluation report is prepared by the evaluation team following the outline provided in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the final evaluation of the “Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts” (EVA) Project implemented by UN Women and UNICEF in Moldova.**

The final evaluation covered the entire duration of the EVA project, i.e. January 2020 – May 2023.

The evaluation included a data collection mission in Chisinau and six project sites from the two targeted districts of Moldova: Cahul and Ungheni. The evaluation covered all project (sub)components and was scheduled between December 2022 – May 2023.

*The overall goal* of the project is to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment through strengthened implementation GM in local development planning processes, including budget planning and addressing gender-based and domestic violence affecting women and children in two regions: Ungheni and Cahul.

The evaluation used a combined data collection approach, particularly field visits in the programme sites and mostly face-to-face data collection methods. The evaluation has adopted a participatory approach, engaging a wide and diverse range of stakeholders, including representatives: UN Women, UNICEF, local public authorities (LPAs), implementing partners (CSOs, media outlets), end-beneficiaries, donor and other stakeholders. Participation of the main partners, including the members of the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) was a necessary condition to ensure accountability, stimulate learning, promote ownership, facilitate future buy-in and arrive at comprehensive recommendations for the key project stakeholders.

The evaluation mostly managed to ensure representation of the main local and national stakeholders relevant for the project, but still faced some data limitation issues described in the report, particularly regrading two quantitative indicators.

## The EVA Project has two outcomes and three outputs:

**Outcome 1: Gender equality is mainstreamed in the local policy-making and decision taking by the local public authorities (LPAs).**

*Output 1.1: Gender mainstreaming of public policies at the local level by the LPAs.*

**Outcome 2: Victims of domestic violence, including sexual violence, have greater access to effective survivor-focused multidisciplinary services, and violence prevention is piloted in local schools and communities.**

*Output 2.1: Range of quality services for women victims of domestic, including sexual violence developed.*

*Output 2.2: Secondary schools and media have staff trained to plan and implement violence prevention programmes.*

## Conclusions

**The project is multi-dimensional and comprehensive, it reflects the needs of the target groups and beneficiaries and is aligned to the thematic national and local priorities strategies.** The project used a multi-level and multi-stakeholder participatory approach based on the involvement of a high number of state and non-state local, national and international actors, but with some coordination and synergetic issues. Still, some relevant actors (local councils, district financial authorities and the Ministry of Finance) were insufficiently involved. The project is relevant, and aligned to the national strategic documents. It also reflects the needs and priorities of the targeted localities, especially regarding the prevention of the violence, increasing

the functionality of the services oriented towards the victims of violence and enhancing the thematic and operational capacities of other local actors.

The comprehensiveness of the project is illustrated also by a wide range of interconnected areas tackled by the project, such as: local policy review/development, gender responsive budgeting (GRB), multidisciplinary services, child protection, foster care, organizational capacity development, healthcare, economic empowerment, media development, infrastructural development, educational support, and humanitarian assistance.

**The project successfully used a ‘bottom-up’ (unlike the ‘top-down’) change -oriented approach, based on valid, but incomplete Theory of Change (ToC) and consistent results` chain.** The “bottom-up approach”, including community participation was effective in the local policy-making and gender-responsive local budgeting, because all targeted local policies and budgets were successfully engendered. As for the “top-down” approach (work with the national and district financial authorities and adjustment of the national regulatory framework), it was not foreseen and the high decision-maker impeded approval of the GRBs. This provides a lesson to be learned for the design of future similar projects. See the *Lessons Learnt and Recommendations* parts.

The results ‘chain is logically interlinked to the project’s ToC, which is valid, but still incomplete, because the offender-oriented dimension is not reflected. Combating domestic violence against women and children (VAWC) is not depending only on *‘greater access to effective survivor-focused multi-disciplinary services and piloted violence prevention in local schools and communities’<sup>1</sup>*, but also on *“teaching the perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships with a view to preventing further violence and changing violent behavioural patterns”<sup>2</sup>*.

**The project is gender-sensitive and rights-based and has a balanced approach targeting „rights holders” (demand side) and „duty bearers” (supply side).** The gender, child protection and women’s empowerment aspects are well integrated within the

project management cycle (from design to reporting). The project used the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and was focused, on the one side, on engendering the local policy and capacity development of the „duty bearers” (Multidisciplinary teams (MDTs), LPAs, schools’ administrations, teachers, healthcare and foster care professionals), and, on the other side, on increasing the capacities and empowerment of the „rights holders” (Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Local Action Groups (LAGs), Local Initiative Groups (LIGs), end-beneficiaries: women and children). The project follows the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle and among others is focused on women empowerment, child protection and covers other vulnerable people (e.g., persons living with disabilities, refugees, elderly people).

**The project was instrumental in promoting social change and generated positive effects across both components (outcomes) and was successful in gender mainstreaming in the local policies, enhancing the access of the victims of violence to survivor-focused multidisciplinary services, and piloting violence prevention in the local schools and communities.** The project performed mostly well against the targets of both components, despite some delays in implementation and changes in the country context in Moldova. The partners managed to implement all planned actions and achieved its targets and expected results at the outcome and outputs level as per the Results Framework.

The EVA Project (which somehow became a brand in the perception of the stakeholders) made tangible contribution towards mainstreamed gender issues in the local policies and combating domestic violence affecting women and children. This resulted in engendered local policies/socioeconomic development strategies and GRBs, which still needs approval. The project reinforced the local capacities, improved the functionality of the multidisciplinary services and local actors, especially (CSOs, Women Clubs/LIGs, LAGs etc). As the consequence, the project positively impacted the increase of number of women and girls who experience violence seeking assistance from public institutions in both targeted districts and number of reported cases of

1 Description of Action. Annex 1. Strengthened Gender Action in Caul and Ungheni districts.

2 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Istanbul, 11.V.2011, Art.16, page 6. <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>

violence against children.<sup>3</sup> The project also enhanced the visibility of the gender equality and violence prevention issues in the schools and local communities as the result of the piloted prevention actions in the schools, media outputs and mini-grants scheme of supporting the local initiatives.

**Overall, the project achieved its results in an efficient manner.** Analyzing the project fulfillment versus use of financial, human and time resources, it can be concluded that the project operated in an efficient manner reaching the majority of the targets within the anticipated budget lines, with the available human resources, but within the extended timeframe, generated by the external factors, which influenced the implementation dynamic. The resources were used for the budget lines as planned without the significant deviations. The evaluation team did not find any alternative solutions, which could be provided at fewer expenses and/ or would be more economical for the project. The project management is flexible and adaptive and monitoring and evaluation system is mostly robust, although both with some areas for further improvement.

**Overall, the sustainability of the project achievements is mixed and differs from component to component.** The analysis of the ownership and sustainability of the policy-level achievements leads to the conclusion that the policy sustainability seems to be promising given the long-term commitments of the LPAs to implement the local engendered strategies. The same is valid for the SOPs and regulatory framework of the Regional Integrated Center for the victims of sexual violence. The sustainability of the GRBs is unclear and at risk, because of lack of national normative framework.

The institutional/organizational and individual sustainability perspectives are promising in the case of capacitated local actors, although the weak response system to cases of VAW at national level may adversely affect the work of MDTs, which perhaps needs further support. The sustainability perspectives are rather weak and fragile in the case of women-led startups, Women Clubs and is premature regarding the Regional Integrated Center for the victims of sexual violence. The financial sustainability prospects are either weak (some local CSOs; start-ups) or unclear (Regional Integrated Center for the victims of sexual violence).

## Good practices

The project contributed to generation of some scalable good/best practices by other stakeholders (e.g. LPAs, MDTs). Some of them are already well described and justified in the endline assessment reports. In addition to them, the evaluation team identified four other good practices explained in the report:

- *Multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder approach* contributed to enabling environment for promotion of the gender equality, capacitation of the local actors and supporting their initiatives.
- *Flexibility and receptiveness of the project or adaptive management* were important in the changing context, because allowed an adequate management response tailored to the unforeseen external factors, such as: pandemic restrictions, Russian-Ukrainian war and high number of refugees; limited capacity of some implementing partners etc.
- *Use of the baseline, mid-term and endline assessment* consolidates the monitoring and evaluation system and represents a good practice to be followed in the future similar actions.
- *Involvement of the local CSOs from the targeted districts as implementing partners* increases the use of available local expertise and consolidates the local ownership and sustainability perspectives.

## Lessons Learnt

There are five lessons, explained in the report, that might be of value for the project stakeholders:

- The design and ambition of the project should take into consideration the available time frame/ funding period and involve the ultimate decision-makers.
- While increasing the number of the project sites, there is a need to adjust the initial targets.
- A local policy-level change is never a linear process, it faces resistance both at the local, but also district/national.
- For an effective fight against the domestic violence, there is a need for both survivor-focused initiatives (targeted by the project) and offender-oriented actions (not targeted by the project).
- Online capacity development events, beside the disadvantages have also one important advantage, but needs to be adjusted in terms of intensity, format and duration.

3 Yearly reports of the District Departments of Social Assistance.



## RECOMMENDATION

Following analysis of the gathered data and face-to-face consultations with the key stakeholders, the evaluation team suggests a manageable number of recommendations explained to its best professional judgment.

N	Recommendations	To whom	Priority	Time frame
Rec. 01	Capitalize on achievements, continue GM in the local policies and support for improving services for victims of violence and child protection. Consider supporting/developing the offender-oriented services.	UNW UNICEF EUD	High	Immediate / Mid-term
Rec. 02	Fine-tune the project design, scale up the good practices and consider the lessons learned. Involve the change agents and gender champions generated by the EVA Project in future projects.	UNW UNICEF	High	Immediate
Rec. 03	Use a three-level approach in promoting and mainstreaming the GRB. Advocate for adjustment of the regulatory framework on GRB.	UNW	High	Immediate
Rec. 04	Improve the internal coherence, particularly coordination and synergy between the partners.	UNW UNICEF	Medium	Mid-term
Rec. 05	Support more consistently the local stakeholders' initiatives - more financial resources, longer duration, adjusted logic of intervention.	UNW UNICEF EUD	High	Mid-term
Rec. 06	Reinforce the WEE subcomponent. Consider developing a separate project or component.	WEE EUD	High	Long-term
Rec. 07	Consolidate the sustainability of the achievements, especially of the Integrated Center and increase the ownership commitments.	UNW UNICEF	Medium	Immediate/ Mid-term
Rec. 08	Further improve the M&E system.	UNW UNICEF	Medium	Mid-term

# PART I. INTRODUCTION

This final evaluation report is prepared by the evaluation team following the outline provided in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the final evaluation of the “Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts” Project implemented by UN Women and UNICEF in Moldova.

The evaluation report is prepared based on a review of the documents related to the project and field mission and consultations with the stakeholders from the targeted sites. The report describes: country

context; project framework; evaluation scope, purpose and objectives; evaluation approach; key findings; conclusions, good practices and lessons which should be learnt. The report also provides the recommendations for increasing the project relevance, performance, efficiency and sustainability perspectives. The annexes are: Evaluation Matrix (Annex 8.1), Evaluation Tools (Annex 8.2), List of consulted stakeholders (Annex 8.3), List of reviewed documents (Annex 8.4), ToR (Annex 8.5) and Visual adds (Annex 8.6).

# PART II. COUNTRY CONTEXT

**UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the UN, globally and locally works for elimination of discrimination against women and girls, empowerment of women, and achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace, and security.**

Moldova remains the poorest country in Europe with a Gross Domestic Product per capita of USD 2,311, according to the latest Census results.<sup>4</sup> The poverty is particularly acute amongst the rural population and while there is a little appreciable difference between men and women on the majority of indicators, there is a substantial difference in share of gross national income. The employment rate of women is 39%, compared to 43% for men and women earn on average 12,4% less than men<sup>5</sup>. Moldova scored 1.005 on the Gender Development Index<sup>6</sup> and 0.266 on the Gender Inequality Index.<sup>7</sup>

Moldova is party to seven of the nine core international human rights treaties, including the Convention on

the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The constitution of the country and the primary legislation include guarantees of women’s and children’s rights. In the recent years further steps have been made to amend and adopt laws and policies, which advance gender equality, including the Law on Prevention and Combating Family Violence (2008) and related amendments (2016) aligning the national legislation to Istanbul Convention. The National Strategy for Prevention and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (2018-2023) sets standards for prevention of gender-based violence, protection of victims and sanctions of aggressors.

4 [https://statistica.gov.md/ro/statistic\\_indicator\\_details/12](https://statistica.gov.md/ro/statistic_indicator_details/12)

5 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/moldova/brief/moldova-economic-update>

6 <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/MDA>

7 <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/MDA>

A comprehensive legal, policy and regulatory framework is in place, which among other acts includes: *Child Protection Strategy (2014-2020)* and its *Action Plan (2016-2020)*; *Law on Children at Risk and Children Separated from their parents (2013)*, legal norms on child online protection integrated in the Criminal Code, as well as the *National Action Plan (2017-2020 on Promotion of internet safety of children and adolescents (2017-2020)*.

Although capacity development initiatives of the state officials have been undertaken at the different levels, the capacities of the gender equality (GE) machinery of the government remain weak. Most of the policies and budgets are developed and implemented without considering gender aspects.

At the local level, the GE machinery is not operational, most of the public policies, budgets and services are gender neutral or blind, despite some piloted actions on gender responsive budgeting undertaken in the past at the district level.

The domestic violence and violent disciplining are the endemic problems that are deeply rooted in social norms and behaviors. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova, overall 6 out of 10 women experienced since the age of 15 at least one form of violence: psychological, physical, or sexual. In the rural area the ration is 7 out of 10.<sup>8</sup> The limited capacity and availability of service providers and multidisciplinary teams to effectively respond to violence against women and children results in higher dissatisfaction with provided services.<sup>9</sup>

UN Women's presence in Moldova has evolved from a project-based office in 2007 to a Country Office with fully delegated authority as of 2015. The work of UN Women in Moldova is guided by several strategies and policies: Country Strategic Note for 2018-2022, Republic of Moldova – United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development (UNPFSD) for 2018–2022, Global Strategic Plan of UN Women (2018-2021), National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) for 2017-2021 – and aims to contribute to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN Women's

Strategy for Moldova for 2018 – 2022 is focused on three main areas:

1. Strengthening women participation in politics and decision making.
2. Women economic empowerment.
3. Ending violence against women and girls.

UN Women implements a wide range of projects/programmes in collaboration with national and international partners within the different national and regional initiatives.

The current project entitled “*Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts*” was developed following the European Commission Decision European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI)/2018/041-302 regarding the Annual Action Programme 2018<sup>10</sup> in line with the EU – Moldova Association Agreement.<sup>11</sup> The principles of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) are central to the project, as women in Moldova continue to face gender stereotypes and inequalities in the case of employment/access to certain jobs, involvement in the public/political decision-making, equal payment.



Photo Credit: UN Women

8 [https://statistica.gov.md/ro/nivelul-infractionalitatii-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2018-9478\\_49950.html](https://statistica.gov.md/ro/nivelul-infractionalitatii-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2018-9478_49950.html)

9 Description of the Action. Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts. Page 17.

10 For additional information: See: ANNEX 4 of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2018 in favour of Republic of Moldova Action Document for Support for the Implementation of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement: [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2018-12/annex4\\_implementation\\_of\\_the\\_association\\_agreement.pdf](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2018-12/annex4_implementation_of_the_association_agreement.pdf)

11 See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/association-agreement-with-moldova.html>

## PART III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**The European Union (EU) – funded “Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts” (hereinafter EVA) Project tackles domestic violence against women and children (VAWC), particularly on improving the capacity and assessment tools of multi-disciplinary specialised response and services.**

### ***The Theory of Change<sup>12</sup> (ToC)***

IF 1) *The gender equality is promoted and mainstreamed in local policymaking and decision taking by the Local Public Authorities (LPAs) and 2) The victims of domestic violence have greater access to effective survivor-focused multi-disciplinary services and violence prevention is piloted in the local schools and communities; THEN the LPAs will promote the GEWE through strengthened implementation of gender mainstreaming (GM) in local public policies and will combat domestic violence affecting women and children; BECAUSE the local capacities on GE were addressed and the favourable social norms, attitudes and behaviours are promoted at the community (school and media) and individual levels to prevent violence against women (VAW).*

**The overall purpose of the EVA Project is to promote GEWE through strengthened implementation GM in local development planning processes, including budget planning and addressing gender-based and domestic violence affecting women and children in two regions: Ungheni and Cahul.<sup>13</sup>**

***See the Figure 1.***

It is expected that the project will contribute to the consolidation and fortification of gender mainstreaming at the local level, in line with the provisions of the National Strategy to Ensure Equality between Women and Men in the Republic of Moldova for the years 2017-2021.<sup>14</sup>

### **The specific objectives (outcomes), outputs and key activities of the EVA Project are:**

**Outcome 1:** *Gender equality is mainstreamed in the local policy-making and decision taking by the local public authorities (LPAs).*

**Output 1.1:** Gender mainstreaming of public policies at the local level by the LPAs.

### **Key activities include:**

- Training LPAs' representatives on GE and gender mainstreaming and respective implications for the local decision - making;
- Supporting LPAs to contribute to the principles of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life;
- Capacity development on women rights of the local CSOs, which advocate for gender equality;
- Public awareness raising about the GEWE in the local decision making.

12 There are also ToCs for each outcome of the project. See Project document – Description of Action “Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts”, page 22.

13 Both regions are among the top five cities and districts and are considered of strategic importance. Both districts are under administrative reform and within the EU Neighborhood Policy and both border with the EU.

14 <https://moldova.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Moldova/Attachments/Publications/2018/SN%20Summary%202018-2022.pdf>

**Outcome 2:** *Victims of domestic violence, including sexual violence, have greater access to effective survivor-focused multidisciplinary services, and violence prevention is piloted in local schools and communities.*

**Output 2.1:** Range of quality services for women victims of domestic, including sexual violence developed.

**Key activities include:**

- Capacity development of the MDT and strengthening intersectoral cooperation of the service providers in the areas of policy, healthcare, social protection, justice;
- Establishment of a specialized service for the victims of sexual violence in line with the Istanbul Convention<sup>15</sup>;
- Empowerment of the domestic violence survivors in reaching out to employment and income generating activities.

**Output 2.2:** Secondary schools and media have staff trained to plan and implement violence prevention programmes.

**Key activities include:**

- Piloting violence prevention programmes in schools and communities for promoting gender equality and a violence free relation for men and women, girls and boys.
- Capacity development on women rights of the local CSOs advocating for zero tolerance on GBV.

**The estimated results of the EVA Project are:**

GE is promoted and mainstreamed in the local policy-making and decision taking.

Victims of domestic violence, including sexual violence, have greater access to effective survivor-focused multi-disciplinary services (MDS), and violence prevention is piloted in local schools and communities.

Secondary schools and media have staff trained to plan and implement violence prevention programmes.

**FIGURE 1:**

**EVA Project coverage**

**Partner localities within the EVA project**

**UNGHENI District**

**105.324**  
Population

**54.401**  
Women

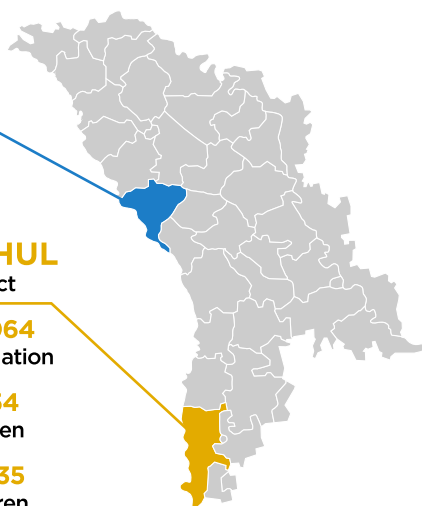
**22.898**  
Children

**CAHUL District**

**101.064**  
Population

**51.754**  
Women

**23.035**  
Children



**12**

**Partner localities in UNGHENI district**

- Cornești town
- Cornești village
- Costuleni
- Mănoilești
- Măcarești
- Pirlîța
- Rădeni Vechi
- Sculeni
- Teșcurenii
- Ungheni
- Valea Mare
- Zagarancea

**12**

**Partner localities in CAHUL district**

- Andrușul de Jos
- Alexanderfeld
- Alexandru Ioan Cuza
- Baurci-Moldovenii
- Cahul
- Cucoara
- Larga Nouă
- Pelinei
- Slobozia Mare
- Vadul lui Isac
- Vălenii
- Zirnești

Source: Mid Term Review Report

Project duration: January 2020 – May 2023.<sup>16</sup>

Total budget: EUR 5,250,000, including 5,000,000 - EU funded and 250,000 – UN Women’s contribution.

15 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention>

16 Addendum to the Contribution Agreement. June 2022.

**The target groups are:** LPAs of the level I and II (elected and appointed), members of multidisciplinary teams<sup>17</sup> (MDT) responsible for preventing and combating domestic violence and violence against children (VAC), service providers working with survivors of domestic violence and in child protection, schools, civil society organizations (CSOs), mass media, children and young people, parents, and women and men living in Cahul and Ungheni districts.

**The final beneficiaries are:** LPAs, women, children, men/boys, adolescent/youth of the both districts.

### Management arrangements and oversight

The project was established as an action administered by UN Women. According to the project document<sup>18</sup> and UN Agency to UN Agency Contribution Agreement<sup>19</sup>, UNICEF contributed to the achievement of the Outcome 2 activities:

- Capacity development of the MDT and strengthening intersectoral cooperation of the service providers in the areas of policy, healthcare, social protection, justice;

- Piloting violence prevention programmes in schools and communities for promoting gender equality and a violence free relation for men and women, girls and boys.

The project operations were implemented through the project core team that was responsible for ensuring effective and efficient coordination and day-to-day implementation of the project activities. The Steering Committee, consisting of the representatives of the line ministries of: Health; Social Protection and Family and Education and Research, EU Delegation to Moldova heads of UN Women and UNICEF as well as CSO, provided strategic direction and oversight of the project. The Committee also facilitated collaboration between participating organizations for the implementation of the project, reviewed and approved of the joint project document and annual, evaluation and reports.



Photo credit: UN Women Moldova



Photo credit: UN Women Moldova

17 MDTs are mixed teams of specialists (social workers, police, healthcare etc.) established at local level as first responders to intervene and provide support in case of gender-based violence and domestic violence, violence against children etc.

18 Description of Action, “Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts” Project, page 64.

19 UN Agency to UN Agency Contribution Agreement. Page 2.

# PART IV. EVALUATION APPROACH

**This section presents an overview on the structure and guiding principles informing the evaluation design and conduct. It furthermore outlines the methodology and limitations encountered.**

## 4.1. EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

**The purpose of the final evaluation of the EVA Project were twofold to:**

1. Assess the programmatic progress and final project performance<sup>20</sup> based on the evaluation criteria (*Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Gender Equality and Human Rights*) and identify good practices and lessons to be learned.
2. Develop recommendations for the next phase of the project or other similar initiatives.

**The key objectives of the final project evaluation were to:**

- Analyse the relevance of the project objectives, strategy and approach at the local and national levels for the GE mainstreaming in local public policies and combating domestic VAWC;
- Assess coherence and synergies and coordination with other initiatives;
- Assess effectiveness and a potential measurable impact of the project intervention on the target group across all communities under the project interventions;
- Assess efficiency of use of resources and coordination mechanisms;
- Assess the sustainability prospects of the results and the intervention in promoting GEWE.
- Analyse how Human Rights-Based Approach

(HRBA), cross-cutting (incl. disability) and GE principles are integrated in the project design and implementation;

- Assess how/if the project contributed to implementation of the Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Identify and analyse lessons to be learned, challenges, good practices and innovations;
- Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling identified good practices;
- Provide actionable recommendations regarding UN Women's and UNICEF' work on gender mainstreaming (GM) and combating domestic violence against women and children (VAWC).

The targeted users of the evaluation are: UN Women, UNICEF, responsible parties, government counterparts at local and national levels, CSOs, and other UN agencies, EU, donor community and development partners present in Moldova, and programme beneficiaries.

The evaluation is expected to provide specific recommendations as to the priority areas that should be considered in next phase of the similar projects, including interventions that require continued support, as well as recommendations to improve project management and maximize ownership.

The final evaluation covered the entire duration of the of the EVA project, i.e. January 2020 – May 2023.

The evaluation included a data collection mission in Chisinau and six project sites from the two targeted districts of Moldova: Cahul and Ungheni. The evaluation covered all project (sub)components and was scheduled between December 2022 – May 2023.

<sup>20</sup> As mentioned in the ToR (page 4): "The evaluation will not be able to fully assess the project performance, as some activities are still ongoing...; However, it will address the questions with the results and evidence that is available to date."

## 4.2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation has adopted a participatory approach, engaging a wide and diverse range of stakeholders, including representatives: UN Women, UNICEF, UNDP, LPAs, implementing partners, media, academia, MDT, secondary schools, local CSOs, and end-beneficiaries. Participation of the main partners, including Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) was a necessary condition to ensure accountability, stimulate learning, promote ownership, facilitate future buy-in and arrive at comprehensive recommendations for the key project stakeholders.

The evaluation was based on a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA), Leave No One Behind (LNOB), including disability inclusion aspects<sup>21</sup> and two disability inclusion indicators reflected in the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, particularly: Indicator 5 – Consultations with Persons with Disabilities<sup>22</sup> and Indicator 10 – Evaluation<sup>23</sup>.

The evaluation team used UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator<sup>24</sup> and the final evaluation was gender-responsive<sup>25</sup>. Thus, the evaluation team integrated gender consideration in the evaluation questions, methods and sampling<sup>26</sup> and analyzed the degree to which the project targeted both women and men, gender and power relationships—including structural, social and economic causes that give rise to inequities and unfair power relations in the targeted sites of Moldova, changes for women and men as result of the project using the process

which is inclusive, participatory and respectful of all stakeholders ('rights holders' and 'duty bearers').<sup>27</sup>

The evaluation team has used the utilization-focused evaluation approach (UFE)<sup>28</sup>, which is based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged according to how useful it is. This means identifying the primary users of an evaluation and ensuring that they are engaged in decision-making throughout the process. It is expected that the evaluation will contribute to accountability and learning processes of main users: UN Women, UNICEF, public authorities, CSOs, EUD and other stakeholders.

The evaluators used mixed data collection methods to include both qualitative and quantitative data. The evaluation team used the following data collection methods:

- Desk review of 60 written informational sources, including: project documents, progress reports of UN Women and implementing partners, mid-term review report, endline assessment reports, national and local normative acts, useful online links as well as other written sources. See Annex 8.4.
- Focus group discussions (FGDs) with the implementing partners (CSOs), local MDTs and end-beneficiaries (school pupils, school teachers and administrations, media outlets, implementing partners, local CSOs). See Diagram 1 and Annex 8.3. The FGD with pre-determined sets of questions were used to: facilitate public discussions, share of the opinions/anecdotal evidence/examples and generate insights for understanding stakeholders' perspectives regarding the local context and identification of the changes and factors that have contributed or

21 According to the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy the term "disability inclusion" refers to the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion and mainstreaming of their rights, the development of disability-specific programmes and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

22 Systematic close consultation with and active involvement of, organizations of persons with disabilities on all disability-specific issues and broader issues. For additional information see UN Disability Inclusion Strategy: [https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/assets/documentation/UN\\_Disability\\_Inclusion\\_Strategy\\_english.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/assets/documentation/UN_Disability_Inclusion_Strategy_english.pdf)

23 Disability inclusion is mainstreamed effectively throughout the evaluation process and reflected in the terms of reference, inception and evaluation report(s). For additional information see UN Disability Inclusion Strategy: Ibidem

24 The UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator assesses the extent to which the evaluation reports of an entity meet the gender-related UNEG Norms and Standards and demonstrate effective use of the UNEG Guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality during all phases of the evaluation. For additional information: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/unsystemcoordination/un-swap/un-swap-2-tn-pi04-evaluation-en.pdf?la=en&vs=2403>

25 For additional information: How to manage gender responsive evaluation . UN Women Independent Evaluation Office.

26 Targeting both women and men respondents.

27 See the GEWE and HRBA aspects integrated in the Evaluation Matrix.

28 For additional information: [https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization\\_focused\\_evaluation](https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation)



impeded the occurrence of changes in Cahul and Ungheni districts and sites.

- Individual semi-structured interviews with a range of stakeholders, including: UN Women, UNICEF, donor, UNDP, women – victims of domestic violence and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. See Diagram 1 and Annex 8.3. The interviews facilitated in-depth data collection increasing the consistency of the data collected from the stakeholders, limited potential bias, and gave flexibility to ask additional questions.
- Direct observation at visited sites, including secondary schools -allowed observation of the improvements of the supported local initiatives.

*Primary information* was collected through the semi-structured interviews and FGDs. The evaluation team conducted 26 individual interviews and 10 FGDs with a total of 99 stakeholders (including 70 or 70% women/girls and 30% men/boys) during a seven-day field mission in Moldova (Cahul and Ungheni cities, Chisinau city) and four villages<sup>29</sup> located in the targeted districts.

While selecting the project sites the evaluation team took into consideration the following: 1) The size and population of the project site (municipality/commune/village); 2) Districts (Ungheni, Cahul); 3) Variety of stakeholders, including beneficiaries, vulnerable groups including those living with disabilities; 4) Available time for the field missions; and 5) Geographical situation of the locality.

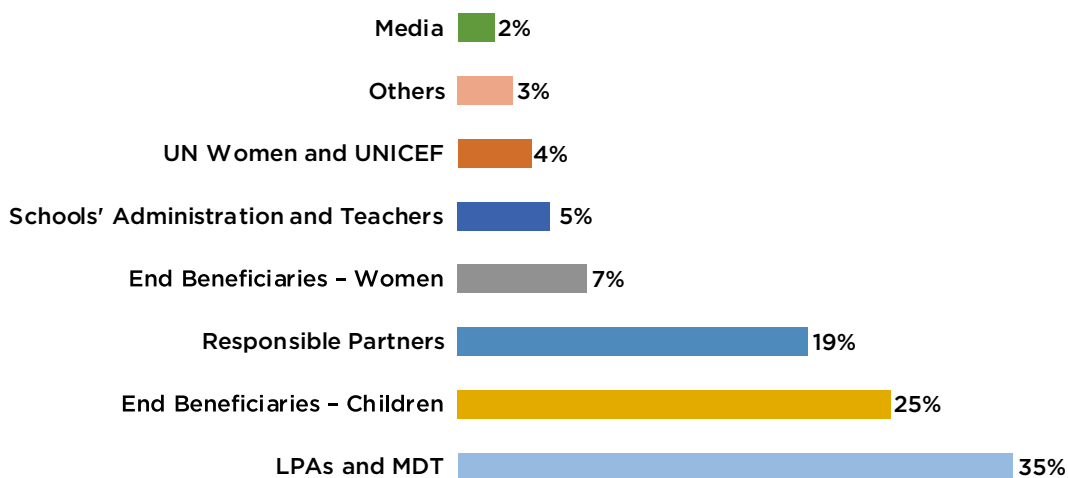
The evaluation consulted: UN Women, UNICEF, implementing partners, LPAs, MDTs, school administration and teachers, media, local CSOs, donor, end-beneficiaries (women and children) and UNDP.

The final evaluation questions (See Annexes 8.1 and 8.2) were tailored for each stakeholder group, as approved in the inception report. The transparency of the process was ensured by the availability of and the agreement on the methodology (inception phase) and by clear communication through the entire process with the project team and all stakeholders. To increase the accessibility and maximize the responses of the respondents, the consultations were held in the national language – Romanian.

The secondary information was gathered through a desk-review of written project documents, guiding documents, thematic policy documents, progress reports, MTR report, baseline and endline assessment reports, and other documents provided by UN Women. The full list of documents and written informational sources is presented in Annex 8.4. The evaluation team used mostly face-to-face data collection methods. The available documentation and semi-structured consultations allowed analysis of the data against the key indicators in the logical framework and their triangulation. Quantitative and qualitative aspects were considered.

## Diagram 1.

### Consulted stakeholders (99 pers.)



29 Cucoara and Zirnesti villages in Cahul district and Pirlita and Cornesti villages in vUngheni district.

The following methodologies in data analysis were used:

**Table 2: Analysis methodologies applied**

Method	Rationale
Responsibility assignment mapping	As a result of the logic of the intervention, involvement of the UN entities and their partners, the evaluation systematized the collected data on partnership arrangements and implementation arrangements. Ultimately, this helped reach conclusions on effectiveness and efficiency of the partnerships, coordination and synergetic effects.
Change analysis	Collected data were systematized and compared against the achievements and expected changes described in the project document. This helped reach conclusions on progress of the project towards the targets and efficiency of the approaches and recommendations for the next similar actions.
Contribution analysis	Contribution analysis proved to be the most appropriate method used in understanding the causes of achieved results, results' chain, influencing factors, including both enablers and barriers. That enabled also drawing conclusions around the identification of the main contributors or key driving force/s.

The evaluation was carried out according to UNEG norms and standards<sup>30</sup> and Code of Conduct<sup>31</sup>:

- **Independence, Impartiality and Incorruptibility.** These three interdependent elements were necessary for credibility and prevention of conflicts of interest, bias or influence of others, which may compromise the evaluation. The evaluation team remained independent from both UN entities, donor and other stakeholders at all times. Clear reasons for evaluative judgments, and the acceptance or rejection of comments on the deliverables were given. The final evaluation report is making clear that it is the evidenced-based view of the evaluation consultants, and not necessarily that of UN Women, UNICEF donor or other stakeholders, which may articulate their voice through a Management Response.
- **Respect and accessibility.** The evaluation team provided access to the evaluation process and deliverables<sup>32</sup> to the project stakeholders, without any discrimination based on sex, race, language, religion, ability etc. To secure the accessibility, the data collection was done in Romanian language used by the respondents and were held in easily

accessible locations and at an adequate and previously agreed time.

- **Anonymity and confidentiality.** The evaluation respected the rights of individuals who provided information, ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality. The evaluation team informed the stakeholders about the principles of the evaluation at the beginning of the consultations and asked orally the permission for notes taking.
- **Responsibility and validity of information.** The evaluation team is responsible for the accuracy of the information collected and presented in the evaluation report.

When consulting with the survivors of the VAW, the evaluation team respected the following ethical and safety considerations:<sup>33</sup>

- Informed consent about the nature and purpose of the consultation, type of information to be collected, given consent.
- Confidentiality, which in addition to the above-mentioned clauses, is especially important in small, rural and remote areas.

30 United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for evaluation can be found at: = <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

31 UNEG Code of Conduct to Evaluations in the UN system: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

32 Inception report, draft and final evaluation report.

33 Safe consultations with survivors of violence against women and girls. Global Rights for Women. UN Women. 2022 <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Safe-consultations-with-survivors-of-violence-against-women-and-girls-en.pdf>. Researching Violence Against Women. A Practical Guide for Researches and Activists. World Health Organization. PATH. 2005 [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/42966/9241546476\\_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/42966/9241546476_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

Private setting, which included safe and accessible place.  
 Autonomy, which means that if the survivors want to end their participation, they will be given the freedom to leave the consultation or reschedule it.

### 4.3 MANAGEMENT OF THE EVALUATION AND QUALITY CONTROL

The evaluation management structure consisted of the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) led by UN Women and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). The EMG oversaw the evaluation process, made key decisions and quality assure of the deliverables. The ERG was the representative body and included main relevant stakeholders: UN Women, UNICEF, implementing partners, LPAs and donor. ERG was established to promote a highly participatory review and to ensure that the evaluation approach is an accountable, learning and relevant exercise for stakeholders. The ERG was consulted and provided input at key stages of the evaluation: inception report; draft and final reports.

### 4.4 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Diverse sources of information were used, and types of information gathered during the assignment. The data obtained from the desk-review of documentation and field consultations ensured sufficient information for triangulation and synthesis of objective conclusions. Variety of data analysis methods mentioned above were applied in order to best respond to the requirements of the assignment.

Comprehensive and processed data were provided on most aspects through relevant primary and secondary project documents. The identified evaluation risks (during the inception phase) have not materialized in negative effects on the evaluation and its results. These were largely thanks to the openness of the selected respondents and commitment of the UN Women project team for sharing available information and for reflection on the evaluated to-pics. Still, the following challenges and limitations should be taken into consideration, in order to understand the scope of the evaluation report and to correctly interpret, use and communicate the data presented:

**Table 3: Challenges and limitations**

Data	The field visits were focused on generating qualitative data via interviews, focus groups and observations. To supplement the qualitative data with the quantitative one, the evaluation used quantitative data available in the written documents (progress reports, MTR, endline assessment report). The team triangulated the pre-existing quantitative data, including from the project M&E framework and endline assessment to triangulate findings wherever possible. Two quantitative indicators and achievements, namely: Nr of enabled vulnerable women and children (4,600) and social workers (1,200), who increased their personal protection and functionality during pandemic restrictions and Nr of the analyzed (by the implementing partners) local acts (7,418), including 790 identified as contributing to the advancement of GE were challenging to be accurately assessed in the absence of the respective database. As the mitigation measures, the evaluation team cross-checked with the end-beneficiaries, social workers and LPA representatives interviewed during the field consultations and used its own professional judgement in assessing the enabling effects of the pandemic-related support and gender mainstreaming in the local policies.
Representation	The evaluation managed to ensure representation of the main local and (one) national stakeholders relevant for the project. The evaluation was not able to meet the representative of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, who did not react to the repeated messages of the evaluation team. However, the evaluators managed to gather sufficient information from other stakeholders and written sources and to formulate evaluation findings and recommendations related to key aspects of the project.
Approach	The final evaluation was mostly undertaken according to the sampling and methodology described in the inception report, with one exception. Given the sensitiveness of the domestic violence issues, the individual interviews with the end-beneficiaries, namely women - victims of domestic violence was done by the National Consultant, who is also a woman. The National Consultant written summaries of gathered data and shared the data with the International Consultant. Afterwards, the evaluators analyzed the main findings, conclusions and recommendations as the result of the consultations with the end-beneficiaries.

# PART V. EVALUATION

## FINDINGS

This part of the report presents the findings and analysis of the final evaluation organized to highlight the Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and human rights and gender equality aspects, as specified in the inception report.

### 5.1 RELEVANCE

The relevance is assessed mostly by the extent to which the project is in line with the thematic priorities globally per the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, government priorities and national strategies. It takes into account the degree to which the project is aligned to the needs of beneficiaries, and the degree to which the logic of intervention is results-oriented and consistent for achieving the expected results.

Consistency between the project and national strategic priorities and needs.

**Finding 1.** The EVA Project is highly relevant and consistent with the thematic priorities and national development strategies of Moldova, as well as UN Women's and EU's priorities.

The project is in line with the norms of the key thematic documents, such as:

- National Strategy to ensure Equality between Women and Men in the Republic of Moldova (2017-2021), which sets some key priorities as: promotion of the women in the decision making,

women economic empowerment, gender responsive budgeting, integration of the gender equality aspects in the educational system and fighting social stereotypes and promoting non-violent social norms<sup>34</sup>.

- Republic of Moldova – United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development for 2018–2022, which states: “It is critical to address the structural causes of gender inequality, such as violence against women, unpaid care work, and unequal participation in decision-making with targeted efforts, as well as the integration of a gender perspective in all development interventions (thematic area – Governance, Human Rights and Gender Equality).<sup>35</sup>”
- National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for 2018–2023 and the Action Plan for 2018-2020, which is based on the four-pillar approach of the Istanbul Convention: Prevention of VAW and domestic violence, Protection, Punishment of the offenders and Integrated Policies.<sup>37</sup>
- Child Protection Strategy (2014–2020), which is focused on: Ensuring proper childcare and education conditions in the family; preventing and combating violence, and the neglect and exploitation of children; promoting non-violent practices in raising children.<sup>38</sup>

The project is aligned to the nationalized Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It reflects the thematic priorities of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is aligned to the nationalized SDGs: SDG 1- End poverty in all its forms everywhere; SDG 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower

34 [https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/intr16\\_85.pdf](https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/intr16_85.pdf)

35 <https://moldova.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Moldova/Attachments/Publications/2018/SN%20Summary%202018-2022.pdf>

36 <https://moldova.un.org/en/22103-partnership-framework-sustainable-development-2018%E2%80%932022-pfsd>

37 Government Decision No. 281 of 03.04.2018. <https://rm.coe.int/state-report-on-moldova-greivio-inf-2022-23/1680a86207>

38 <https://gdc.unicef.org/resource/moldova-child-protection-strategy>

all women and girls; SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; SDG 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries and SDG16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.<sup>39</sup>

The project is aligned to the UN Women Moldova Country Strategic Note for 2018-2022, particularly: Impact Area 1: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Impact Area 2: Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy and Impact Area 3: Women and girls live a life free of violence<sup>40</sup> and the Global Strategic Plan of UN Women (2018-2021) strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy and All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence.<sup>41</sup>

The project is also in line with the Gender Action Plan II (GAP II) of European Commission Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016 – 2020, which sets that: Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is vital to building fair, inclusive, prosperous and peaceful societies everywhere.<sup>42</sup>

**Finding 2.** Overall, the project meets the needs of the target groups and end-beneficiaries, including victims of the domestic violence, although the local stakeholders were not involved during the planning phase as the localities were selected after the approval of the proposal.

UN Women, UNICEF, municipalities of Cahul and Unghei and the donor actively communicated during the project planning stage and their inputs were incorporated in the project framework. As for the other project stakeholders (e.g. national and local CSOs, MDTs, other LPAs, school administrations, local media, women, children, healthcare and foster care specialists), they were not involved in the design/planning phase, because they were selected later in line with the DoA during the inception phase, after approval of the project proposal by the donor.

Two baseline researches<sup>43</sup>, undertaken at the inception phase of the project, assessed the functionality of the MDTs in cases of domestic violence (DV) and the local development and the budget planning from the gender perspective. Both studies identified the developmental needs (e.g. capacity development of the LPAs, MDTs and healthcare workers; integration of the gender issues in the local development policies; development and implementation of the GRB; inter-sectoral collaboration in the cases of child abuse and DV; collaboration with the local community; infra-structural support), which were considered and targeted by the project partners during the implementation.

About 90 percent of the interviewed local stakeholders (LPAs, MDTs, end-beneficiaries, incl. victims of domestic violence, local CSOs) remarked that the domestic violence is indeed an issue in the respective localities, just like in the Moldovan society, as such and the survivor -focused multidisciplinary services and the violence prevention measures in the schools are highly relevant, but still insufficient for solving the social issue. They also clearly underlined the need for offender-oriented services<sup>44</sup>, which would be focused on causes of the DV (offender), not only on its effects or consequences (victims).

As for the relevance of the gender mainstreaming in the local policies (Outcome 1), in the perception of the LPAs, mostly mayoralties – the findings show a

39 For additional information: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

40 <https://moldova.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Moldova/Attachments/Publications/2018/SN%20Summary%202018-2022.pdf>

41 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/8/un-women-strategic-plan-2018-2021#:~:text=The%20Strategic%20Plan%202018%E2%80%932021,empower%20all%20women%20and%20girls>.

42 [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/gender-equality/gender-equality-and-empowering-women-and-girls\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/gender-equality/gender-equality-and-empowering-women-and-girls_en)

43 Baseline Report "Assessment of the functionality of Multidisciplinary Teams in Cases of Domestic Violence (in 12 communities from Ungheeni and Cahul districts)". Baseline Report "Assessment of the Local Development and Budget Planning from the Gender Equality Perspective (in 12 communities from Ungheeni and Cahul districts)."

44 See Effectiveness part of the report.

mixed picture. Thus, more than half of the interviewed LPA's representatives consider it relevant for their localities and an 'eyes-opening' exercise because, as illustratively stated one mayor: *"It provides and highlights the equal opportunities and benefits for men and women, which is important for a democratic community and society."*<sup>45</sup>

A few interviewed LPAs' representatives<sup>46</sup> do not see a high relevance in gender-disaggregation of the existing indicators of the local development policies and planning some actions (e.g. lighting or paving the street to the school/kindergarten), which in their perspectives are oriented towards the whole community without favoring or disadvantaging women or men. See Effectiveness part of the report.

Finally, in the perspectives of the great majority of other local actors such as: local CSOs, MDTs, end-beneficiaries, local media – mainstreaming the gender in the local development policies is important because of several reasons: facilitates debates about the gender perspectives of the actions; stimulates GRB, improves awareness about and increases the visibility of the gender-related issues.

## 5.1.2 Consistence of the project design and intervention logic.

**Finding 3.** The project represents a grass-root level initiative with a well-defined and realistic results chain at the outputs and outcome levels, but with a few gaps regarding the expected results – key performance indicators – activities.

The project has a realistic and clearly defined results' chain consisting of three types of expected results: outputs (three), *outcomes/specific objectives* (two) and impact/overall objective (one). All three types

of results have a distinct set of: baselines and 19 gender- and age- (adults and children) disaggregated key performance indicators (KPIs) for measuring the targets and results. One indicator is related to the pandemic response.

Analysis of the KPIs of the project reveals that overall the indicators are logically linked to the targets and expected results. The majority of the KPIs are quantitative expressed in: 'Number of...', 'Share of...' and 'Percentage of...'. There are also three mostly qualitative indicators such as: 'Existence of functional multidisciplinary services to victims of domestic, sexual violence in selected regions' (Outcome 2 indicator); 'Existence of standard operating procedures for health staff in emergency care for victims of sexual violence' (Output 2.1 Indicator) and 'Specialist service for victims of sexual violence ready to start in up to two institutions from the districts'. (Output 2.1 Indicator). The last indicator seems to be inadequately formulated for a change-oriented project, because the expression 'up to two' is vague and interpretable and it includes one or two institutions, therefore is difficult to be accurately assessed, i.e. is less evaluable than other KPIs.

There are two gaps in terms of activities – expected results – KPIs – targets. The women economic empowerment (WEE) subcomponent (Activity 2.1.3 'Empower domestic violence survivors in reaching out to employment and income generating activities') is described in the project document<sup>47</sup> but is not reflected in the results framework and has no KPI and targets. The same is valid regarding the capacity development actions, which represent one of the core dimensions of the EVA Project.

**Finding 4.** The project document uses a Theory of Change (ToC) approach, which has interlinked and mostly valid assumptions with two exceptions.

The ToC<sup>48</sup> has an interconnected if...then... because

45 Key informants' interviews.

46 Ibidem.

47 Description of Action. Annex 1. Strengthened Gender Action in Caul and Ungheni districts. Pages 44 - 46.

48 IF: 1) GE is promoted and mainstreamed in local policy-making and decision making by LPAs; 2) Victims of domestic violence have greater access to effective survivor focused multi-disciplinary services and violence prevention is piloted in local schools and communities, THEN LPAs will promote GEWE through strengthened implementation of gender mainstreaming in local public policies and will combat domestic VAWC; BECAUSE local capacities on GE were addressed and the favorable social norms, attitudes and behaviors are promoted at community (within the school and media) and individual levels to prevent VAW.

causality. The ToC is based on two assumptions (ifs), which, as confirmed by the findings of the final evaluation described below<sup>49</sup>, are valid and logically interlinked with the then and because blocks and the outcomes and outputs of the EVA project. The endline assessment reports<sup>50</sup> do not assess the validity and consistency of the ToC, unlike the Mid-Term Review which states that: *“The mid-term exercise demonstrated that the Theory of Change remains valid and highly relevant in the current social, economic and political context, substantiating that if: the favourable social norms, attitudes and behaviours promoted at community level; financial resources for GEWE are available and effectively used at community level as result of application of gender mainstreaming; violence is being prevented before it happens, and those experiencing violence will be supported to recover THEN Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts is strengthened.”*<sup>51</sup>

The project framework includes nine assumptions linked to the national and LPAs, service providers, CSOs, beneficiaries (women and children), communities, educational staff and secondary schools’ administrations and media representatives. Seven assumptions are valid, while two other linked to LPAs and CSOs, particularly *„LPAs and CSOs have adequate resources to provide services to women suffering from domestic violence”* and *“LPAs will have after the training, sufficiently staff capable applying GM in decision-making process”* are not fully valid, because the field mission consultations revealed that the LPAs and CSOs have insufficient financial and human resources to provide services for the victims of DV and mainstream gender in the decision-making process. This is also confirmed by the findings of the endline assessment: *“LPAs have insufficient budget resources in comparison to the needs”* and *“LPA does not even have enough employees...”*<sup>52</sup>

Neither the ToC nor the logic of the intervention include the offender-oriented interventions, which, as underlined majority of the interviewed project stake-

holders, represents an important issue, because as mentioned, the offender represents the roots of the problem tree, while the victim – the consequence. It worth noting that the national ratification by the Moldova Parliament of the Istanbul Convention was in 14 October 2021 and entered into force on 1 May 2022<sup>53</sup>, after the start of the project. Still, the ToC is linked to the envisaged services focused on the victims-oriented protection services, engendering the local policies and capacity development of the key local actors.

**Finding 5.** The involved actors were relevant, but insufficient, while the implemented activities were mostly relevant and contributed to the expected results.

The project represents a multi-stakeholder action based on the wide participation of a high number of relevant actors, such as: the local mayoralties, members of the MDTs, local CSOs, media outlets, school administrations, end-beneficiaries (women and children), numerous (mostly national) implementing partners, two line ministries (Education, Culture & Research and Labour & Social Protection). However, some important actors, such as: Ministry of Finance, District Councils, District Educational Divisions and Local Councils were not targeted and had limited interaction with the project except participation to some events. This affected the approval of the gender sensitized local budgets and involvement of the local and district councilors. The offenders of the victims of the DV were not targeted. Both UN entities involved over 20 national implementing partners, which brought valuable expertise, boosted implementation and generated expected performance. Often the local actors (LPAs, media, local CSOs, MDTs, schools, theatre) overall played a role of rather beneficiaries than the key driving forces. As described in the *Effectiveness and Sustainability* parts of the evaluation report, in some

49 See Effectiveness.

50 Endline Assessment of the functionality of Multidisciplinary Teams in Cases of Domestic Violence (in 23 communities from Ungheni and Cahul districts). Baseline Report “Assessment of the Local Development and Budget Planning from the Gender Equality Perspective (in 23 communities from Ungheni and Cahul districts).”

51 Mid-term review report. Eva Project. (1 January 2020 – 31 July 2021). UN Women. 2021

52 Endline assessment of the Local development planning process, including gender responsive budgeting in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts. 3.7 Challenges and Opportunities.

53 See: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/chisinau/-/the-istanbul-convention-enters-into-force-in-the-republic-of-moldova>

cases this affected the consistency and sustainability of the project achievements.

Overall, the set of interventions was mostly adequate and largely contributed to reaching the expected results. It included a range of actions: baseline and endline assessments; public information campaigns; technical assistance in engendering the local policies; thematic capacity development actions (trainings, mentoring sessions) of the local actors (LPAs, MDTs, healthcare and foster care professionals, media, women, incl. victims of DV, local CSOs, children and youth); WEE; development of the regional integrated services for the victims of the sexual violence; piloting violence prevention programs in the schools; development of the SOPs; mini-grants scheme for supporting the local initiatives etc.

Still, there are some suggestions to adjust the consecutiveness of some interventions and the respective approaches as such and to involve the stakeholders mentioned above. See *Recommendations*.

In conclusion, the EVA Project is highly relevant and aligned to the national thematic priorities and contributes to the implementation of the nationalized SDGs reflected in the Agenda 2030. It is a multi-stakeholder grass-roots level and gender-oriented action by its nature and definition. It is results-oriented and with mostly consistent and interlinked results` chain, baselines, indicators, targets and incorporated ToC, but with some design gaps.

## 5.2 COHERENCE

The evaluation team assessed both dimensions of the coherence, i.e. internal coherence<sup>54</sup> and external coherence<sup>55</sup>. It concluded that overall, the coherence represents a mixed picture in terms of strengths and weaknesses: mostly strong in the case of external coherence and mixed and weak regarding the internal coherence.

**Finding 6.** The internal coherence of the project is mixed, it takes into consideration the previous thematic experiences of the both UN entities and implementing partners. The coordination and synergetic effects between the implementing partners (IPs) is insufficient, but is well between UN Women and UNICEF.

The project is aligned with the international thematic agreements and frameworks described above. It takes into consideration the profiles and previous thematic experiences of the both UN entities (UN Women – gender equality and UNICEF – child protection) and of the IPs, which are well-known in Moldova and dedicated actors in their expertise areas.

Overall, the coordination between the UN Women and UNICEF is well, although the operational communication between the both entities sometimes was affected by the staff turnover within the UN Women as explicitly remarked one interviewed stakeholder.<sup>56</sup> Still, the leadership role of the UN Women is widely appreciated and acknowledged by all project stakeholders interviewed during the field mission.

Generally, communication and coordination between the IPs was insufficient and, subsequently the synergetic effects were weak. This generated some overlaps, for instance in case of: undertaken local surveys/questionnaires; creating the local initiative groups (LIGs), working schedules. The high number and intensity of the activities in a relatively small number of localities during a tight timeframe generated fatigue of the local stakeholders.

As for the IPs, they were mostly focused on their tasks and deliverables than on interacting, information sharing and coordination with other providers involved in the project. *“We were mostly competing between us for bringing the community members, LPAs and other local actors to our events and delivering the activities than on coordinating with other IPs”*<sup>57</sup> – stated one representative of the IPs.

54 Internal coherence considers alignment with other interventions implemented by the institution, including those of other departments responsible for implementing development interventions or interventions which may affect the same operating context, as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres. For additional information: [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/543e84ed-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/543e84ed-en&\\_csp\\_=535d2f2a848b7727d35502d7f36e4885&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book#section-d1e2935](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/543e84ed-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/543e84ed-en&_csp_=535d2f2a848b7727d35502d7f36e4885&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book#section-d1e2935)

55 External coherence considers alignment with interventions implemented by other actors in a specific context. See: Ibidem.

56 Key informants' interviews.

57 Ibidem.



“We are glad that we benefitted of such consistent support. However, the number and intensity of the actions were too high. Every provider was ‘jumping on us’ without synchronizing the activities with the other implementers. Sometimes I was getting invitations to two simultaneous EVA Project’s events in our village both of them provided by two different partners. This made me to conclude that they do not coordinate their working plans.”<sup>58</sup> – remarked one representative of LPA.

These findings highlight some areas for improvement of the communication, coordination and synergy for the future similar actions. See Recommendations.

**Finding 7.** The external coherence is stronger than the internal one and communication, coordination and synergy with the similar projects implemented by other development organizations is mostly well.

Overall, the project performed well in communication with other similar projects implemented by other actors. Thus, communication, coordination and synergy have been identified between the EVA Project and other development partners supporting the gender agenda and implementing initiatives in the targeted districts. Some examples are described below:

- *EU4Moldova Focal Regions Project* implemented by UNDP and UNICEF. All healthcare specialists from Cahul and Ungheni districts involved in the home visits have received anthropometrical kits<sup>59</sup>, which improved the quality of the healthcare service delivery.
- *Family Justice Center Project*<sup>60</sup> run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and funded by the Government of the United States (US). The Center, scheduled to be launched in June 2023, will be focused on delivery the 24/7 life-saving services for the victims of domestic violence and sexual offences. The synergy with

the EVA Project was achieved regarding the development of a specialized service for survivors of violence and exchanging best practices for developing new services for victims of GBV considering US experiences by applying “what works” principles;

- *Data for Impact Project*<sup>61</sup> funded by USAID and focused on harnessing the power of data for the benefit of the child. The interaction between the projects targeted strengthening the data collection system on VAC.
- *EU4Moldova: Startup City Cahul Project*<sup>62</sup> implemented by ATIC – interaction was for identifying synergies on engaging survivors of violence in digital literacy/ICT training.
- *EU4GenderEquality: Together against the gender stereotypes and gender-based violence Project*<sup>63</sup> implemented in the Eastern Partnership region by UNFPA and UN Women. An example of coordination was distribution the personal protective equipment during the pandemic period.

One of the coherence related platforms was the EVA Project’s Steering Committee, which, beside its strategic monitoring and steering role, facilitated information sharing and communication between the development actors, donors and public authorities: UN Women, UNICEF, UNDP, EU, line ministries, local public authorities and others.

The main comparative advantages of the EVA Project in comparison with other similar initiatives are: multi-dimensional approach towards gender mainstreaming, women empowerment and child protection at the local level; high thematic national and international expertise and some innovative approaches brought by the project (described the next chapter – Finding 8), well-grounded/needs-based and tailored actions and wide involvement of the different actors.

58 Ibidem.

59 <https://www.unicef.org/moldova/comunicate-de-pres%C4%83/echipamente-de-antropometrie-pentru-asisten%C8%9Bii-%C8%99i-asistentele-medicale-din>

60 See: <https://moldova.iom.int/news/moldovas-first-family-justice-center-open-soon>

61 See: <https://www.data4impactproject.org/countries/moldova/>

62 See: <https://eufordigital.eu/discover-eu/eu4moldova-start-up-city-cahul/>

63 See: <https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/eu-4-gender-equality-programme>

## 5.3 EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness of the project was assessed preponderantly by analysis of its final achievements at the outcome and output levels. The key supportive factors and challenges, which influenced the achievements of the results, the project adaptability as well as the innovative approaches are also analyzed.

Before assessing the final performance of the project it worth noting that as the result of the savings, the number of covered localities doubled from 12 to 24, while the initial targets were not revised. This, to a great extent, explains some of the impressive overachievements of the quantitative targets of the project. At the same time this does not underestimate the project's contribution to the final results and changes described below per each core component.

**Outcome 1: Gender equality is mainstreamed in the local policy-making and decision taking by the local public authorities.**

**Output 1.1: Gender mainstreaming of public policies at the local level by the LPAs.**

**The key activities within this component included:**

- Training LPAs' representatives on GE and gender mainstreaming and respective implications for the local decision - making;
- Supporting LPAs to contribute to the principles of the European Charter for Equality of Women & Men in Local Life;
- Capacity development on women rights of the local CSOs, which advocate for gender equality;
- Public awareness raising about the GEWE in the local decision making.

The key implementing partners were: AXA Management Consulting, Gender Centre, Expert Grup, Welfare Improvement Network (WIN), Centre for Partnership Development (CPD), Youth Media Center (YMC), Contact Cahul and Institutum Virtutes Civilis (IVC).

The final achievements within this component are illustrated in the Table 4.

**Table 4: Outcome 1 and output -levels achievements**

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Achievements	Comments
<b>Outcome 1.</b> Gender equality is promoted and mainstreamed in local policy-making and decision taking by LPAs.	Nr of LPAs having policies and budgets developed and adopted in accordance with an inclusive and evidence-based approach, complying with gender mainstreaming approach in selected regions.	0	10	24	Overachieved, as the result of the increased number of localities.
	Share of LPAs from Cahul and Ungheni district, which undertake target actions on GE and gender mainstreaming at local level.	0	10%	34%	Overachieved, as the result of the increased number of localities
	Dedicated financing of VAWC prevention programs as proportion of local budgets.	0	2%	2%	Achieved.
<b>Output 1.1</b> Gender mainstreaming of public policies.	Share of local public authorities, from two districts, involved in capacity/ skills development events on gender mainstreaming.	0	10%	34%	Overachieved, as the result of the increased number of localities.
	Nr of local CSOs, community groups working on advocacy for GE.	4	6	45	Overachieved, as the result of the increased number of localities.
	Share of local decisions, by targeted LPAs, which tackles GE issues at local level.	0	10%	10.6%	Achieved.

Analysis of the final achievements of the project shows that four out of six targets are significantly overachieved, while two other targets are achieved as planned.

**Finding 8.** All targeted LPAs were capacitated in the thematic area. The share of the gender-related local decisions increased and the LPAs have needs-based local development policies with the mainstreamed gender aspects adopted with a transparent and inclusive approach.

The desk review<sup>64</sup> and the field consultations<sup>65</sup> show that project positively contributed to the improved understanding, enhanced capacities, increased commitment, and leadership of over 80 civil servants and public officials, including 11 women mayors from 24 LPAs in engendering local governance and financing. This was performed through consistent and intensive capacity development interventions, namely: workshops, individual mentorship sessions, innovative approaches and social practices, e.g. Welfare Improvement Network's Social Innovation Model<sup>66</sup>, Positive deviance<sup>67</sup>. The covered topics were wide and numerous such as: national and international normative framework on GE; gender statistics; gender analysis; GRB, tools; entry points for engendering local budgets; inclusive and transparent policy-making; harmonious and non-discriminatory working environment; energy efficiency; social services, waste management etc.

For the first time in Moldova, the local socio-economic development strategies in the targeted 24 localities were adopted or revised based on the previously performed gender analysis of the availability of the sex-disaggregated data, identified needs and

priorities set through participative and inclusive consultations with wide participation citizen, including women.

The local engendered polices address existing gender gaps by adopting specific measures targeting women and girls and/or by applying GM approach to enable equal rights and opportunities of women and men. Some localities (Cahul, Ungheni, Andrusul de Jos, Larga Noua, Slobozia Mare, Valeni, Zirnesti, Vadul lui Isac, Macaresti, Manoilesti, Pirlita, Radenii Vechi, Zagarancea, Cornesti and Valea Mare) prioritized WEE initiatives and prevention and combating VAWC for reducing gender gaps in the economic income of women and elimination of the gender-based discrimination, stereotypes and violence. Other communities (Tescureni, Costuleni, Pelinei, Cucoara, Baurciu-Moldobeni, Alexandru Iona Cuza, Alexanderfeld) mainstreamed gender aspects in their strategies and action plans and outlined inclusive and accessible infrastructure, advancing the gender issues in the local decision-making.

The share of the local decisions which tackles gender issues increased from 0 percent (baseline) to almost 11 percent (targeted 10 percent). Thus, according to the written documents<sup>68</sup> out of the 7,418 local acts put forward in 2022 and analyzed by the project partners, 790 (or 10.6 percent) have been identified as contributing to the advancement of GE and considering the tailored and distinct needs of women, girls, men, and boys.

*"This project helped us to increase the gender sensitivity of our long-term local economic development strategy and the action plan<sup>69</sup>, which is the key development policy for our district."* Local stakeholder interviewed during the field mission.

The project increased the participation in the local development of women, young people from educational institutions, business entities, and

64 Progress report. Strengthened Gender Action in Caul and Ungheni districts Project. 2021

65 Key informants' interviews.

66 Final report. Support to UN Women work in developing and implementing innovative approaches to gender mainstreaming in LPAs activity. WIN 2022.

67 Positive Deviance is based on the observation that in every community there are certain individuals or groups whose uncommon behaviors and strategies enable them to find better solutions to problems than their peers, while having access to the same resources and facing similar or worse challenges. For additional information: <https://positivedeviance.org/>

68 Progress report. Strengthened Gender Action in Caul and Ungheni districts Project. 2021

69 The engendered Socio-Economic Development Strategy of the Cahul district (2023-2030) can be found at <https://cahul.md/programul-de-dezvoltare-a-raionului/>

employees of the municipal structures<sup>70</sup> and school representatives in the local development were the most active in this process.

Although the development/adjustment of the local policies and action plans was a transparent and participatory process and “people became a bit more active”, as underlined the interviewed representatives of LPAs, the engagement of community members overall remains still low. This is in line with the finding endline assessment which states: “most often the (project related) work is done by the employees of the municipality and state employees”.<sup>71</sup>

**Finding 9.** The local budgets are engendered and local authorities planned dedicated financing for initiatives encompassing gender, women empowerment and child protection. The GRBs are adopted by the Local Councils, but not approved by the district authorities because of the regulatory discrepancies.

In line with the newly developed or adjusted local economic strategies, 24 LPAs publicly discussed and the Local Councils adopted GRBs with the dedicated funding (2% of the local budgets) for gender - related activities and reducing GBV, VAWC and increasing the safety and wellbeing of women and girls.

About 34% of all LPAs from Cahul and Ungheni districts are periodically undertaking targeted actions on advancing gender equality and gender mainstreaming at the local level. This significantly surpassed the initial target (10 %) of the project.

One of the strengths of gender-responsive local budgeting subcomponent lies in the fact that the majority of the targeted LPA representatives and

several community members” acknowledged the importance of gender-responsive budgeting”.<sup>72</sup>

*“The EVA Project was an eyes-opening exercise for us. We were not fully aware of gender issues in our locality and how to develop a GRBs and to integrate gender in the local policies, but we learned it and did it”.<sup>73</sup> Honestly, without this project we wouldn’t focus on gender equality issues.”<sup>74</sup> Local stakeholder.*

The weakness refers to the lack of field-related standard documents approved by the Ministry of Finance, which, hindered the approval by the district authorities of the GRBs. The field mission consultations with the stakeholders revealed that the adopted local GRBs were not approved by the district authorities from Ungheni and Cahul, because of the current regulatory framework of the Ministry of Finance. This is confirmed also by the endline assessment: *“Accountants prefer to create the budget following methodological regulations; they rely on them. The lack of an official document from the Ministry of Finance represents an issue for them... Finance Department from Ungheni prohibited the introduction of gender-responsive budgets into the system”.*<sup>75</sup>

Similar situation is in Cahul district. Subsequently, as stated the representatives of LPAs: *“We practically developed two budgets. One that was accepted by the Finance Department and one gender-responsive budget with all annexes we used within this project.”*<sup>76</sup>

Despite project’s efforts and attempts to interact with the Ministry of Finance and overcome the bottleneck, the system -related issue still persists. According to the same source, the representatives of the Finance Department lack a proper understanding of the legal provisions outlined in Law no. 436/2006, specifically article 81 (2), which states that the budget process and budgeting for administrative-territorial units at the first and second levels are independent elements.<sup>77</sup>

70 Employees of the municipality, Cultural Hall, Library, Kindergarten, Museum.

71 Endline assessment of the Local development planning process, including gender responsive budgeting in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts. 3.7 Challenges and Opportunities. page 54

72 Ibidem. Page 50.

73 The engendered Socio-Economic Development Strategy of the Ungheni district (2019-2025) can be found at: <http://ungheni.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Strategia-de-dezv-1.pdf>

74 Key informants’ interviews.

75 Endline assessment of the Local development planning process, including gender responsive budgeting in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts. 3.7 Challenges and Opportunities. page 50.

76 Key informants’ interviews. Endline assessment of the Local development planning process, including gender responsive budgeting in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts. 3.7 Challenges and Opportunities. page 55

77 Endline assessment of the Local development planning process, including gender responsive budgeting in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts. 3.7 Challenges and Opportunities. page 50.

It worth noting that not all local project's stakeholders, including decision-makers who benefitted from the project events are positive regarding the GRB and gender-sensitive local policies. Two of the interviewed LPA representatives are either neutral or even hesitant regarding this thematic area.

*"Honestly, we mainstreamed the gender issues in our local strategy and action plan because we were asked to do it within this project. We have much greater problems, which are affecting both sexes, such as: water supply, sanitation, employment, trash management, gasification etc. I think it is absurd to discuss about the GE in the development. Everything we plan and do – it is for both, men and women, for instance in the case of installed street light both men and women benefit, the same is valid in the case of social, economic or cultural aspects. Majority of the gender actions integrated in the local policies are exaggerated from the GE perspectives and are irrelevant, I would say they change nothing. Very few of them (e.g. a higher nr of bathrooms for women/girls comparing to men/boys) are in-deed justified."*<sup>78</sup> Representative of LPA.

*"We incorporated some gender-related activities and indicators in our local development plan, but I don't think we have an issue with the gender inequality in our village. I am a woman, the Secretary of the Local Council is also a woman, just like the social assistant and the police representative. Women actively participate in the public consultations together with the men. I cannot find an area where our women are disadvantaged comparing to the men."*<sup>79</sup> Representative of LPA.

Despite the active involvement of the LPAs in the project actions, including those related to GM in the local policy-making, these two quotes reveal the need for further efforts focused on increasing the gender-oriented awareness of the local decision-makers.

**Finding 10.** The project significantly increased the number of capacitated civil society actors for working on advocacy on GE and positively contributed to resources mobilization in the localities.

A dedicated roadmap<sup>80</sup> for engaging the local CSOs and initiative groups from Cahul and Ungheni districts to work on advocacy for GE was developed. It was followed by the in-house thematic capacity development actions (trainings, mentoring sessions) of the CSOs interested in being part of the project's initiatives and becoming vocal advocates for GM in their localities.

The project significantly increased the number of capacitated (knowledge, skills, tools) local actors for working on advocacy of GE 45<sup>81</sup> versus target - six. The capacity development areas among others included: monitoring the local public policies and budgets; developing watchdogging reports, as well as advocating for a gender-responsive approach in the local policy-making and development.

According to the written documents<sup>82</sup> about 900 local community members, mostly youth from Cahul and Ungheni, (out of which 280 girls, 162 boys, 423 women and 45 men) learned about GE and empowerment of women in local decision-making processes, gender roles, stereotypes and positive gender norms. As reflected in the pre- and post-training evaluation forms, the beneficiaries slightly increased their knowledge (about 6%) and awareness level (about 7%) on the GE gaps, on the underlying and root causes leading to gender inequalities, as well as measures to close those gaps, as result of the work of UN Women's partners.<sup>83</sup> The also stated that are more aware of the gender-based violence and available services for the victims of violence/survivors.<sup>84</sup>

78 Key informants' interviews.

79 Key informants' interviews.

80 Roadmap for including Innovative Approaches and Tools for Capacity Development of CSOs in the EVA Project. WIN.

81 As mentioned in the Table 4, one of the key reasons of this overachievement is doubled number of localities from 12 to 24.

82 Quarterly Progress Report IV, Year 2. October - November 2022. Young people and LPAs from Cahul and Ungheni districts together for a community without gender-based violence and gender stereotypes Project. Youth Media Center.

83 Analytical report of the assessment of the focus-groups' results. 2022. Youth Media Center. Pages 3-4.

84 Ibidem. Page 4.

The extent to which the local capacitated actors (LAGs, CSOs, initiative groups) will be active in the advocacy actions in their localities remains open, this is a sustainability issue<sup>85</sup>. However, it is clear that already at the project end<sup>86</sup> some of the local actors' initiatives contribute to the GM and promotion of local women/ girls, especially from the rural areas.

As result of the increased mobilization of women and men in communities over 30 local community and action groups from the targeted communities have developed 41 initiatives and gathered local financial recourses to solve a wide range of specific community issues/challenges, e.g. infrastructural renovations in the schools, kindergarten, parks etc<sup>87</sup>

In a few cases the local actors were positively surprised by the involvement of some (initially underestimated) other stakeholders, particularly diaspora.

"We managed to actively involve our diaspora, i.e. people who temporarily left the village. With their support we managed to cover our local contribution to the project and to raise much more money than we anticipated. We managed to renovate the roof of our school, despite the fact that the project support covered about 30% of the total costs. The majority (70%) of money was raised by us." Representative of the LPA<sup>88</sup>

However, the financial resources mobilization from some categories of vulnerable people for covering 10% contributions<sup>89</sup> to the projects was a difficult task to be performed, especially in the rural areas.

*"The young people have left the village, and it is difficult to collect the necessary money from the elderly people as they don't have much money, in general."*<sup>90</sup>

**Outcome 2: Victims of domestic violence, including sexual violence, have greater access to effective survivor-focused multidisciplinary services, and violence prevention is piloted in local schools and communities.**

**Output 2.1 A range of quality services for women and children as victims of domestic and sexual violence has been developed.**

**The key activities included:**

- Capacity development<sup>91</sup> of the MDT and strengthening intersectoral cooperation of the service providers in the areas of policy, healthcare, social protection, justice;
- Establishment of a specialized service for the victims of sexual violence in line with the Istanbul Convention<sup>92</sup>;
- Empowerment of the domestic violence survivors in reaching out to employment and income generating activities.

The main implementing partners who contributed to this outcome were: Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims "Memoria"; Faclia; WIN; Terre des Hommes (Tdh); Artemida; National Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse (CNPAC); EDUCAT, Copil Comunitate, Copil Familie (CCF) Moldova; CNFACEM; Ave Copii; Association of Independent Press (API), Institute of Mother and Children (IMC) and YMC.

85 See Sustainability part of the report.

86 May 2023.

87 Progress report. Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts Project. 2021, page 15.

88 Key informants' interviews.

89 10% local contribution could be either monetary or non-monetary depending on the decisions of the LAGs, which benefited from assistance in running fundraising campaigns.

90 Endline assessment of the Local development planning process, including gender responsive budgeting in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts. 3.7 Challenges and Opportunities. pages 54-55.

91 The project documents and informational sources (reports) use the terms „capacity building” and „capacity development/strengthening” as similar and they are not. The first term means building the capacity from the scratch, because we assume that there are no any knowledge and capacities, i.e. the baseline is “0”; while the second one recognizes that there are some knowledge and capacities already, i.e. the baseline is not “0” and it is about enhancing the knowledge and development of the capacities, which already exist. For additional information: [www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/capacity-building/capacity-development-a-undp-primer.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/capacity-building/capacity-development-a-undp-primer.html)

92 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention>

The final achievements within this component are illustrated in the Table 5.

**Table 5: Outcome 2 and output -levels achievements**

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Achievements	Comments
Outcome 2. Victims of domestic violence have greater access to effective survivor-focused multi-disciplinary services and violence prevention is piloted in local schools and communities.	Existence of functional multi-disciplinary services to victims of domestic, sexual, violence in selected regions.	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved.
	Share of women, from identified cases, who benefited from specialized services.	12%	up to 25%	15.5%	Partially achieved
	Nr of violence prevention measures piloted in local schools and communities.	0	10	12	Achieved.
<i>Output 2.1 A range of quality services for women and children victims of domestic, including sexual, violence developed.</i>	Nr of multidisciplinary teams with strengthened capacities to respond effectively to cases of violence against women and children.	0	6	25	Overachieved, as the result of the increased number of localities.
	Specialist services for victims of sexual violence ready to start in up to 2 institutions from the districts.	No	Yes	Partially "yes"	Partially achieved. The service was recently (March 2023) open, it's at the piloting phase.
	Existence of standard operating procedures for health staff in emergency care for victim of sexual violence.	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved.
	Percentage of children victims of violence, neglect and exploitation whose cases have been closed.	71%	80%	83%	Achieved.
	COVID-19 - Number of people (incl. from vulnerable groups) from Cahul and Ungheni who have received support as part of COVID-19 response.	0	X	4,600	Done.
<i>Output 2.2 Secondary schools and media have staff trained to plan and implement violence prevention programmes.</i>	Nr of media products that reflects GE aspects in selected districts.	0	30	176	Overachieved.
	Nr of cases of VAC addressed by teachers and school administrations, disaggregated by sex.	289	350	426 (136 girls and 290 boys)	Overachieved, as result of the increased localities.

**Finding 11.** The project performed well within the Outcome 2 managing to fully achieve and overachieve the great majority<sup>93</sup> of its targets and partially achieve two other targets.

There are functional multi-disciplinary services to the victims of domestic and sexual violence from the covered sites. As the result of the project activities, slightly increased (from 12% to 15.5%, but still behind the target up to 25%) the share of women, who benefited from specialized services.

93 The pandemic-related KPI has no a target value; therefore the respective achievement will be analyzed as de-facto is without comparing with the target value.

According to the official statistics<sup>94</sup>, 59 cases (or 15.5%) were referred and received specialized services in 2022 (23% in 2021). In addition, 65 cases protection orders were issued by police officers.

The decreasing tendency of the referred cases in 2022 is due to the higher number of women and girls seeking assistance from state institutions, with 386 seeking help in 2022 compared to 223 in 2021.<sup>95</sup>

The project also actively contributed to the increased number of the violence prevention measures piloted in local schools and communities from 0 to 12, which generated positive effects describe below.

**Finding 12.** The project increased thematic capacities and visibility of the targeted MDT, which overall are functional and responding to the cases of VAWC in the covered localities.

Within this subcomponent, the project targeted strengthening the capacities of MDT representatives on two distinct components: (i) intersectoral intervention in cases of violence against children and (ii) intersectoral intervention in cases of domestic violence against women led by two granted CSOs, respectively Association for Child and Family Empowerment “AVE Copiii” and Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture “Memoria”.

The project, in close partnership with the LPAs, delivered comprehensive capacity building actions on a wide range of topics<sup>96</sup> for local MDTs by involving the key sectorial actors working on child protection and women rights (e.g. child rights protection specialist, social workers).

The use of different training methods and approaches, like sectoral and intersectoral groups, summer/winter schools, mentoring/coaching, peer-to-peer learning, study visits, follow-ups and direct

supervision of MDTs members contributed to the shared and acquired knowledge, enhanced competences and enhanced intersectoral cooperation, confirmed by the pre- and post-evaluation tests.<sup>97</sup>

The field visit consultations with the local stakeholders, including the MDT members and the desk review findings illustrate that the visibility of MDTs at local level increased. The MDTs are perceived by the local population as a good support in cases of VAWC<sup>98</sup>. Beside the enhanced thematic capacities, the MDTs are better equipped (with laptops, printers, tablets, projectors) for a prompt, documented and coordinated response.<sup>99</sup>

*“During the EVA Project time, in our village the MDT became much more active and visible than before. We increased cooperation with the Police. In 2021 we had 0 cases analyzed by the MDT; in 2021 – one case and during the 1st Quarter of 2023 – three cases, inc. one case from the local school.”* MDT team member.

There are some important challenges, which undermine the effectiveness of the MDTs and efforts to prevent the VAWC.

- Hesitance (in some cases reluctance) of the victims of the violence to report the cases of violence, because of the different reasons, including social stereotypes and the fear that the sanctioning mechanism will hit the men, which in many cases are the ‘bread winners’ in their families as the women are (economically, socially, psychologically) dependent. This affects identification of and intervention in the cases of violence.
- Majority of MDTs have no psychologists and child rights protection specialists, which, as repeatedly remarked the interviewed local stakeholders, are needed for the cases of VAWC and referral to the guardianship authorities;
- Low engagement of the healthcare workers

94 The Report of the General Inspectorate of Police. 2.6.1 Violence in the Family. 2022. [https://politia.md/sites/default/files/raport\\_priv-ind\\_activitatea\\_politiei\\_6\\_luni\\_2022.pdf](https://politia.md/sites/default/files/raport_priv-ind_activitatea_politiei_6_luni_2022.pdf)

95 Ibidem.

96 E.g. legal/normative framework and tools on the intervention in cases of VAWC; case management and referral in cases VAWC; collaboration between MDT members; professional burnout prevention, etc.

97 Endline assessment of the functionality of the Multidisciplinary Teams in cases of violence (in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts), page 13.

98 Vox-populi in Cahul and Ungheni on MDTs response on VAWC, by Memoria, November 2021.

99 Endline assessment of the functionality of the Multidisciplinary Teams in cases of violence (in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts), page 13.



within the MDTs in the cases of child violence and abuse, despite the existing intersectoral cooperation mechanism between the social workers and healthcare workers.

There is no electronic recording and intersectoral referral system for victims affected by violence, neglect, exploitation, and trafficking. Personal data privacy is an obstacle in cross-sector collaboration, reporting and solving the cases.

The last three challenges were identified also by the endline assessment commissioned by the EVA Project, prior to the final evaluation<sup>100</sup>

One interviewed MDT member made a remark, which seems to be valid, given the confirmations of other stakeholders: *“Majority of the domestic violence cases are done by the offenders, who are systematically or periodically consuming excessively the alcohol, i.e. alcohol is one of the triggers of the domestic violence. Neither in our locality nor in our district/region exist a programme or project working with the people addicted to alcohol. This would reduce the number of domestic violence cases.”*<sup>101</sup>

The described issues, among others highlight the complexity of the responding and prevention mechanisms in the cases of VAWC in general and the activity of the MDTs in particular, as well as underline the need for further sustained work in those areas.

An unexpected progress was achieved in the voluntary engagement of the priests in supporting the MDTs and prevention activities on of VAWC. Thus, the priests from Ungheni actively participated in promoting actions to prevent and address VAWC within the family.

One interviewed stakeholder, who was unexpectedly actively engaged in the “16 Days Campaign to end violence against women” said: “We have some influence on the people and should be in the frontline of

the family strengthening efforts. We should voice up for love, respect and tolerance in the families. Therefore, I decided to join this project with a deep biblical name – EVA.”<sup>102</sup>

**Finding 13.** The Integrated Regional Service for the victims of sexual violence was recently<sup>103</sup> launched in Ungheni district. It is a first ever specialized service in the country. The service is in the piloting phase and it is premature to assess the functionality.

The integrated service is in line with the provisions of the Council of Europe’s Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence<sup>104</sup> (Istanbul Convention) and was jointly co-created by the relevant actors (law enforcement bodies, social workers, family doctors/healthcare specialists, lone ministries, district and local authorities, CSO representatives, Members of Parliament, thematic national and international experts) following the wide public consultations. The draft Governmental Decision for the piloting of the Integrated Service is in the approval process, being repeatedly published.<sup>105</sup>

The integrated service is going to have the regional coverage including six districts: Ungheni, Nisporeni, Calarasi, Falesti, Telenesti and Singerei, where according to the official data<sup>106</sup>, during 2017 – 2022 were reported 539 cases of sexual violence.

While Ungheni district was selected for the piloting of the integrated service, the co-creation of the concepts was done for both Cahul<sup>107</sup> and Ungheni territorial units. The concept for a coordinated response to cases of sexual violence was designed based on the Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART) model<sup>108</sup> and the

100 Endline assessment of the functionality of the Multidisciplinary Teams in cases of violence (in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts).

101 Key informants’ interviews.

102 Key informants’ interviews.

103 March 2023. <https://www.mai.gov.md/ro/node/7629>

104 The Istanbul Convention was ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on October 14, 2021.

105 <https://particip.gov.md/ro/document/stages/se-plaseaza-spre-avizare-repetata-proiectul-hotararii-guvernului-pentru-pilotarea-serviciului-integrat-regional-pentru-victimele-violentei-sexuale/10320>

106 Ibidem

107 In Cahul district, apparently because of the political will, an expected similar Center was not launched.

108 SART model is identified as the most effective in improving victim services and legal outcomes for sexual assault cases. <https://www.ojp.gov/library/publications/sexual-assault-response-team-sart-implementation-and-collaborative-process>

best EU practices and was tailored to the local context. The service is in the piloting phase and it is premature to assess the functionality.

**Finding 14.** The project positively contributed to the multi-dimensional empowerment of the women for a decent work and decent life. The WEE actions slightly enhanced the income and wellbeing of the beneficiaries, but more consistent business development support is needed.

In the framework of this women empowerment subcomponent run by the NGO Faclia (Ungheni) a total of 207 women, including (potential) victims of the violence from Cahul and Ungheni regions benefited from the consistent multi-dimensional assistance (psycho-social counselling, career development, employment orientation, legal counselling, hygiene/healthcare products)<sup>109</sup>. As illustrated the individual discussions with the women beneficiaries, they are able to recognise and report the cases of the VAW and are familiar with the available essential services and opportunities for engaging in income generating activities. An important success factor was the local communication platform created within the 16 Women's Clubs (9 in Ungheni and 7 in Cahul districts), which are led by the local CSO in close partnership with local authorities, service providers and initiative groups.

*"We established an informal Women Club, which is quite popular among the women from our village. We periodically meet each other, spend time together, tell our stories, discuss our issues and decide some actions. Women Club is important because it contributes to socialization and empowerment of the women, including those who are victims of the domestic violence, but hesitate to recognize it. We are proud that we mobilised some local resources, renovated our stadium and we have a good women basket team."*<sup>110</sup> Local stakeholder, Pirlita village.

A draft referral mechanism to support the integration/re-integration of women survivors of violence in the employment or income generating activities was co-created with LPAs, members of MDTs, service providers and women from the localities.

About 20 women benefitted from business development support (trainings, coaching, mini-grants) and run (mostly self-employed) start-ups in different areas such as: haircutting & hairdressing; manicure & pedicure; sewing; preparation of traditional sausages, handicrafts, manufacturing of sensorial toys for children, zootechnics, growing flowers, etc.<sup>111</sup> The business development support slightly increased the income and positively influenced the well-being and the independence of the beneficiary women.

*"I have two children and I was totally dependent on my husband. Now, I have a small business and I go out at 8:00 am., come back at 5:00 pm. I'm happy and I manage well the home working".* Interviewed woman.<sup>112</sup>

*"I was willing to sew, but the sewing machines are very expensive. Now, I am happy that I got the equipment and I have a possibility to sew and repair clothes for my family, especially for children. Slowly the community starts to order and I am getting some additional income."* Interviewed woman.<sup>113</sup>

The field mission individual consultations with the women also revealed some challenges and issues. Thus, the amount of the mini-grant is indeed very small (about \$500 – \$1,000), and many of them need much more consistent funding and tailored business development support to develop their small businesses and to sell their products/services. Despite the fact that in September – October 2022 the NGO worked with the beneficiaries and the business coaches identified the most appropriate equipment for the women's business, some of the interviewed women mentioned functionality problems with the business equipment/utensils. Thus, the equipment/utensils are cheap and seems to be of questionable quality, because got broken shortly after the beginning of exploitation. A few of them also mentioned that they cannot benefit from the guarantee for the equipment and utensils, because

109 Final Progress Report. NGO Faclia. November 2022.

110 Key informants' interviews.

111 Final Progress Report. NGO Faclia. November 2022.

112 Key informants' interviews.

113 Key informants' interviews.

they do not have the purchasing tickets as the buyer is the project. These aspects highlight some areas for improvement.

**Finding 15.** The project performed well in supporting the healthcare professionals and improving the cross-sectorial cooperation of the healthcare specialists and social workers.

According to the desk review findings<sup>114</sup> confirmed during the consultations, a total of 48 doctors and 145 nurses responsible for VAC cases from the 12 target localities increased their knowledge on how to identify, report and refer VAC cases as a result of capacity development and monitoring activities in line with the Intervention Guideline for health care workers in cases of VAC.<sup>115</sup> The guideline describes the mechanism of differential diagnosis for identification of the most usual VAC types and aims to strengthen current insufficient cooperation between social and medical services, and involvement not only of nurses, but also of other MDTs specialists. It provides useful information and guiding for consolidation of the much-needed cooperation between the medical services and the MDTs (see the challenges described above). As mentioned in the Coherence part of the report, all healthcare specialists involved in home visiting are equipped with the anthropometrical kits<sup>116</sup> as part of collaboration and synergetic effects with the *EU4Moldova: Focal regions Programme*. Beside the healthcare specialists, about 60 social workers from both districts have learned about the implementing the cross-sectorial mechanism in preventing and addressing VAC following the trainings and peer support. Three nursing courses<sup>117</sup> provided by the Medical Colleges were revised and adjusted to include VAC provisions, risks and protection factors, positive parenting components, and the role of the medical worker in cases of violence.

The capacity development (trainings, coaching) performed by the NGO ARTEMIDA (Drochia) and the share of experience with two other NGOs “I want to know Club” (Cahul) and “The future starts today” (Ungheni) enhanced the capacities of the NGOs from Cahul and Ungheni in developing specialized services according to the essential package of assistance services for victims of gender violence and domestic violence. The two NGOs also learned about the offender-oriented services delivered by the Drochia-based NGO. Both NGOs launched the specialized services for psycho-social and legal assistance and counselling for the victims of GBV and domestic violence in their districts. The total number of persons affected by GBV who benefited from specialized services provided by NGO in Ungheni was 25 women, while in Cahul – 34 women. However, the sustainability perspective of the launched specialized services is an issue, because of the very limited financial resources to adequately support post-capacity development initiatives of those CSOs.

The project proved flexibility and adoptability by providing tangible support to the vulnerable people from both districts as part of COVID-19 response. Thus, during pandemic period about 4,600 vulnerable women and children from Cahul and Ungheni increased their well-being and personal protection from COVID-19 as the result of distributed food, hygiene packages, personal protective items, as well as educational materials for children confined at home due to school closure.<sup>118</sup> Around 1,200 social workers from 70 localities were enabled to provide continuous social assistance to the local population, due to the delivery of protective items.<sup>119</sup>

**Output 2.2: Secondary schools and media have staff trained to plan and implement violence prevention programmes.**

114 Progress report. Strengthened Gender Action in Caul and Ungheni districts Project. 2021.

115 For additional information: <https://wcmprod.unicef.org/moldova/rapoarte/interven%C8%9Bii-%C3%AEn-cazurile-de-violen%C8%9B%C4%83-%C3%AEmpotriva-copiilor>

116 For additional information: <https://www.unicef.org/moldova/comunicate-de-pres%C4%83/echipamente-de-antropometrie-pentru-asisten%C8%9Bii-%C8%99i-asistentele-medicale-din>

117 “Nurse” - duration of studies 3 and 5 years; “Birth assistant” - duration of studies 3 years and “Internships/Residence”.

118 Progress report. Strengthened Gender Action in Caul and Ungheni districts Project. 2021.

119 Ibidem.

**The key activities within this output include:**

Piloting violence prevention programmes in schools and communities for promoting gender equality and a violence free relation for men and women, girls and boys.

Capacity development on women rights of the local CSOs, that advocate for zero tolerance on GBV.

This output was mostly implemented by UNICEF and its partners (CSOs mentioned above) dedicated on child protection. The media subcomponent was run by YMC and API.

The analysis of the final achievements against the targets (see Table 5) show that the project over-achieved both targets, which is commendable. The overachievements of the second KPI (Nr of cases of VAC addressed by teachers and school administrations, disaggregated by sex) can be partially explained also by the increased number of targeted localities.

**Finding 16.** The project enhanced the targeted capacities of the school professionals, increased the children's knowledge about the child protection norms and their involvement in the local projects and strengthened their resilience to violence, sexual abuse and exploitation.

The EVA Project involved 21 schools from the targeted localities, which planned and successfully implemented violence prevention programmes by applying the Child Protection Policies (CPP)<sup>120</sup>. According to the project documents, about 500 school professionals from the localities of both districts learned about involving pupils in decision-making processes, managing communication of schools with mass-media, using the ethics code as a

tool for VAC prevention, and intervention in the cases of bullying.<sup>121</sup>

A curriculum and course support materials for the CPP implementation in schools; a curriculum and course support materials for psychologists from schools and for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Services in identifying, assisting, and reporting cases of violence, neglect, exploitation, and trafficking of children are available because of the partnership agreements between UNICEF and the CNPAC and EDUCAT.

Over 130 pupils (incl. 81% girls and 19% boys) increased their knowledge about the CPP and their role in the process, VAC and bullying in schools, child participation in the respective disputes solving, including through the involvement and development of the Pupil Councils.<sup>122</sup>

*"The EVA project supported our community, not just our school. We discussed about and implemented anti-bullying activities, because the bullying is an issue in our school. It comes from the unequal treatment and social issues in the families and community".*<sup>123</sup> Interviewed pupil

*"I am a girl and for me are important the learnings about the gender issues to avoid mistreatment".*<sup>124</sup> Interviewed pupil

*"Besides the knowledge about the gender aspects, I have improved my public speaking skills as the result of our activities. It is an additional benefit for me and perhaps my future career".*<sup>125</sup> Interviewed pupil

About 1,604 pupils (incl. 831 girls and 773 boys) both from Cahul and Ungheni districts have strengthened their resilience to violence and sexual abuse and exploitation as a result of the 12PLUS Programme<sup>126</sup> implementation for preventing sexual abuse and sexual exploitation targeting 12-18 years old children and adolescents.<sup>127</sup>

120 Child Protection Policies are internal documents in educational institutions aimed to ensure children learn in a safe environment. The policies describe interventions in situations of risk for the life and health of children through prevention, protection, and assistance. They aim to address VAC through: (i) informing children about available specialists and services; (ii) working effectively with and involving parents; (iii) raising awareness of staff's role in protecting children.

121 Progress report. Strengthened Gender Action in Caul and Ungheni districts Project. 2021.

122 Ibidem.

123 Key informants' interviews.

124 Key informants' interviews.

125 Key informants' interviews.

126 For additional information: <https://12plus.md/>

127 Progress report. Strengthened Gender Action in Caul and Ungheni districts Project. 2021.

The project supported implementation of seven social innovation local projects focused on safe social environment free of violence for women and girls. The projects involved about 3,500 adolescents and this is part of the UNICEF's "UPSHIFT"<sup>128</sup> programme, which promotes adolescents' empowerment as local innovators and seekers of the solutions to gender stereotypes that lead to violent behaviours.

As the result of the project support, about 500 adolescents from 25 schools (14 from Ungheni and 11 from Cahul) can identify, report, prevent and address all forms of violence in all settings, being empowered to act as agents of change in addressing negative social norms and gender stereotypes contributing to violent behaviour resulting from 25 sessions organized within the programme.<sup>129</sup>

It worth noting that beside the school teachers/administration and pupils, the project also covered an important number of the parents and caregivers, which increased their parenting knowledge. Thus, 1,701 parents/caregivers of preschool children, adolescents, and pre-adolescent (incl. 1,640 women and 61 men) learned how to apply positive parenting principles without resorting to violent methods as a result of their participation in the structural training programs "Without slaps and Abuse" and "CONNECT" supported by UNICEF and delivered by the trained parental educators, and psychologists.<sup>130</sup> The advancement of social innovation in building a resilient community to violence, especially GBV, was sustained by an online/offline communication campaign that has reached more than 60,000 online users, and over 2,000 young people from Cahul and Ungheni; and the distribution of over 11,000 informative materials in Cahul and Ungheni targeting children, parents and professionals on how to recognize abuse of children, promote safety avoid slapping and ensure a happy childhood by parents/caregivers of preschool children.<sup>131</sup>

The capacities of 27 national foster care professionals, including from Cahul and Ungheni to provide safe and qualitative placement services for child victims

of violence were strengthened. This was achieved as the result of the activities developed by the UNICEF's implementing partner CCF Moldova. In addition, 92 foster careers and parent educators from five other selected regions (Telenești, Strășeni, Orhei, Criuleni and Chisinau municipality) were capacitated on supporting child victims of violence and gender-based violence. The achievements are confirmed by the pre and post capacity development surveys.<sup>132</sup>

In addition to this, the Foster Care Services from Cahul and Ungheni improved their operational infrastructure as the result of the institutional support, which included: projectors, Interactive Touch Screen Panels, portable speakers, web cams, USB sticks; and office supplies.

*"We are the only ones in the district who have such an interactive board. Both specialists and children will be able to benefit from interactive activities organized with the support of these resources!"*<sup>133</sup> Representative of the Child Protection and Family Department.

The local media outlets from Cahul and Ungheni targeted by the project, increased their gender literacy level and produced a high number of gender-sensitive media content.

The project targeted four local online media outlets, i.e. two from Ungheni and two from Cahul, which benefitted from the capacity development support and were involved in gender-sensitive media content development as well as in the increasing the visibility of the public events (e.g. flash mobs, public campaigns). Beside the enhanced capacities and increased number of media content products (176 versus targeted 30). The local media outlets have access to the comprehensive guidelines<sup>134</sup> and training package on ethical coverage of women and child protection issues developed by UNICEF in partnership with the Association for Independent Press (API).

The interviewed media outlet representative stated: "I learned quite a lot about gender-sensitive media content. Those topics were new for me, despite

128 For additional info: <https://www.unicef.org/innovation/upshift>

129 Progress report. Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts Project. 2021.

130 Progress report. Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts Project. 2021.

131 Ibidem.

132 Narrative report. Protective foster care services for child victims of violence and gender-based violence. CCF Moldova. 2022

133 Ibidem

134 The guidelines were developed (in Romanian and Russian) and piloted at the local level in Cahul and Ungheni and distributed at the national level to every media outlet.

my consistent working experience in media sector. I became more diligent when publishing news about gender-sensitive subjects.”<sup>135</sup>

### Factors, which influenced project implementation.

**Finding 17.** There are at least two external key factors (pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war) and one key driving force (implementing partners), which significantly influenced project delivery and ‘modus operandi’.

The pandemic situation was one of the key external influencing factors, which generated: partial and full lockdowns; difficulties in the interaction with and between the stakeholders, including public consultations of the local engendered policies; delays in delivery of the local activities of the implementing partners; shifting and canceling of the study visits and financial savings.

The majority of the project team members were hired during the pandemic period<sup>136</sup> and worked remotely/homebased for more than a year, meeting face-to-face only when restrictions were lifted.<sup>137</sup> This represented an operational challenge and required additional efforts for integration of the team members. It also generated some turnover among the newly contracted staff remarked by some of the interviewed stakeholders.

The adaptation measures used by the management of the project included non-monetary and monetary adjustments and specific additional activities.

The pandemic restrictions changed the modus operandi to the online interaction (non-monetary adjustments), which, as mentioned already, generated on-line fatigue and somehow negatively affected the efficiency of the project activities, communication and interaction between the implementing partners and the communities, the LPAs and communities.

At the same this adjustment avoided bottlenecking of the project and secured continuity of the activities. The monetary adjustments included financial reallocations for purchasing the personal protective equipment as well as extension of the project duration and coverage (doubling the number of localities from 12 to 24).

The effects of the pandemic over the public involvement are different from the locality to locality. Thus, a large number of LPAs’ representatives stated that after the pandemic the level of public participation in the local decision-making in their localities significantly decreased.

*“...Once the pandemic related restrictions were removed, the people are no longer as active as before the pandemic. Even the local celebrations, such as the Village Day, are attended by fewer people than before. A large number of people left the village...”<sup>138</sup>*

In a few localities, the public involvement is similar “local people actively participate as before the pandemic” or “even more people participate”.<sup>139</sup>

Another external key factor, which influenced the implementation dynamic was (still going on) the Russian-Ukrainian war<sup>140</sup>, which generated millions of refugees from Ukraine preponderantly women, children and elderly people.<sup>141</sup> Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, several implementing partners (e.g. Tdh<sup>142</sup>, Ave Copiii<sup>143</sup>, CNPAC<sup>144</sup>, CCF Moldova<sup>145</sup>), just

135 Key informants’ interviews.

136 Early spring of 2020.

137 Summer of 2021.

138 Endline assessment of the Local development planning process, including gender responsive budgeting in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts. 2023

139 Ibidem.

140 See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russo-Ukrainian\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russo-Ukrainian_War).

141 See: Refugees’ profiles from the gender perspective: <https://moldova.unwomen.org/ro/digital-library/publications/2022/03/profilul-refugiatilor-din-perspectiva-de-gen-republica-moldova>

142 See: <https://tdh-moldova.org/ro/solutii-pentru-garantarea-sigurantei-romilor-refugiati-din-ucraina>

143 See: <https://www.avecopiii.md/proiectul-suport-comunitatilor-moldovenesti-in-gazduirea-refugiatilor-ucraineni>

144 See: <https://www.cnpac.md/ro/atelier-pidtrimka-dezvoltarea-rezilientei-si-asigurarea-mediului-protector-pentru-copiii-refugiati-lor-din-ucraina/>

145 See: <https://ccfmoldova.org/noutati/donatii-pentru-familii-din-ucraina>

like the UN system in Moldova, the people of Moldova and the national and local authorities, especially from Cahul<sup>146</sup> were actively involved in helping those seeking refuge from the destruction and chaos left behind. The implementing partners and the UN Women<sup>147</sup> quickly stepped up to support the national and local authorities to respond to the refugees influx – improving living conditions and covering essential needs of refugees, promoting access to decent work, providing legal and psychosocial assistance, supporting access to a safe and continuous learning environment for children. This required substantial additional efforts, adjustment of the working plans<sup>148</sup> and resources, which generated some delivery delays within the EVA Project.<sup>149</sup>

The project documents, namely the MTR, endline assessment and progress reports, highlight also some other factors (cross-checked by the evaluators and confirmed during the field consultations), which were challenging and, to a different extent, influenced the implementation dynamic of the EVA Project.

- Limited local CSO's expertise on gender, VAWC and sexual violence, generated some disruptions in the project delivery. *"After unsuccessful attempts during 2020, in July 2021 was possible to identify an expert CSO (Tdh Moldova) to partner with UN Women for Activity 2.2.2. "To raise the capacities and knowledge on women's rights of local CSOs that advocate for zero tolerance for domestic violence."*<sup>150</sup> Tdh's capacity development efforts and work<sup>151</sup> with the eight grassroots CSOs enhanced their knowledge on GE, facilitated integration on gender and EVAW within the

organizational priorities and supported their thematic local initiatives (e.g. Ludotecas, safe spaces for children and women), but also required project extension and some unforeseen adjustments.<sup>152</sup>

- Limited institutional capacity of some of the implementing partners, particularly expert CSOs. *"The project is partnering with expert CSOs that have different administrative and management experiences, some of which face difficulties in complying with the general conditions of the Partner Agreements. Capacity development plans for NGOs "Faclia" and "Memoria" are being implemented from the onset of the Partner Agreements, as part of partner risk assessment involving tailored training on results-based management, procurement, and finance management."*<sup>153</sup>
- Limited human resources of the LPAs and staff turnover in the local MDTs (social workers, police officers). These issues and the high demand for engagement in the EVA Project's activities, but also similar projects implemented by the other development organizations (UNDP, ATIC, UNFPA etc) funded by different donors (EU, Sweden, USAID) was a challenge repeatedly mentioned by the interviewed LPAs<sup>154</sup> and reflected in both endline assessment reports<sup>155</sup>.
- Energy crisis in Moldova, which was generated after the Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and which led to increased prices to energetic resources (petrol, gas) and negatively affected the socio-

146 See: <https://moldova.unwomen.org/ro/stories/reportaj/2022/03/multe-femei-sunt-neajutorate-in-fata-razboiului-si-nu-au-o-destinatie-clara>

147 See: <https://moldova.unwomen.org/ro/stories/comunicat-de-presa/2022/04/comunicat-de-presa-in-timpul-vizitei-sale-in-moldova-directoarea-executiva-a-un-women-s-a-angajat-sa-promoveze-abilitarea-si-rezilianta-femeilor-din-moldova-si-a-femeilor-refugiate>

148 "... Due to armed conflict in Ukraine and after a proper consultation with local partners, it was decided, together with UN Women team, to re-think the initial ideas and focus on response to the refugees' crisis." Project title: "Zero tolerance to domestic violence in Cahul and Ungheni districts". Progress report. Challenges /bottlenecks faced in the reporting period. Tdh Moldova.

149 "The delays faced in the process of implementing of all project activities due to the decision to postpone the activities in the context of armed conflict in Ukraine and humanitarian/refugee crisis that affected Moldova". Project title: "Zero tolerance to domestic violence in Cahul and Ungheni districts". Progress report. Challenges /bottlenecks faced in the reporting period. Tdh Moldova.

150 The Mid-Term Review Report, EVA Project. 2021.

151 The capacity development was performed by one outsourced NGO A.L.E.G. from Romania, <https://aleg-romania.eu/>.

152 "The initial idea to go with the same organizations that previously participated in the EVA Project, was not possible to be realized as 3 out of 9 organizations did not want to continue, and their level of participation in previous activities being very low". Project title: "Zero tolerance to domestic violence in Cahul and Ungheni districts". Progress report. Challenges /bottlenecks faced in the reporting period. Tdh Moldova.

153 The Mid-Term Review Report, EVA Project. (1 January 2020 – 31 July 2021). UN Women. 2021

154 Key informants' interviews.

155 Endline assessment of the Local development planning process, including gender responsive budgeting in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts. 2023. Endline assessment of the functionality of the Multidisciplinary Teams in cases of violence (in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts). 2023

economic situation of the country, including the targeted project sites.

- Tight project duration and high frequency of the activities. The three years timeframe proves to be tight and very ambitious given the complexity of the project, high number of service providers (over 20 contracts mostly simultaneously implemented in 24 localities), understaffed local actors (see above). This and the above-mentioned factor produced bi-dimensional effects: On the one side, it affected absorption capacity of the local actors and generated 'saturation and fatigue' because of the duration and intensity of the online events; On the other side, sometimes affected the institutional memory of the envisaged MDTs. It is commendable that the EVA Project team proved flexibility and adaptability and found a management solution appreciated by the local stakeholders - timeframe was stretched on the way allowing for some periods of less intensity for LPAs, expanding this way the delivery period of the partnership agreements. Still, this provided a project design lesson to be learned for future similar projects. See Lessons Learned.
- Staff turnover within the UN Women EVA Project team. This factor was mentioned only by a few interviewed stakeholders<sup>156</sup>, which remarked that to a certain extent it sometimes affected the institutional memory and operational communication and coordination during the project delivery. Still, the project team managed to catch up and to cover the gaps.

Besides the good practices<sup>157</sup> generated by the EVA Project led by UN Women, the evaluation team identified the implementing (responsible) partners as the key driving force/s of the project. They, among others, performed well the key tasks: established and maintained close communication and cooperation with the local stakeholders (LPAs, district authorities, MDTs, CSOs, LAGs, LIGs, school administrations, foster care services, healthcare/family doctors; local media outlets, end-beneficiaries); provided tailored in-house capacity development actions; monitored post-trainings processes and provided respective guidance;

granted and monitored the implementation of the local initiatives by the grantees, etc.

## 5.4 EFFICIENCY

The efficiency was examined in terms of the implementation of the major project activities and timeliness of the achievements, delivery methods and use of available resources. The aspects of project management, monitoring and evaluation system were also considered along the evaluation process.

**Finding 18.** The technical expertise and the resources, i.e. inputs (financial, human, material, time) were mostly adequate and sufficient for reaching the expected results, with some exceptions.

Despite the factors, which influenced the timeliness<sup>158</sup> and the implementation, the project team managed to catch up and to deliver all key planned actions and to hit the initial targets within the extended project time frame. As mentioned, the online modus operandi during the pandemic period affected the efficiency of the capacity development actions and interactions between the stakeholders.

The technical expertise brought by the project and used for: gender mainstreaming in the local policy-making, GRB, capacity development of the envisaged actors (LPAs, MDTs, NGOs, LAGs/LIGs, healthcare professionals, foster care services, some implementing partners), economic empowerment, child protection and media development was determinant for the successfulness of the achievements.

The project managed to reach the majority of the targets with the available inputs, which means that the estimations were mostly appropriate. The inputs/resources were allocated and used as initially planned and adjusted without significant deviations. No information was found about misuse of resources or contra-productive partnerships. The evaluation also did not find any alternative solutions,

156 Key informants' interviews.

157 See Conclusions, Good Practices and Lessons Learnt.

158 Some delays and adjustments happened mostly because of the pandemic, Russian-Ukrainian war and shifting towards humanitarian assistance to refugees as well as infrastructural works of the Regional Integrated Service for victims of sexual violence.



which could be provided at fewer expenses and / or would be more economical for the EVA Project.

Both UN entities and the implementing partners were adequately staffed. In majority of the cases the financial and human resources were sufficient to reach the results, with some exceptions explained below. As for the time, as mentioned, it was quite tight.

In some cases, particularly grass-roots initiatives (local CSOs, initiative/action groups, media, women run startups the funding was very small (e.g. \$500, \$1.000-3.000) and the duration (a few months) was too short for generation some tangible results. Therefore, as repeatedly mentioned the interviewed local stakeholders “the trainings and consultations are good, but there is a need for more consistent funding and longer implementation period”.<sup>159</sup>

**Finding 19.** The management of the project was proactive, receptive and flexible with well-established monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, regular data collection and reporting and with a few areas for improvement.

The adaptive project management is one of the key success factors given the complexity and numerous unforeseen influencing factors described above. The project’s response mechanism, such as: remote (online) modus operandi during the pandemic, rescheduling of some of the activities, budget reallocations, extension and expansion of the project proved to be efficient because secured delivery of the planned activities, which generated the performance described in Effectiveness part of the report.

The M&E system is well established and facilitated timely tracking of the progress, identification of the risks and opportunities and well-informed management decisions. The M&E was process-based (MTR) and results-oriented (baseline/endline assessments), multi-level (international/regional, national and local)

and multi-stakeholders (UN Women, UNICEF, implementing partners, local actors). The M&E was done according to the M&E plan and its key elements are:

- Bi-lateral regular consultations between the both UN entities (UN Women, UNICEF);
- Multi-stakeholder meetings and strategic monitoring of the Steering Committee;
- Consistent technical/quality assurance support provided by the M&E specialists of each UN entity;
- Comprehensive baseline and endline assessments, MTR and final evaluation;
- Additional evaluation of some partners’ projects (e.g. Contact Cahul);
- Two-level data collection and reporting done by the implementing partners and the UN entities;

There are some M&E aspects, which need further improvement, such as: increasing the alignment of the baseline and endline assessments with the project’s KPIs; fine-tuning of the implementing partners’ progress reporting templates<sup>160</sup>; further integration of the change-oriented reporting of the partners<sup>161</sup> and management response to the recommendations reflected in the partners’ reports<sup>162</sup>.

See *Recommendations*.

It worth noting that, overall the donor and the interviewed stakeholders are mostly satisfied with the project management, including communication and reporting.

## 5.5 SUSTAINABILITY

In terms of the likelihood of sustaining the benefits of the EVA Project, the achievements at the final evaluation are particularly important. Given the relatively short project implementation period, the evaluators assessed the potential sustainability prospects of the project achievements.

159 Key informants’ interviews.

160 It is valid only for UN Women’s partners. The structure of some progress reporting templates significantly differs from each other, e.g. Expert Grup’s reporting template from CPD’s or YMC’s ones.

161 The partners are rather describing what has been done than what has been changed as the result of what has been done. See *Recommendations*.

162 Some of the partners suggested in their narrative reports 14 (WIN) or 21 (Expert Grup) recommendations, many of which are specific and tailored for LPAs, local CSOs, implementing organisations and donor. The evaluation team was unable to find a management response of the project team to those recommendations.

**Finding 20.** Generally, the sustainability of the achievements presents a mixed picture: in some cases, there are promising sustainability prospects, while in other case sustainability remains fragile and even weak.

Policy sustainability. The project was focused on direct supporting and influencing the local policy-making and mainstreaming the gender aspects in the local policies and budgets in the target localities of Ungheni and Cahul districts. It represents promising sustainability perspectives given the long-term engagements reflected in those local policies (in some cases up to 2030). It illustrates also the increased commitments of the local actors, especially LPAs and local ownership of the achievements. Despite achieved progress on mainstreaming gender at the local level by adjusting the local strategies and budgets, the sustainability of the achievements needs additional assistance (mentoring and watchdogging of the LPAs) given the non-binding gender-related normative framework and the high risk of abandoning gender mainstreaming achievements by the LPAs, mostly because of insufficient local funds. Lack of normative framework on GRB puts at risk the institutionalization and sustainability of the GRB developed in Cahul and Ungheni. Both sustainability-related risks were identified by the MTR, as well.<sup>163</sup>

The elaborated SOPs for healthcare professionals have also some promising sustainability prospects, because they are officially approved and valid for undefined period of time, just line the regulatory framework of the Regional Integrated Center for the victims of sexual violence.

The EVA Project was clearly geared towards the capacity development of the local actors and individual empowerment of the end-beneficiaries (women, children, teachers), despite lack of corresponding KPIs. Evaluation findings show that the institutional/organizational and individual sustainability perspectives are promising in terms of knowledge acquired, developed skills and perceptions changed in the case

of MDTs, healthcare specialists/family doctors, some local CSOs, local media, school administrations, foster care services. The overall weak response system to cases of VAW at national level may adversely affect the work of MDTs capacitated to respond to those cases. Therefore, the MDTs needs further support to apply the new legal framework when it will be aligned to Istanbul Convention, and when the new instructions on intersectoral response to VAW will be approved by the Government.<sup>164</sup>

The sustainability perspectives are rather weak and fragile in the case of women-led startups<sup>165</sup> and local initiatives groups - Women Clubs, because of ad-hoc character of their activity (Women Club) and unclear viability and insignificant income (startups). It is premature to assess the institutional functionality of the Regional Integrated Center for the victims of sexual violence.

The financial sustainability prospects of the achievements are mixed: 1) weak in the case of the local CSOs capacitated<sup>166</sup> for delivery of the services for victims and offenders of the domestic violence and women run start-ups and 2) unclear (Regional Integrated Center for the victims of sexual violence).

As illustratively remarked one representative of the local CSO from Cahul district: “We were active and produced good results as long as we implemented our short mini-grant, but once it ended – we stopped, because we are not able to secure the continuity of our activities in the absence of the funds”.<sup>167</sup>

The same is valid for the local initiative groups supported by CPD and YMC, some of which (CPD-related) were boosted by the local mayors. As mentioned on stakeholder: “We participated to several trainings and consultations developed by the different NGOs, which came to our village. We have learned a lot, but we still do not have resources to implement our initiatives.”<sup>168</sup>

Environmental sustainability – was not directly targeted by the project, as it was designed as a non-environmental action. Still, the evaluation team did not identify any actions, which would produce harm or

163 The Mid-Term Review Report, EVA Project. (1 January 2020 – 31 July 2021). UN Women. 2021

164 Ibidem.

165 The women entrepreneurship subcomponent started at the end of EVA Project, November - December 2022.

166 By NGO Artemida (Drochia).

167 Key informants' interviews.

168 Key informants' interviews.

affect somehow the environment. On-contrary, a few mini-grants promoted clear environment protection and trash management, which have positive effects on the environment.

## 5.6 GENDER EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

**Finding 21.** The GE and human rights aspects as well as the key elements of the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) are mainstreamed in the project design. The project is gender-sensitive and incorporated the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) Principle.

The EVA Project integrated well the HRBA approach and had a bi-dimensional focus. Thus, as reflected in the Figure 1, the project was focused on the both „rights holders” (women and children, including victims of domestic violence, school children, local CSOs, media outlets, LAGs, LIGs) and „duty bearers” (LPAs, MDTs, family doctors/healthcare specialists, school ad-ministrations, foster care services, and occasionally the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and Ministry of Education, Culture & Research).

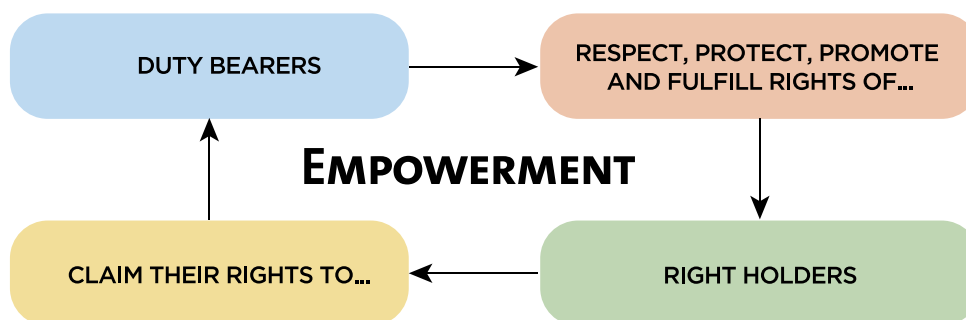
Analyzing the needs and expected results identified and described in the project document, both baseline assessment reports and confirmed by the interviewed stakeholders, the evaluation found that the project design is gender-sensitive by its definition, title, performance indicators, ToC, expected results, and end-beneficiaries. The gender and human rights aspects are integrated in the project management cycle (needs assessment – designing & planning – implementation – M&E – progress reporting).

The KPI and the expected results are gender- and age-disaggregated. The gender, human rights and some disability inclusion aspects (e.g. access ramps, tactile pavements) are also integrated in the local policies, action plans and budgets. The MDTs from the targeted localities are capacitated, among others, to secure protection and fulfillment of the gender equality and human rights aspects.

The project design incorporated the LNOB Principle by targeting the vulnerable women and children, including those who are victims of the violence, as well as the persons living with disabilities (PWD).

The LNOB Principle was reinforced as the result of the humanitarian assistance to the refugees from Ukraine, who were mostly women, children and elderly people. The same is valid when the project provided personal protective means to the beneficiaries during pandemic.

**Figure 1: The core concept of HRBA**



# PART VI. CONCLUSIONS, GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

**This chapter of the final evaluation report summarizes key conclusions and lessons learnt based on the analyses of collected data and elaborations along the evaluation criteria.**

## 6.1 CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1. The project is multi-dimensional and comprehensive, it reflects the needs of the target groups and beneficiaries and is aligned to the thematic national and local priorities strategies.**

Based on findings 1 and 2, the evaluation team concluded that the project used a multi-level and multi-stakeholder participatory approach based on the involvement of a high number of state and non-state local, national and international actors, but with some coordination and synergetic issues. Still, some relevant actors (local councils, district financial authorities and the Ministry of Finance) were insufficiently involved. The project is relevant, and aligned to the national strategic documents. It also reflects the needs and priorities of the targeted localities, especially regarding the prevention of

the violence, increasing the functionality of the services oriented towards the victims of violence and enhancing the thematic and operational capacities of other local actors.

The comprehensiveness of the project is illustrated also by a wide range of interconnected areas tackled by the project, such as: local policy review/development, GRB, MDS, child protection, foster care, CSO capacity development, healthcare, economic empowerment, media development, infrastructural development, educational support, and humanitarian assistance.

**Conclusion 2. The project successfully used a 'bottom-up' (unlike the 'top-down') change-oriented approach, based on valid, but incomplete ToC and consistent results` chain.**

This conclusion derives from the findings, 3, 4 and 5. The "bottom-up approach", including community participation was effective in the local policy-making and gender-responsive local budgeting, because all targeted local policies and budgets were successfully

engendered. As for the "top-down" approach (work with the national and district financial authorities and adjustment of the national regulatory framework), it was not foreseen and the high decision-maker impeded approval of the GRBs. This provides a lesson

to be learned for the design of future similar projects. See the Lessons Learnt and Recommendations parts.

The results 'chain is logically interlinked to the project's ToC, which is valid, but still incomplete, because the offender -oriented dimension is not reflected. Combating domestic VAWC is not depending only on 'greater access to effective survivor-focused multi-disciplinary services and piloted violence prevention

in local schools and communities<sup>169</sup>, but also on "teaching the perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships with a view to preventing further violence and changing violent behavioural patterns".<sup>170</sup>

**Conclusion 3. The project is gender-sensitive and rights-based and has a balanced approach targeting „rights holders” (demand side) and „duty bearers” (supply side).**

The gender, child protection and women empowerment aspects are well integrated within the project management cycle (from design to reporting). As confirmed in the finding 21, the project used the HRBA and was focused, on the one side, on engendering the local policy and capacity development of the „duty bearers” (MDTs, LPAs, schools' administrations, teachers, healthcare and foster care profes-

sionals), and, on the other side, on increasing the capacities and empowerment of the „rights holders” (CSOs, LAGs, LIGs, end-beneficiaries: women and children). The project follows the LNOB principle and among others is focused on women empowerment, child protection and covers other vulnerable people (e.g., PwD, refugees, elderly people).

**Conclusion 4. The project was instrumental in promoting social change and generated positive effects across both components (outcomes) and was successful in GM in the local policies, enhancing the access of the victims of violence to survivor-focused multidisciplinary services, and piloting violence prevention in the local schools and communities.**

Based on the findings 8-16, the project performed mostly well against the targets of both components, despite some delays in implementation and changes in the country context in Moldova. The partners managed to implement all planned actions and achieved its targets and expected results at the outcome and outputs level as per the Results Framework.

The EVA Project (which somehow became a brand in the perception of the stakeholders) made tangible contribution towards mainstreamed gender issues in the local policies and combating domestic violence affecting women and children. This resulted in engendered local policies/socio-economic development strategies and GRBs, which still needs approval.

The project reinforced the local capacities, improved the functionality of the multidisciplinary services and local actors, especially (CSOs, Women Clubs/LIGs, LAGs etc). As the consequence, the project positively impacted the increase of number of women and girls who experience violence seeking assistance from public institutions in both targeted districts and number of reported cases of violence against children.<sup>171</sup>

The project also enhanced the visibility of the GE and violence prevention issues in the schools and local communities as the result of the piloted prevention actions in the schools, media outputs and mini-grants scheme of supporting the local initiatives.

169 Description of Action. Annex 1. Strengthened Gender Action in Caul and Ungheni districts.

170 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Istanbul, 11.V.2011, Art.16, page 6. <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>

171 Yearly reports of the District Departments of Social Assistance.

### Conclusion 5. Overall, the project achieved its results in an efficient manner.

Analyzing the project fulfillment versus use of financial, human and time resources and based on the findings 18 and 19, it can be concluded that the project operated in an efficient manner reaching the majority of the targets within the anticipated budget lines, with the available human resources, but within the extended timeframe, generated by the external factors, which influenced the implemen-

tation dynamic. The resources were used for the budget lines as planned without the significant deviations. The evaluation team did not find any alternative solutions, which could be provided at fewer expenses and/or would be more economical for the project. The project management is flexible and adaptive and M&E system is mostly robust, although both with some areas for further improvement.

### Conclusion 6. Overall, the sustainability of the project achievements is mixed and differs from component to component.

The analysis of the ownership and sustainability of the policy-level achievements described in the finding 20, leads to the conclusion that important progress was made and the policy sustainability seems to be promising given the long-term commitments of the LPAs to implement the local strategies. The same is valid for the SOPs and regulatory framework of the Regional Integrated Center for the victims of sexual violence. The sustainability of the GRBs is unclear and at risk, because of lack of national normative framework.

The institutional/organizational and individual sustainability perspectives are promising in the case of capacitated local actors, although the weak response system to cases of VAW at national level may adversely affect the work of MDTs, which perhaps needs further support. The sustainability perspectives are rather weak and fragile in the case of women-led startups, Women Clubs and is premature regarding the Regional Integrated Center for the victims of sexual violence. The financial sustainability prospects are either weak (some local CSOs; start-ups) or unclear (Regional Integrated Center for the victims of sexual violence).

## 6.2 GOOD PRACTICES

The project generated by itself and contributed to generation of some scalable good/best<sup>172</sup> practices by other stakeholders (e.g. LPAs, MDTs). Some of them are already well described and justified in the endline assessment reports.<sup>173</sup> In addition to them, the evaluation team identified four other good practices, which are valuable and can further bring tangible added values in the future similar projects.

- *Multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder approach* contributed to enabling environment for promotion of the GE, capacitation of the local actors and supporting their initiatives. Mainstreaming the gender aspects in the local policies, capacitation of the local actors and violence prevention are not technical processes. On contrary – they are depending on a wide range of legal, social, economic and political issues, which require comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach, which can be provided by a wide range of local, national and international stakeholders with necessary thematic expertise. The good practice is that the project

172 Some project stakeholders in their reports use the term 'good practices', while others – 'best practices'. The evaluation team use the term 'good practices', which is in line with the inception documents.

173 E.g. "Decision-making transparency of the LPAs in the GRB"; "LPAs' transparency in the allocation of financial sources from the local budgets for the projects"; "Project's practical trainings in developing the GRBs". Endline assessment of the Local development planning process, including gender responsive budgeting in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts. 2023. "Documentation of child abuse cases by the MDT from Vadul lui Isac; Engagement of the police officer from Valeni in the informational sessions of the local school"; Endline assessment of the functionality of the Multidisciplinary Teams in cases of violence (in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts). 2023

successfully performed it and this experience is replicable.

- *Flexibility and receptiveness of the project or adaptive management* were important in the changing context, because allowed an adequate management response tailored to the unforeseen external factors, such as: pandemic restrictions, Russian-Ukrainian war and high number of refugees; limited capacity of some implementing partners etc. The adaptability of the project allowed a timely response for the vulnerable people in need (refugees, personal protection means from pandemic); fine-tuning the implementation approach (e.g. institutional capacity development of the expert organizations) and increasing the project coverage. In other words, the adaptability contributed to maximizing the effects of the project interventions and a better use of available resources given the changes in the operational context.
- *Use of the baseline, mid-term and endline assessment* consolidates the M&E system and represents a good practice to be followed in the future similar actions. Despite some inconsistencies in the cases of baseline and endline assessments described above, both assessments provided valuable data, which informed the management decisions and were used by the final evaluation as some important sources for information and triangulation. The data generated by the endline assessment were also helpful for understanding the legal, social and operational contexts of the project, assessing the final achievements and identification the challenges and corresponding recommendations.
- *Involvement of the local CSOs as implementing partners.* It is plausible that the EVA Project involved two local CSOs one from each of the targeted districts, namely Faclia (Ungheni) and Contact (Cahul) as implementing expert partners. It worth reminding that one of them (Faclia), as mentioned, benefited from the organizational development support beside delivering of the economic, psychological and legal empowerment assistance to the end-beneficiaries/women. This is a good and remarkable approach, which needs to be followed in the future projects, because: on the one hand, it increases the use of available local expertise (even if it needs some enhancement); on the other hand,

it consolidates the local ownership and sustainability perspectives, which should not be underestimated. See Recommendations.

## 6.3 LESSONS LEARNT

Usually, any aspect or approach, which did not fully work as expected or functioned surprisingly well, represents and delivers a lesson, which normally should be learned and inform future projects. Thus, based on the evaluators' review of project documents, interviews with the key informants, and analysis of the performance and logic of intervention, evaluation suggests the following lessons that may be of value to engaged UN entities and other stakeholders:

- *The design and ambition of the project should take into consideration the available time frame/funding period and involve the ultimate decision-makers.* This is a bi-dimensional project design lesson, which means that: 1) Intensity and frequency of the capacity development activities, diversity of the covered topics and number of involved providers should take into account the available timeframe or project duration, otherwise it affects the absorption capacity of the local stakeholders; creates fatigue or even frustrations and affects the efficiency of the actions; 2) A project focused on local GRB should expressly target and interact the high hierarchy decision-makers, i.e. district authorities and Ministry of Finance, which is responsible for the respective regulatory framework. The performance of the grassroots level project might be directly affected by the gaps of the national-level regulations. In other words, both approaches bottom-up and top-down are needed. See Conclusion 2.
- *While increasing the number of the project sites, there is a need to adjust the initial targets.* This lesson is equally valid for UN Women, UNICEF, but also for the donor. Despite the flexibility and adaptability of the project described above as the good practice, the project still delivers this management/planning – related lesson. Perhaps it does not require much explanations because it is rather technical than conceptual, but it does not diminish its importance. Once the number of localities/target groups/beneficiaries changed (increased or decreased) there is a need to revise the initial quantitative targets reflected in the project Results' Framework.

- *A local policy-level change is never a linear process, it faces resistance both at the local, but also district/national. Therefore, there is a need to follow the change management phases<sup>174</sup> in the attempt to overcome the respective resistances and to make stakeholders embrace the change: 1) Create a sense of urgency; 2) Form a powerful and inclusive coalition (ambassadors of change); 3) Create a vision for change; 4. Communicate the vision at all levels of public administration, including central one; 5) Overcome resistance and remove obstacles 6) Implement the change – create short-term wins; 7) Build on the change; and 8) Anchor the changes in the organizational/ society culture.*
- *For an effective fight against the domestic violence, there is a needed for both survivor-focused initiatives (targeted by the project) and offender-oriented actions (not targeted by the project). As explained already in the report, this was repeatedly mentioned by the interviewed local stakeholders (members of the MDT, LPA representatives, CSOs, and end-beneficiaries – women victims of domestic violence), but also some of the implementing partners. A comprehensive approach does not mean only multi-dimensional victim-focused services, it also implies development of the offender-oriented services. See Recommendations.*
- *Online capacity development events, beside the disadvantages have also one important advantage, but needs to be adjusted in terms of intensity, format and duration. Despite the difficulties generated by the online modus operandi described in the Efficiency part, the online mode had also one positive effect. The online mode increased the accessibility of the capacity development actions, because some stakeholders/women participated to the events without spending time and efforts to join them. Moreover, they were doing the house work, while getting the new knowledge. However, the training providers should reduce the duration, format<sup>175</sup> and intensity of the on-line events to avoid fatigue of the participants.*

The evaluators recognize that there are additional specific lessons already identified by other project stakeholders and reflected in the different reports, including MTR and endline assessments.<sup>176</sup> Nonetheless, the evaluation team have restricted itself to five lessons that are overarching and that are less covered by the stakeholders. As “basic” the lessons learned may be, their application offers the opportunity for the project partners to increase the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the interventions in other future similar actions.



Photo Credit: UN Women

174 See: Eight steps for Leading Change. John Kotter. <https://www.mindtools.com/a8nu5v5/kotters-8-step-change-model>

175 This observation is in line with the MTR findings: “If trainings are conducted online, these should be short and combine theoretical part with practical work”. Mid-Term Review Report, EVA Project. (1 January 2020 – 31 July 2021). UN Women. 2021

176 E.g. MTR identified some lessons regarding: trust building with the LPAs; tailored capacity development based on the previously identified needs; empowerment of youth as change agents. See: Mid-Term Review Report, EVA Project. (1 January 2020 – 31 July 2021). UN Women. 2021. Endline assessments identified some lessons regarding: Integrated and holistic approach of the inter-sectorial trainings; Monitoring and assessment system of the MDTs’ activities; Awareness raising activities and trainings of children on violence in schools. etc. Endline assessment of the functionality of the Multidisciplinary Teams in cases of violence (in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts). 2023



# PART VII.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the evaluation report provides a manageable number of eight recommendations based on the findings, conclusions and lessons learned of the final evaluation and are set forth for UN entities, their partners and donor to use in a follow-up initiative, if this is considered most feasible. The recommendations are developed and explained

by the evaluation team to its best professional judgment following analysis of the gathered data and face-to-face consultations with the key stakeholders. Presentations of the evaluation’s preliminary findings, and conclusions took place in May 2023 separately with the members of the ERG and informed the final recommendations below.

### 7.1 GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The table presents the general framework of the final evaluation recommendations.

N	Recommendations	To whom	Priority	Time frame
Rec. 01	Capitalize on achievements, continue GM in the local policies and support for improving services for victims of violence and child protection. Consider supporting/developing the offender-oriented services.	UNW UNICEF EUD	High	Immediate / Mid-term
Rec. 02	Fine-tune the project design, scale up the good practices and consider the lessons learned. Involve the change agents and gender champions generated by the EVA Project in future projects.	UNW UNICEF	High	Immediate
Rec. 03	Use a three-level approach in promoting and mainstreaming the GRB. Advocate for adjustment of the regulatory framework on GRB.	UNW	High	Immediate
Rec. 04	Improve the internal coherence, particularly coordination and synergy between the partners.	UNW UNICEF	Medium	Mid-term
Rec. 05	Support more consistently the local stakeholders’ initiatives - more financial resources, longer duration, adjusted logic of intervention.	UNW UNICEF EUD	High	Mid-term
Rec. 06	Reinforce the WEE subcomponent. Consider developing a separate project or component.	WEE EUD	High	Long-term
Rec. 07	Consolidate the sustainability of the achievements, especially of the Integrated Center and increase the ownership commitments.	UNW UNICEF	Medium	Immediate/ Mid-term
Rec. 08	Further improve the M&E system.	UNW UNICEF	Medium	Mid-term

## 7.2 DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

Below all recommendations are explained, which, as to the evaluators, could enhance the relevance and performance, stimulate learning and consolidate the sustainability prospects. Because this is a utilization- focused evaluation<sup>177</sup>, the evaluators paid a special attention to the applicability of the recommendations, which are explained, prioritized, time-oriented and dedicated. The order of the recommendations does not reflect their value or importance.

### Rec. 01

Capitalize on achievements, continue GM in the local policies and support for improving services for victims of violence and child protection. Consider supporting/ developing the offender-oriented services.

The UN entities and their implementing partners within the EVA Project gained valuable subject-related experience and should make sure that it was not a one-phase or stand-alone project.

Therefore, the UN entities are strategically advised to capitalize on the achievements, use the momentum and to continue development of the comprehensive and multi-dimensional support projects focused on GM in the local policy-making, GRB, increasing the functionality of the services for victims of violence and child protection and respective prevention measures, capacity development of the civil society actors, women empowerment as well as media development.

Therefore, the UN entities and the donor are strongly advised to undertake a proper root-cause analysis of the domestic violence and consider supporting the Moldovan Government and developing the offender-oriented services (See Conclusion 2) in line with the provision of the Istanbul Convention, which as mentioned came into force in Moldova on 1 May 2022.<sup>178</sup> Adjust the ToC, by enhancing the comprehensiveness and inclusion the offender -oriented dimension in the 'If' causal linkage. It worth noting, that in Moldova already exist at least one well dedicated service provider<sup>179</sup> in this regard, who was involved (by the EVA Project) in some capacity development and good practice sharing with two organizations from Cahul and Ungheni districts, but post capacity development funding was insignificant.

### Rec. 02

Fine-tune the project design, scale up the good practices and consider the lessons learned. Involve the change agents and gender champions generated by the EVA Project in future projects.

Eliminate the design gaps described in the Relevance part of the report. Make sure the subcomponents have interlinked KPIs. Also is advisable to focus more on the family strengthening-oriented activities, particularly supporting families in dealing with the challenges they might face<sup>180</sup> and parenting skills development.<sup>181</sup>

Consider the lessons learned and replicate the generated good practices described in the report, but also those thematic specific mentioned by the endline assessments.<sup>182</sup>

177 For additional information: [https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization\\_focused\\_evaluation](https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation)

178 Ibidem

179 Artemida (Drochia). See: <https://artemida.md/centrul-de-asistenta-si-consiliere-pentru-agresorii-familiali/>

180 <https://www.unicef.org/serbia/en/family-strengthening-and-alternative-care>

181 See: <https://strengtheningfamiliesprogram.org/>

182 Endline assessment of the Local development planning process, including gender responsive budgeting in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts. 2023. Endline assessment of the functionality of the Multidisciplinary Teams in cases of violence (in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts). 2023

The project envisaged a wide range of capacity development trainings, both on-line and offline and in some cases the providers delivered mentoring post-training assistance, and afterwards supported the local initiatives of the trainees by providing the mini-grants. In other words, it was used the classical learning/capacitating and (then) doing approach, which requires time to identify the needs, to prepare and train and only then to (organize the bidding, select and) support the initiatives. Therefore, often, the funding and implementation of the local initiatives took place at the final phase of the partnerships and the interviewed grantees had quite limited time to implement their actions and to benefit from mentorship and practical guidance and consultancy.<sup>183</sup>

Evaluation team advises, whenever feasible, to use a new approach - learning by doing<sup>184</sup> instead of the current learning and doing approach, i.e. initially select the grantees, support their local initiatives, identify the needs and provide tailored capacity development assistance while they are implementing their initiatives. This approach will shift the implementation to earlier phase, will calibrate the capacity development assistance depending on the needs identified/observed during the mentoring and monitoring. What is more important is that it will give more time to the grantees for implementation of their initiatives, generation the expected changes and analyzing those changes together with their mentors, eventually adjusting the approaches for overcoming the resistances to change and maximizing the effects. It might change the current paradigm and emphasize the practical skills augmentation allowing a more accurate monitoring, data collection and assessment of the functionality of the actors and the sustainability of the achievements.

It is also highly advisable to involve the change agents/ gender champions<sup>185</sup>, who generated replicable good practices within the EVA Project in future projects as role models, peer-to-peer capacity developers.

They might have an incentivizing influence on their colleagues from other future targeted localities given their own positive stories and examples, because leading by example is one of the most powerful developmental approach.<sup>186</sup> As for the current training providers, consider their involvement rather as monitors and mentors than trainers.

### Rec. 03

Use a three-level approach in promoting and mainstreaming the GRB. Advocate for adjustment of the regulatory framework on the GRB.

The recommended three-level approach to be used integrates the first learnt lesson described and includes: national level (Ministry of Finance) – district level (district financial authorities) – local level (Mayoralties and Local Councils). Combine the current grass-roots/bottom -up approach with the top-down approach. Implementation of this recommendation will increase the comprehensiveness of the promoting and mainstreaming of the GRB aspects, but also will facilitate analysis and overcoming of the MDT-related functionality issues. It will increase the involvement of the public actors and subsequently national ownership of the achievements.

This recommendation is also in line with the MTR's recommendations: "Gender mainstreaming in local policy-making and gender-responsive budgeting at local level needs to be well anchored in governmental endorsed legal and normative provisions in order to be institutionalized. Support to central government on making mandatory gender-responsive policies and budgets is needed".<sup>187</sup>

183 The trainings are mostly focused on increasing the knowledge, awareness, motivation of the participants, while the mentoring is a follow up assistance mostly focused on developing the implementation skills of the participants during the application of those knowledge. The two methods are different, but complementary and provide different types of relationship and benefits for the participants.

184 For additional information about the benefits of the learning by doing approach: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning-by-doing> and <https://www.the-learning-agency-lab.com/the-learning-curve/learning-by-doing/>

185 See the specific good practices reflected in the endline assessment report: e.g. "Documentation of child abuse cases by the MDT from Vadul lui Isac village; Engagement of the police officer from Valeni village in the informational sessions of the local school"; "Engagement of the priest from Cornesti village in the violence prevention measures". Endline assessment of the functionality of the Multidisciplinary Teams in cases of violence (in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni Districts). 2023

186 Like It or Not, You Are Always Leading by Example. Harvard Business Review. Michal Scharge 2016.

187 Mid-Term Review Report, EVA Project. (1 January 2020 – 31 July 2021). UN Women. 2021

Use the positive cooperation experience of the UN Women with the Ministry of Finance within other initiatives (ex. mid-term budgetary framework, gender public evaluation and financial accountability) for advocating for the adjustment of the regulatory framework on the GRB. This, on the one hand might deblock the current situation with the GRBs from the targeted localities and will allow their approval, on the other hand will eliminate this barrier in the future similar projects.

#### **Rec. 04**

**Improve the internal coherence, particularly coordination and synergy between the partners.**

The internal coherence, i.e. the coordination, jointness and synergy between the (sub)contracted implementing partners as service providers was one of the weaknesses of the EVA Project, which is a project management challenge. The greater the number of providers/implementers, the more important is the coordination of their activities to avoid thematic and operational duplications and overlaps and secure much needed complementarity and synergetic effects.

Therefore, it is advisable to set up a clear, prompt and functional communication, information sharing and coordination mechanism, which might include: regular multi- and bi-lateral working meetings, information and planning sessions, sharing the working plans and the deliverables (e.g. survey results), developing the joint or combined activities etc. This would also increase the jointness of the project.

It is getting even more actual given the objective fact of chronological asynchronization of the partners, which is normal because they are involved in the project during the different timeframes.

188 Key informants' interviews.

189 According to the project documents.

190 See: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

191 See: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

192 See: <https://www.ilo.org/gender/Aboutus/ILOandGenderEquality/lang--en/index.htm>

#### **Rec. 05**

**Support more consistently the local stakeholders' initiatives – more financial resources, longer duration and adjusted logic of intervention.**

A project, which is expected to increase the gender sensitiveness, to support the local initiatives, to empower the end -beneficiaries and to generate sustainable grass-roots level changes needs to provide a much stronger funding support at the local level. Particularly, the amount of financial resources for the mini-grants schemes should be increased, as remarked the stakeholders<sup>188</sup> up to 4-6 times and duration of the local projects to be extended at least for one year. We have to distinguish the cumulative budget share (about 60%) allocated to the NGOs (majority of which are national-level providers), from those amounts (less than 10%) effectively allocated for supporting the local thematic initiatives<sup>189</sup>.

*See Recommendation 2 regarding adjustment of the logic of intervention.*

#### **Rec. 06**

**Reinforce the WEE subcomponent. Consider developing a separate project or component.**

Many international commitments support WEE, including the Beijing Platform for Action<sup>190</sup>, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women<sup>191</sup> and a series of International Labour Organization conventions<sup>192</sup> on GE.

As remarked interviewed end-beneficiaries, the women, especially in the rural areas of Moldova perform the bulk of household work and they often have little time left to pursue economic opportunities and decrease their dependency of the men. This situation emphasizes the inequalities.

Investing in WEE sets a direct path towards GE, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. This increases their independence and make them able to decide where, when, and how to spend their income, see improvements in their social and economic status and the level of resources devoted to them and their children.

The WEE achievements of the project reflected that this subcomponent has a great transformational potential, but needs more consistent support. Therefore, it is advised to reinforce it in terms of employment assistance, startup support, further business development to already existing businesses for bringing the business to the next level, sales development, increasing the market share and creation of additional workplaces. While supporting the women to run their business, adjust the current approach: at the inception phase provide legal registration assistance and get registered their entities, afterwards provide them funding and let them procure the needed business development equipment and utensils with the invoices on their firms. In such a way they will be able to benefit from the guarantee and will take the control over their equipment.

Consider developing a separate project or at least component with the distinct KPI and targets. Also consider setting the partnerships with other WEE programmes in Moldova, for instance Women in Business reduces the inequalities in Moldova<sup>193</sup> run by the Organization for Business Development.

### **Rec. 07**

**Consolidate the sustainability of the achievements, especially of the Integrated Center and increase the ownership commitments.**

This recommendation is inter-linked with the Recommendation 3, because the successful advocacy and adjustment of the regulatory framework on the GRB also implies consolidation of the sustainability prospects of those GRBs. It is also advisable to support public monitoring/watchdogging on the implementation of the engendered local policies to identify the enablers and bottlenecks, success stories and lessons to be learned as well as the gender champions, which might be involved as change agents. *See Recommendation 2.*

The overall weak response system to the cases of VAW at national level may adversely affect the activity and sustainability of the MDTs' achievements capacitated to effectively respond to the cases of VAWC. The successes and results EVA project achieved with MDTs can be lost overtime if persistent challenges -which depend from central level policy makers – are not addressed. Therefore, the MDTs in partner localities need to be further supported to apply the new legal framework once the legislation is aligned to Istanbul Convention, and when the new instructions on intersectoral response to VAW will be approved by the government. This recommendation is similar to the one reflected in the MTR report.

A particular attention should be paid to the viability of the Regional Integrated Center. There is a need for an explicit and realistic Sustainability Plan with clear financial commitments of the national and local public authorities, including the Ministry of Finance and district authorities. The current situation when UN Women assumes the responsibility for securing the functionality and covering the operational costs for two more years represents a short-term solution, which does not solve the strategic issue. UN Women might find useful the suggestion that during the next two years to gradually involve the public authorities in covering the financial costs and the full phase out to be done after two years. In such a way, UN Women will gradually phase-out, while the public authorities will gradually phase-in.

193 See: <https://www.oda.md/ro/granturi/femei-in-afaceri-program>

## Rec. 08

### Further improve the M&E system.

Strengthening the M&E system is not an act, it is a (never ending) process, just like the capacity development, therefore it should be continuously consolidated. Having baseline and endline assessments, as mentioned represents a good practice to be followed in the future similar actions. Despite some methodological gaps, both assessments provide useful data, mostly regarding the outcome and output-level effectiveness of the project and to a less extent regarding its relevance, impact and sustainability prospects. The endline assessments also generated some valuable endline-related and project-related lessons learned and a few recommendations, which are advisable to be used by both UN entities in the future programming. Whenever feasible, maintain this baseline versus end-line assessment approach, tailor them to the project's KPIs to get a more in-depth data about the project performance.

Fine-tune the final reporting templates (for UN Women partners) and emphasize the change-oriented reporting and analysis (for all partners) by including the corresponding questions, e.g.: What has been changed as the result of implemented activities? What are the evidences which illustrate those changes? What are the most significant changes? Why they are considered the most significant comparing to other changes? What is the resistance to change and how it can be overcome? Who are the change agents and how they can be involved in future programming?

Provide management response to the implementing partners' recommendations reflected in their progress/final narrative reports. Many of those recommendations are subject-related and valuable, because are coming from those expert organizations, who are expected to contribute to generation of the targeted changes. Subsequently, use the relevant and applicable ones to inform on-going and/or future project management decisions. In such a way, the internal M&E system will be used for both 'proving' and 'improving'.



Photo Credit: UN Women

# PART VIII. ANNEXES

## ANNEX 8.1 EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Criteria	Key evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Type of Indicators	Indicators related to EQs	Sources of data	Data collection Tools/Methods
Relevance	To what extent is the project aligned with international agreements and national development strategies in the area of GEWE and combating VAWC in Moldova?	How the project contributes to the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs, as well as UNPSD (2018-2022)?	Mainly qualitative	Confirmation of the usefulness by the stakeholders and desk review findings.	Project and thematic policy documents, incl. UNPFSD. Stakeholders	Analysis of the project documents, progress reports, MTR report and thematic documents on the development priorities.  Key informants Interviews KII, FGD  Desk review KII, FGD with project stakeholders
		To what extent the project is consistent with/reflects the national development strategies on GEWE and combating VAWC?	Mainly qualitative	Consistency of the project. Linkages of the project with the national thematic priorities on GEWE and combating VAWC in Moldova and international thematic agreements.	Project and thematic strategic documents	
		To what extent is the project aligned with international agreements on GEWE/combating DGBV?				
	To what extent was designing of the project collaborative and relevant to the needs and priorities of the stakeholders/beneficiaries?	To what extent and how were implementing UN entities and other stakeholders involved/consulted during the PMC? To what extent the activities were relevant to the target group's needs?	Mainly qualitative Partially quantitative	Evidences of assessed/integrated needs in programming; Evidences of the causality inter-linkage between the actions delivered and changes generated.	Project documents. Stakeholders, including key partners of the project.	KII, FGD with project stakeholders
	To what extent the overall project design is consistent in terms of RBM?	To what extent the results' chain is interconnected with the baselines, milestones, targets and indicators? Are there significant design gaps?	Qualitative Quantitative	Linkage of the result's chain.	Mostly project documents. Eventually, project team.	Desk review. KII with the project team.
To what extent the cross-cutting issues and LNOB were considered?	To what extent the disability inclusion issues were reflected in the PMC?	Qualitatively Quantitatively	Inclusiveness of the project design and implementation approach.	Project proposal, log-frame, results' framework, progress reports, MTR report. Thematic guidelines on RBM, HRBA and LNOB.	Mostly desk review.	
	To what extent the project targeted duty bearers and rights holders? To what extent the most vulnerable people, including the persons with disabilities were involved in and benefitted of the project?	Mainly qualitative Partially quantitative	Consistency and focus of the project approach in terms of RBM, HRBA and LNOB. Disability inclusion in the PMC.		Desk review. KII, FGD.	

Evaluation Criteria	Key evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Type of Indicators	Indicators related to EQs	Sources of data	Data collection Tools/Methods
Relevance	Is the project achieving the synergies between the work of the UN entities in Moldova?	To what extent the project adheres to corporate strategic priorities of UN Women and UNICEF? Is the project achieving the synergies between UN Women's and UNICEF's portfolios and UN Country Team's work in Moldova?	Qualitative Quantitative	Internal coherence of the project and alignment with the UN strategic priorities	Progress reports, MTR report. UN entities, UN Country Team, CSOs, local governments, and other project stakeholders.	Desk review. Mostly KII.
	To what extent the project achieved synergy with other actors' actions focused on GEWE and VAWC?	Is the project achieving synergies between UN Women, UNICEF and CSOs and local governments?	Qualitative Quantitative	External coherence and synergy of the project		
	What is the comparative advantage in the project's area of the UN Women and UNICEF in comparison with other (UN) organizations?	What is the uniqueness of the EVA project? What is the added value of brought by UN Women and UNICEF?	Mainly qualitative	Uniqueness and added value of the partners	Progress reports Project stakeholders	Desk review KII, FGD with the project stakeholders
Effectiveness	To what extent have the <b>expected results</b> been achieved at the outcome and output levels?	To what extent the GE is promoted and mainstreamed in local-policy making and decision taking as the result of the project actions?	Quantitative Qualitative	Project fulfilment. Performance according to quantitative & qualitative indicators. Evidences of the achievements.	Progress reports. MTR report. Local policies and regulatory frameworks. Key stakeholders.	KII, FGD. Desk review Field mission observations
		To what extent the victims of domestic/sexual violence, have greater access to survivor-focused MDS?	Quantitative Qualitative	Examples of the access to MDS of the victims of domestic/sexual violence.	Progress reports, MTR report. MDS teams, victims of domestic/sexual violence.	Mostly FGD. Desk review Field mission observations
		To what extent the quality services for women victims of domestic/sexual violence were developed?	Qualitative Quantitative	Evidence of the developed services for the MDS of the victims of domestic/sexual violence.	MDS teams, victims of domestic/sexual violence. Progress reports.	Mostly FGD. Desk review. Field mission observations
		To what extent the secondary schools and media have staff trained and implement violence prevention programmes?	Mostly Quantitative	Evidence of the increased capacities of media and secondary schools. Existence of the violence prevention programmes.	School curricula, Progress documents, Media and secondary school representatives.	KII, FGD. Desk review. Field mission observations
	What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended, effects brought about by the Project's interventions?	What are the good practices generated and used by the project?	Qualitative Quantitative	Positive changes and added value generated by the project. Positive /negative unintended effects of the project.	Project documents, Stakeholders of the project.	Desk review KII and FGD with the project stakeholders Field observations.



Evaluation Criteria	Key evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Type of Indicators	Indicators related to EQs	Sources of data	Data collection Tools/Methods
Effectiveness	What are the major factors influencing the achievements / non-achievements?	What were the key driving forces (KDF)? How did the project adapt to external and internal factors, including C-19 and ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war?	Mostly Qualitative	Degree of influence of the internal/external factors (enablers & barriers) on achievements. Degree of flexibility and adaptability of the project.	Project documents, Stakeholders of the project.	KII and FGD with the project stakeholders Desk review. Field mission observations
	To what extent is the project approach innovative for achieving GEWE and combating VAWC?	What -if any- types of innovations have been introduced for achievement of GEWE and combating VAWC?	Mostly Qualitative	Innovativeness of the project approach	Project documents, Stakeholders of the project.	KII and FGD with the project stakeholders Desk review.
	How effective have the selected strategies/ approaches been in achieving the project results?	How well did the intervention succeed in involving & building the capacities of <i>rights-holders, duty-bearers</i> and project partners? What contribution are UN Women & UNICEF making to implementing global norms & standards for GE mainstreaming & combating VAWC?	Mostly qualitative	Evidence of the capacity development achievements and contribution to GEWE of the project.	Project documents, Stakeholders of the project.	KII and FGD with the project stakeholders Desk review.
	What are the key recommendations for increasing the project performance?	What should be adjusted, dropped off or reinforced to deliver better results in the future?	Qualitative Quantitative	Recommendations for increasing effectiveness	Stakeholders of the project.	KII and FGD with the project stakeholders
Efficiency	Have the results been delivered in a timely manner? How, if at all, has the joint nature of the project affected efficiency of delivery?	Have resources (human, financial, technical) been allocated and split between the UN entities strategically? Has there been any reduced duplication and increased cost-sharing? Do established levels or mechanism of “jointness” lead to better results?” To what extent the joint modality (with recipient Agency – UNICEF) led to improved communication and coordination within the UN family in Moldova?	Qualitative Quantitative	Timely delivery of the project. Efficiency and benefits of the financial management arrangements. Efficiency of the joint approach.	Work plans, financial documents versus project achievements. Key project stakeholders	Desk review KII and FGD with the UN Women, UNICEF, UNCT, EUD, project stakeholders.
	How efficient were the project actions and the project’s response mechanisms?	How efficient were the project approaches in achieving the results?	Mostly Qualitative	Receptiveness and flexibility of the project. Project adaptability.	Annual work plans versus progress reports	Desk review. KII with KII with UN Women UNICEF, EUD
	To what extent the project management and leadership was efficient? Where does accountability lie?	To what extent the governance mechanism was functional? Has tracking financing in support of GEWE allocation led to improved efficiency? How financial tracking, was efficient to achieve greater GEWE results?	Mostly Qualitative	Efficiency and benefits of the governance and management arrangements of the project.	Project documents	Desk review. KII with UN Women UNICEF, EUD

Evaluation Criteria	Key evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Type of Indicators	Indicators related to EQs	Sources of data	Data collection Tools/Methods
Efficiency	To what extent was the project's M&E system consistent and efficient?	To what extent M&E actions facilitated timely tracking of the progress, identification of the risks and opportunities and well-informed decisions?	Qualitative Quantitative	Timely tracking of the progress and well-informed decisions. Efficiency of the M&E system of the project	Project documents Project team	Desk review. KII with UN Women UNICEF, EUD
		How M&E facilitated learning and accountability to project stakeholders?	Mostly Qualitative	Accountability and learning aspects of the M&E system.	Stakeholders of the project. Project documents.	Desk review. KII, FGD with the stakeholders.
Sustainability	What are the sustainability prospects of the project?	To what extent the benefits of a project are continuing after the completion? What are: policy, institutional, financial sustainability perspectives?	Mostly Qualitative	Long-lasting character of the generated changes with the project support. Evidences of the sustainability prospects of the local policy-making and capacity building achievements. Degree of use of the enhanced capacities of the <i>rights holders and duty bearers</i> .	Progress reports, visual adds. Financial plans, decisions or other commitments. Stakeholders of the project.	Desk review. KII, FGD with the stakeholders.  Field mission observations
		What are the sustainability prospects of the engendered local policies?	Partially Quantitative			
		To what extent the project succeeded in strengthening the capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and inclusive practices?				
	What were the major factors, which influenced the sustainability?	How and why those factors influenced the sustainability prospects?	Quantitative Qualitative	Type and complexity of the factors	Project reports and key stakeholders	Desk review. KII, FGD with the stakeholders.
	How has the project generated national and local ownership of the GEWE and combating VAWC results achieved?	Is there will and commitment of the stakeholders, incl. local authorities, schools, CSOs and media outlets to continue their initiatives? To what extent has the project been able to promote replication and/or up-scaling of successful practices?	Mostly qualitative	National and local ownership perspectives. Commitments of the key public and private actors. Project replicability and scale up perspectives.	Stakeholders of the project.	KII and FGD with the stakeholders.

Evaluation Criteria	Key evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Type of Indicators	Indicators related to EQs	Sources of data	Data collection Tools/Methods
Gender Equality & Human Rights	To what extent has gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the project cycle management?	To what extent the project has gender disaggregated indicators & targets? To what extent the gender & human rights issues were taken into account during design, implementation, monitoring and reporting?	Qualitatively Quantitatively	Gender sensitiveness of the project.	Project documents and reports. Key stakeholders	Desk review. KII and FGD with the stakeholders.
	To what extent women and men equally were involved in the delivery and benefitted from the project achievements?	To what extent women and men equally were involved in the delivery and benefitted from the project achievements?	Qualitatively Quantitatively	Evidence of the equal opportunities for men & women. Gender sensitiveness of the project.	Project documents and reports. Key stakeholders	Desk review. KII and FGD with the stakeholders.
	To what extent the project used a Human Rights Based Approach?	To what extent the project was focused on empowerment of the 'rights holders' and capacity enhancement of the 'duty bearers'? What type of human rights were targeted and enhanced?	Mostly Qualitatively	Project planning and implementation approach from the human rights perspectives.	Project documents and reports. Key stakeholders	Desk review. KII and FGD with the stakeholders.

## ANNEX 8.2 EVALUATION TOOLS

### Annex 8.2.1 Semi-structured interview guide for UN Women and UNICEF

#### Relevance

- To what extent is the project consistent with government priorities and national strategies of Moldova?
- To what extent is the design of the project relevant to the needs and priorities of the end beneficiaries?
- To what extent is the project strategy focused on enabling the duty bearers (public authorities) and empowerment of the rights holders (beneficiaries)?
- How innovative is the design of the project in addressing the root causes of GE and VAWC issues?
- To what extent have gender and human rights principles & strategies been integrated into the design and delivery?
- What mechanisms were embedded into the project to promote GE?
- To what extent were the cross-cutting issues (persons with disabilities, youth) included in the project planning and benefitted of the project actions? /To what extent is the project using LNOB Principle?
- To what extent are the needs and priorities addressed by the project still relevant?

#### Coherence

- To what extent is the project aligned with international agreements/conventions on GEWE and combating VAWC?
- To what extent is the project achieving the synergies between the work of the UN entities in Moldova?

- To what extent is the project coherent with other similar actions in Cahul and Ungheni districts?
- Is there a synergy/coordination with the (local) government and other key partners?
- What is the comparative advantage in the project's area of the UN Women & UNICEF in comparison with others?

#### Effectiveness

- To what extent have the expected results been achieved on both outcome and output levels?
- To what extent the GE is promoted and mainstreamed in local-policy making and decision taking as the result of the project actions?
- To what extent the services for women victims of domestic/sexual violence were developed and the victims of domestic/sexual violence, have greater access to survivor-focused MDS?
- To what extent the schools and media have staff trained and implement violence prevention actions?
- To what extent the implementing partners were involved through the PMC?
- What are the positive or negative, (un)intended effects brought about by the project's interventions?
- What are the major internal and external factors influencing the achievements / non-achievements?
- To what extent is the project approach innovative for achieving GEWE affected by migration?
- What are the key recommendations for increasing the project performance for future similar projects?

#### Efficiency

- Have the results been delivered in a timely manner? How, if at all, has the joint nature of the project affected efficiency of delivery?
- How appropriate were the project budget and human resources to achieve project objectives?
- How efficient were the project actions and the project's response mechanisms in case of pandemic and ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war?

- To what extent was the project delivered in accordance with agreed terms and reports fairly and accurately described the delivery and performance?
- To what extent the project management/leadership was efficient?
- To what extent M&E actions facilitated timely tracking of the progress, identification of the risks and opportunities and well-informed decisions? Do mechanism of “jointness” lead to better results?”
- To what extent did the project’s M&E system was consistent and efficient (types, levels, frequency).
- To what extent the MTR recommendations were relevant implemented?

### Sustainability

- To what extent the benefits from the project will be maintained after project completion?
1. What are the sustainability prospects at the: 1) Policy sustainability, i.e. viability of the local policy and regulatory level achievements); 2) Institutional and individual sustainability – via-bility of the increased capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers) and 3) Financial sustainability – e.g., financial sources and commitments?
- How has the project generated national and local ownership of the results achieved? What commitment has authorities demonstrated to institutionalize and replicate the good practices/ project?
  - To what extent has the project been able to promote or upscale the best practices?
  - What is the exit strategy and how it was implemented?

### Annex 8.2.2: Semi-structured interview guide for implementing partners (CSOs, schools, media, MDT)

### Relevance

- How your organization became the implementing partner of the project?
- What was your key responsibilities within the project?
- What is your general impression about the project in terms of relevance of design, approach, achievements?
- To what extent its design meets the needs and priorities of the end-beneficiaries, incl. people with disabilities? Please provide some examples
- What should be done to increase the relevance of the future similar projects?

### Coherence

- To what extent is the project in synergy with other projects in Moldova, incl. implemented by your organization?
- What is the comparative advantage in the project’s area of the UN Women & UNICEF in comparison with others?

### Effectiveness

- To what extent have the expected results been achieved?
- To what extent the GE is promoted and mainstreamed in local-policy making and decision taking as the result of the project actions?
- What local accountability and oversight systems have been established?
- To what extent the services for women victims of domestic/sexual violence were developed and the victims of domestic/sexual violence, have greater access to survivor-focused MDS?
- To what extent the secondary schools and media have staff trained and implement violence prevention programmes?
- What are the obstacles to having a common agenda for GEWE advocacy (gender mainstreaming, EVAWC)?
- To what extent is the project approach innovative for achieving GEWE and combating VAWC?

- How does the women’s movement, incl. women’s rights CSOs and GE advocates work together to create a common advocacy agenda?
- Looking forward, what are the most important areas of GEWE the Government, UN Women and national partners should focus on in the short and long term (including legislative and policy changes)?

### Efficiency

- To what extent your actions were delivered according to the initial working plan?
- How the project adopted to the pandemic, on-going Russian-Ukrainian war and other factors?
- Have administrative delays or problems if any (e.g. financial transfers, timely provision of information, procurement, etc.) affected project implementation and results?
- How appropriate were the project budget and human resources to achieve project objectives?
- How would you describe the project management and communication with the UN entities?
- Who and how (often) monitored the project implementation? What aspects were monitored?
- On a scale of 1-5 (1 not satisfied – 5 fully satisfied), how satisfied are you with the relationship with UN entities, LPAs and beneficiaries? Please illustrate by examples.

### Sustainability

- What is the likelihood that those achievements/ changes will be sustainable after the project completion?
- To what extent the policy and capacity development changes will be sustainable?
- To what extent has the project been able to promote replication and/or up-scaling of successful practices?
- What would you recommend to UN entities for future similar actions? Why?

## Annex 8.2.3 Semi-structured interview / FGD guide for national and local public authorities

### Relevance

- What is your general impression about the project?
- What was the role of your institution within the project?
- Have you been consulted during the project development phase? If yes, to what extent your suggestions were included in the project design/ framework?
- Is the project aligned to the government priorities/national development strategies?
- To what extent the project reflects the needs and priorities of the women/girls/children/people with disabilities and other community members?

### Coherence

- What is the comparative advantage (uniqueness) in this project in comparison with other projects, in terms of target groups, approach, implementing partners, etc?
- To what extent this project is synergized with other similar projects implemented in your district?

### Effectiveness

- What are the key results generated by the project?
- To what extent the local policies were engendered?
- What is the current share of local budget for realization of local initiatives for GEWE?
- Does the LPA have the inclusive and gender-sensitive policies and budgets?
- Does the LPAs undertake actions on GE and GM at the local level?
- How does the women’s movement, incl. women’s rights CSOs and GE advocates work together to create a common advocacy agenda?

- Looking forward, what are the most important areas of GEWE the Government, UN Women and national partners should focus on in the short and long term (including legislative and policy changes)?
- Share of LPA involved in capacity development on GM;
- What did the LPA learn about GE and GM? Did you manage to apply that knowledge? If yes, please provide some examples. If not, what were the impediments?
- To what extent the project contributed to implementation of the national thematic priorities on GEWE?
- What local accountability and oversight systems have been established?

### Efficiency

- Do you consider the planned time and resources adequate for reaching the expected results of the project?
- To what extent is your institution/local authority providing support to project implementers (technical, monetary, administrative)?
- Is there any practice within your institution/authority of cost sharing? Please provide examples.
- On a scale of 1-5 (1 not satisfied – 5 fully satisfied) how satisfied are you with the relationship with UN entities/implementing partners?

### Sustainability

- To what extent your institution/entity applies inclusive approaches in policy making?
- Are you going to continue the initiatives on GEWE and combating VAWC?
- If yes, do you have some working/actions plans developed or are you going to develop them?
- Does the Government/LPA/institution have the funding (financial commitments) to pursue the current initiatives?
- How you plan to continue GM and combating VAWC?

- What knowledge\skills\ experiences gained through the project will be used in your practice?
- What are your lessons learned from your partnership with UN Women/ UNICEF?
- What project approaches and good practices might be replicated?

### Recommendations

- What are the key areas for improvement? What should be changed, reinforced or dropped?

### Annex 8.2.4 FGD and semi-structured interview / FGD guide for end-beneficiaries (women/girls, children, persons with disabilities, community members)

### Relevance

- To what extent did you participate in the project?
- To what extent you were involved in local decision-making process or benefit of the gender mainstreamed policies?
- What led you to participate in this project? When and how did you learn about it?
- What is your general impression about the project?
- Do you find it useful for your needs? Why? Please explain.
- What ideas did you provide? To what extent were those ideas included in the project?

### Effectiveness

- Which activities do you consider most useful and why? Please provide some examples.
- What did you learn from the project activities?
- Did you have a chance to apply those learnings and skills? Please explain. If yes what are your conclusions?
- How do you consider the quality of the MDS?

### Efficiency

- How pandemic (and other factors) affected your participation in the project activities?
- On a scale of 1-5 (1 not satisfied – 5 fully satisfied) how satisfied are you with the benefits gained from the project? Please illustrate by examples.
- What you would have liked to be done differently? Why?

### Sustainability

- What knowledge and skills have you acquired that you would continue to use if the project is closed?
- What would you suggest for future similar projects to make them stronger and more tailored to your needs?

## Annex 8.2.5 Semi-structured interview guide Donor

### Opening question/Relevance

- What is your general impression about the EVA project?

### Coherence

- What is the comparative advantage (uniqueness) in this project in comparison with other (EU-funded) projects?
- To what extent this project is synergized with other similar (EU-funded) projects implemented in Cahul and Ungheni?

### Efficiency

- Do you consider the planned time and resources adequate for reaching the expected results of the project?
- How would you describe the management of the project and communication/information sharing with UN Women and UNICEF?
- To what extent the project was flexible?
- How would you describe the quality of the reporting and functionality of the M&E system?
- On a scale of 1-5 (1 not satisfied – 5 fully satisfied) how satisfied are you with the relationship with UN Women and UNICEF?

### Effectiveness

- What are the key achievements of the Eva project from your point of view?
- To what extent you perceive the project as successful?
- Are there some areas the partners could perform better? If yes, please explain.
- How would you describe the visibility of the project?

### Sustainability

- What are the national and local ownership prospects/concerns from your point of view?
- To what extent EU is going to continue funding the initiatives on GEWE and combating VAWC?
- What project approaches and good practices might be replicated?
- What should learn UN Women/UNICEF from other grantees funded by EU and implementing similar



## ANNEX 8.3 LIST OF CONSULTED STAKEHOLDERS

Nr	Name and surname	Position held	Institution	Locality
1	Dionisie Tarnavski	Deputy Mayor	City Hall	Ungheni
2	Gheorghe Trofin	Program Officer	UNICEF	Chisinau
3	Simion Sarbu	Executive Director	NGO Artemida	Cahul
4	Ina Gradinaru	Project Coordinator	NGO Artemida	Cahul
5	Tatiana Romaniuc	Deputy Mayor	City Hall	Cahul
6	Cristina Lupan	Projects Coordinator	Contact Center	Cahul
7	Vitalie Hotnogu	Journalist	“Ziua de azi”	Cahul
8	Lilia Moraru	Executive Director	NGO Vreau sa stiu	Cahul
9	Nicolae Beju	Mayor	City Hall	Zarnesti, Cahul
10	Neiculov Elena	Council Secretary	Local Council	Zarnesti, Cahul
11	Tomoianu Efosinia	Social Assistant – MDT member	MDT	Zarnesti, Cahul
12	Vasile Stanga	MDT member	MDT	Zarnesti, Cahul
13	Parascovia Niculita	MDT member	MDT	Zarnesti, Cahul
14	Nadejda Dobanda	Director, Teacher	Lyceum	Zarnesti, Cahul
15	Olga Cebotaru	Deputy director, Teacher	Lyceum	Zarnesti, Cahul
16	Denisenco Tatiana	Mayor	City Hall	Cucoara, Cahul
17	Dimicenco Tatiana	Accountant	City Hall	Cucoara, Cahul
18	Săcăreanu Valentina	MDT member	MDT	Cucoara, Cahul
19	Lidia Cernov	Director	Kindergarten	Cucoara, Cahul
20	Liudmila Nistor	Mayor	City Hall	Parlita, Ungheni
21	Vasilciuc Vadim	Deputy Mayor	City Hall	Parlita, Ungheni
22	Lîsîi Ludmila	MDT member	MDT	Parlita, Ungheni
23	Gulica Anisia	Deputy director	Lyceum	Parlita, Ungheni
24	Vatavu Lidia	Psichologist	MDT	Parlita, Ungheni
25	Cantemir Gheorghe	Sector police officer	Police sector	Parlita, Ungheni

26	Andriuță Elena	Social assistant	MDT	Parlita, Ungheni
27	Negarneac Ludmila	Social assistant in child rights protection	MDT	Parlita, Ungheni
28	Luchina Angelica	Legal assistant	City Hall	Parlita, Ungheni
29	Vera Buga	Mayor	City Hall	Cornesti, Ungheni
30	Ecaterina Chitroaga	Council Secretary	Local Council	Cornesti, Ungheni
31	Olesea Foșnea	Social assistant	MDT	Cornesti, Ungheni
32	Gheorghe Paladi	Sector police officer	MDT	Cornesti, Ungheni
33	Andrian Lupu	Priest	MDT	Cornesti, Ungheni
34	Maria Cudreavțev	Director	Kindergarten	Cornesti, Ungheni
35	Olga Negară	Teacher	Secondary school	Cornesti, Ungheni
36	Vitalie Țăranu	Doctor	Health Center	Cornesti, Ungheni
37	Loredana Arap	Youth initiative member	Secondary school	Cornesti, Ungheni
38	Gârbea Dumitru	Youth initiative member	Secondary school	Cornesti, Ungheni
39	Buga Raisa	Director	Secondary School	Cornesti, Ungheni
40	Dionisie Ternovschi	Deputy Mayor	City Hall	Ungheni
41	Beleniuc Elena	Child protection specialist	City Hall	Ungheni
42	Radețcaia Alina	Chief social assistnat	City Hall	Ungheni
43	Primac Ludmila	Social Assistant	City Hall	Ungheni
44	Dereniov Natalia	Social Assistant	City Hall	Ungheni
45	Popovici Tatiana	Social Assistant	City Hall	Ungheni
46	Cojocar Irina	Social Assistant	City Hall	Ungheni
47	Ursu Elena	Social Assistant	City Hall	Ungheni
48	Angela Ciocârlan	Executive Director	NGO Făclia	Ungheni
49	Daniela Dârzu	Project coordinator	NGO Făclia	Ungheni
50	Constantin Stratulat	Executive Director	CREDO Centre	Ungheni
51	Natalia Junghietu	Journalist	“Express” media	Ungheni
52	Veronica Boboc	Director	NGO Youth Media Center	Chisinau

53	Nina Lozinschi	Director	NGO Gender Centre	Chisinau
54	Veronica Pelivan	Project Manager	Terre des Hommes	Chisinau
55	Galina Precup	Deputy Head	NGO Center for Partnership Development	Chisinau
56	Adrian Lupusor	Executive director	NGO Expert Group	Chisinau
57	Ludmila Popovici	Executive director	NGO Memoria	Chisinau
58	Parascovia Topada-Coroi	Program coordinator	NGO CNPAC	Chisinau
59	Alexandru Donos	President	NGO CNFACEM	Chisinau
60	Livia Marginean	Program manager	CCF Moldova	Chisinau
61	Mariana Ianachevici	Director	NGO AVE COPIII	Chisinau
62	Ion Mazur	Head of advocacy, campaigns and publications department	API	Chisinau
63	Ninel Revenco	Deputy Director	IMC	Chisinau
64	Alexandru Pelivan	Program manager	UNDP	Chisinau
65	Laura Grecu	Program manager	UN Women	Chisinau
66	Anatolii Oprea	Program officer	UN Women	Chisinau
67	Veronica Dobrioglo	Administrative assistant	UN Women	Chisinau
68	Victoria Neaga	Project Manager	EU Delegation	Chisinau
69	Lilia Pascal	Gender Equality Policies Department	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection	Chisinau
70	Plăcintă Oleseă	Woman-Project Beneficiary	Start-up Owner	Semeni, Ungheni
71	Virtosu Vera	Woman-Project Beneficiary	Start-up Owner	Ungheni
72	Tcacenco Ana	Woman-Project Beneficiary	Start-up Owner	Ungheni
73	Burlacu Elena	Woman-Project Beneficiary	Start-up Owner	Ungheni
74	Rosca Zinovia	Woman-Project Beneficiary	Start-up Owner	Colibasi, Ungheni
75	Stanev Tatiana	Woman-Project Beneficiary	Start-up Owner	Larga Noua, Cahul
76	Guiban Adriana	Woman-Project Beneficiary	Start-up Owner	Cahul
77-99	23 children (incl. 13 girls)	Pupils	Lyceum "Dimitrie Cantemir"	Zarnesti, Cahul

## ANNEX 8.4 THE LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

### Annex 8.4 The list of documents reviewed

1. Evaluation Policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNW/2012/8): [www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=UNW/2012/12&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=UNW/2012/12&Lang=E)
2. How to Manage Gender Responsive Evaluation. Evaluation Handbook: [www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation](http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation)
3. UN Women Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS): [www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/about%20us/evaluation/evaluation-geraasmethodology-en.pdf](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/about%20us/evaluation/evaluation-geraasmethodology-en.pdf)
4. Standards for Evaluation in the UN System: [www.uneval.org/document/detail/22](http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/22)
5. Norms for Evaluation in the UN System: [www.uneval.org/document/detail/21](http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21)
6. Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – towards UNEG Guidance: [www.uneval.org/document/detail/980](http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980)
7. UNEG Guidance Integrating Human Rights and Gender into Evaluation: [www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616](http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616)
8. UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator: [www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452](http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452)
9. UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: [www.uneval.org/document/detail/607](http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/607)
10. UNEG Ethical Guidelines: [www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102)
11. UN Women Moldova Country Strategic Note for 2018-2022
12. Republic of Moldova–United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018–2022
13. Global Strategic Plan of UN Women for 2018-2021
14. Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities
15. National Strategy on Equality between women and men in the Republic of Moldova (2017-2021)
16. National Strategy on prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2018-2023)
17. EU Gender Action Plan and the UN Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018-2022
18. Gender Action Plan II (GAP II) of European Commission Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020
19. Child Protection Strategy (2014-2020)
20. Logframe of the Programme “EVA”
21. ProDoc of the Programme “EVA”
22. UN Women Republic of Moldova Country Office SN Report 2018
23. UN Agency to UN Agency Contribution Agreement
24. EVA Inception Report, 2020
25. EVA Mid-Term Review
26. Assessment of the functionality of multidisciplinary teams in cases of domestic violence (in 12 communities from Ungheni and Cahul districts)
27. Assessment of the local development and budget planning from the gender equality perspective (in 12 communities from Ungheni and Cahul districts)
28. EVA Donor Report 2020
29. EVA Donor Report 2021
30. EVA Donor Report 2022
31. Results Logframe 2021
32. Results Logframe 2022
33. Supporting local public authorities to become gender champion communities, Axa Management Consulting
34. Axa Management Consulting Final Report “Support for UN Women work in building the capacities of local public authorities to become gender champion communities”, 2022
35. Quarterly Progress Report (Q4, Y2, October-November 2022), Youth Media Center

36. Youth Media Center Analytic Report (Students) 2022
37. Youth Media Center Analytic Report (Adults) 2022
38. Final Evaluation Report “Local partnerships for women empowerment from Ungheni and Cahul districts”, 2022
39. Center Partnership for Development Final Narrative Report, 2022
40. “Gender-responsive budgeting and public policies Report on lessons learned as a result of collaboration with NGOs from Cahul and Ungheni”, Expert Group
41. “Capacity building program for non-governmental organisations from Cahul and Ungheni districts on gender-responsive budgeting and public policies Final activity Report”, Expert Group
42. Final Report on Support to UN Women work in developing and implementing innovative approaches to gender mainstreaming in LPAs activity, Welfare Improvement Network
43. Analytical report on “what works” from the activities with LPAs and CSOs on GEWE, Welfare Improvement Network
44. Final Report CNFACEM
45. Final Report CCF Moldova
46. Final Report NGO Artemida
47. Final Report Faclia
48. Final Report Contact Cahul
49. Final Report Terre des Hommes Moldova
50. Final Report Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims “Memoria”
51. CNPAC Quarterly Report Q1 2021
52. CNPAC Quarterly Report Q2 2021
53. CNPAC Quarterly Report Q3 2021
54. CNPAC Quarterly Report Q4 2021
55. CNPAC Quarterly Report Q5 2022
56. Final Report “Development of two co-created comprehensive models of violence prevention programmes in secondary schools in Moldova”, 2022, Welfare Improvement Network
57. Assessment of the local development planning processes, including gender-responsive budgeting (in 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni districts)
58. Assessment of the functionality of the multidisciplinary teams in cases of violence (in the 23 settlements of Cahul and Ungheni districts)
59. Evaluation Report on the durability of the project “Women Empowerment for a decent work and decent life”, 2022
60. Local referral mechanism based on local partnerships for the socio-economic inclusion of women victims and survivors of domestic violence from Ungheni and Cahul districts.



## ANNEX 8.5 EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

International Consultant to undertake the final evaluation of the EU funded project “Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts”

Location:	Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
Type of contract:	UN Women Professional Services Contract
Languages required:	English
Duration of the contract:	Up to 36 days (from December 2022 – May 2023)
Project:	Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts (PID-119802)
Purpose of the activity:	to assess the programmatic progress and performance of the project intervention from the point of view of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency, and sustainability

### BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, the empowerment of women, and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace, and security. Placing women’s rights at the center of all its efforts, UN Women leads and coordinates the United Nations system efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout the world.

Through its programmes and projects, UN Women is providing technical assistance to national partners (governmental and non-governmental), including the private sector, in the implementation of existing international and national commitments to women’s rights and gender equality, it facilitates networking and exchange of good practices and advocates for women’s rights and gender equality in all areas of life.

UN Women’s presence in the Republic of Moldova has evolved from being a project-based office in 2007 to a Country Office with fully delegated authority as of 2015. The work of UN Women in Moldova is guided by its Country Strategic Note for 2018-2022, aligned

with the Republic of Moldova–United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018–2022, the Global Strategic Plan of UN Women for 2018-2021, the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2017-2021 (NSGE) and aims to contribute to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UN Women Strategy for Moldova 2018-2022 focuses on three main areas: 1) strengthening women’s participation in politics and decision making, 2) economic empowerment of women, and 3) ending violence against women and girls. To achieve progress in these areas, UN Women works with a variety of national and international partners and as part of different national and regional initiatives.

Based on the European Commission Decision ENI/2018/041-302 regarding the Annual Action Programme 2018 in favour of the Republic of Moldova for Support for the Implementation of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, it was proposed that United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) will implement the following the project *Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts with the short title: “EVA”*.

In this context, a new 3-year project started in January 2020 under the name “Strengthened Gender

Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts” (hereinafter EVA)<sup>1</sup>, funded by the European Union and implemented by UN Women Moldova Country Office, in partnership with UNICEF. Following the Addendum to the Contribution Agreement, EVA project was extended up to 31 May, 2023.

EVA focused on promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment through strengthened implementation of gender mainstreaming in local development planning processes (including budget planning processes) and addressing gender-based and domestic violence affecting women and children in two focal regions: Ungheni and Cahul.

The principles of gender equality and women empowerment are central to the project, as women in Moldova continue to face gender inequalities when it comes to the labour market, the gender pay gap, laws which do not allow women to participate in certain occupations and age-based discrimination. In addition, women’s involvement in public/political decision-making positions is limited, which are aggravated by gender stereotypes and norms.

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The project is implemented in two districts of Moldova, Cahul and Ungheni and covers 24 localities jointly selected by UN Women, UNICEF and in consultation with the EU Delegation, based on their specific express of interest. The project was implemented in five phases during the period of January 2020 to May 2023, for 41 months.

### The project implementation phases:

**Phase 1:** Inception Phase, during January to March 2020

**Phase 2:** Initial Implementation Phase, during April to December 2020

**Phase 3:** Full roll out, during January to December 2021

**Phase 4:** Sharing and upscaling phase, during June 2021 till September 2022

**Phase 5:** Reflection and dissemination phase, during September to May 2023

Total project budget is USD 5,250,000 funded by the European Union (EUR 5,000,000) and UN Women’s contribution (EUR 250,000).

### 2.2. Project strategy and key objectives

The overall purpose of the “*Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts*” intervention is to promoting gender equality, women’s empowerment through strengthened implementation of gender mainstreaming in local public policies, and to combat domestic violence affecting women and children.

The support is expected to contribute to the consolidation and fortification of gender mainstreaming at the local level, in line with the provisions of the National Strategy to Ensure Equality between women and men in the Republic of Moldova for the years 2017-2021.

The proposed intervention will tackle domestic violence against women and children, particularly on improving the capacity and assessment tools of multi-disciplinary specialist response and services. One of the focuses will be on the development of specialized services for women victims of sexual forms violence, as there were interventions on sexual violence from other donors and partners, but not yet on specialized services.

In this regard, the project aimed at achieving the following results: ***Gender equality is promoted and mainstreamed in local policymaking and decision making and Victims of domestic, including sexual violence have greater access to effective survivor-focused multi-disciplinary services and violence prevention is piloted in local schools and communities***

To achieve these objectives, two distinct outcomes were defined:

**Outcome 1:** Gender equality is promoted and mainstreamed in local policy making and decision taking.

**Outcome 2:** Victims of domestic violence, including sexual violence, have greater access to effective survivor-focused multidisciplinary services, and violence prevention is piloted in local schools and communities.

1 The project was proposed to be implemented during the period of January 2020 to May 2023, for 41 months. A potential non cost extension for five months ( by May,2023) is under revision by EU following UN Women official request submitted in June, 2022.

To achieve these outcomes, specific outputs were agreed:

**Output 1.1:** Gender mainstreaming of public policies.

**Output 2.1:** Range of quality services for women victims of domestic, including sexual violence developed.

**Output 2.2:** Secondary schools and media have staff trained to plan and implement violence prevention programmes.

### **I. Gender mainstreaming in local policy making and decision taking**

The project focused on strengthening the implementation of gender mainstreaming in local policies and combating gender-based and domestic violence affecting women and children in the two districts. It is important to note that the project contributes significantly to several policy frameworks: the implementation of the Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities, the National Strategy on Equality between women and men in the Republic of Moldova (2017-2022), the National Strategy on prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2018-2023), the EU Gender Action Plan and the UN Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018-2022.

As a result of constant outreach and coordination efforts more than 67,100 women and girls and 59,000 men and boys, from 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni will benefit from gender-responsive and needs-based local services as a result of engendered strategies for local socio-economic development through 2025. Moreover, 23 communities from Cahul and Ungheni (33% of the total number of LPAs from districts) have adopted local development strategies, action plans, and budgetary programmes that embed gender equality principles.

These efforts at a multiyear policy and strategic level were coupled with annual budgetary planning processes, where significant progress was achieved in engendering the local budgets for the following year. In line with the newly developed strategies, the 23 LPAs allocated 20% of their 2022 annual budget for initiatives encompassing gender equality and women's empowerment objectives.

For the first time these local strategies and budgetary programmes reflect the different needs and priorities

voiced by women and men during participatory processes, incorporate sex disaggregated data and have gender indicators to measure progress towards advancing gender equality.

Over the implementation period, UN Women within the EVA project strengthened and expanded partnerships at national and local levels with the aim to advance the gender mainstreaming and EVAW agenda in Cahul and Ungheni. The number of partner communities doubled from 12 to 24, indicating the high interest and willingness of LPAs to be part of a project advancing gender equality for sustainable development.

The project also partners with 25 civil society organizations and 15 companies, along with 10 consultants to bring extensive expertise in a coordinated manner for better reach out and impact. Partnering with expert civil society organizations members of the Platform for Gender Equality; the National Coalition "Life without Domestic Violence"; and the Alliance of Active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection (APSCF), brings added value to the project by scaling up the messages and evidence from local stakeholders.

### **!!. Greater access to effective survivor-focused multidisciplinary services**

The proposed intervention addressing domestic violence against women and children under the project was supposed to build on the previously EU supported actions, particularly on improving the capacity and tools of multidisciplinary specialised response and services. The intervention tackled all types of cases of domestic violence including special attention to sexual forms of violence.

The project implementation was in line with CEDAW, and the recommendations set within the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention), specifically related to the set of specialized services of support which should be available as shelters, telephone helplines, sexual violence services, legal support, counselling centres. This is significant as it sets the ground for increasing the Government's commitments and accountability for EVAWC. As well, the intervention aimed to closely follow the global standards on essential services known



## [as Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence.](#)<sup>2</sup>

Following the two years of project interventions women and girls, including children, from both districts (Cahul and Ungheni), are benefiting from improved survivor focused services offered through the MDTs, evidenced by the eightfold increase in the number of registered cases, as 13/24 MDTs are now more functional and committed to working on EVAWC cases resulting from the intense capacity development and mentoring conducted in the frame of the EVA project in 13/24 selected localities. The visibility of MDTs at the local level increased, as they are recognized by the local population as a real support in cases of VAWC and are equipped for a more rapid and better documented, and coordinated response<sup>3</sup>.

While the Ungheni district was selected for the piloting of the specialised service for women victims of sexual violence, the co-creation of the prospective functional model for a coordinated response to cases of sexual violence was done for both Cahul and Ungheni districts, with the participation of law enforcement representatives and medical staff, psychologists, and social assistants from both regions. The functional model for a coordinated response to cases of sexual violence was designed based on the SART model, on the best EUMS practices, and tailored to the local context.

The specialised service for victims of sexual violence needs to be established in line with the provisions of Istanbul Convention, ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on October 14, 2021 and best EUMS practices. The successful implementation of the mentioned service will serve as a prototype model which can be replicated and upscaled in other districts as well as will build synergies with the Family Justice Center service creation and national level.

### 2.3. Project beneficiaries and stakeholders

The primary project targets are the local public authorities (LPAs) from level I and II (elected and appointed), members of multidisciplinary teams responsible for preventing and combating domestic violence and violence against children, service

providers working with survivors of domestic violence and in child protection, assistance and counselling services for aggressors, schools, civil society organizations, mass media, children and young people, parents, as well as women and men living in these two districts.

### 2.4. Project management

#### Operational Management of the programme

The project was established as a project implemented by UN Women in partnership with UNICEF. The implementation is in line with the EU-UN financial Administrative Framework Agreement of 29 April 2003 and supplemented by the addendum of 26 February 2014. UN Women passed the pillar assessment, which confirmed that all assessed pillars (internal control, accounting, external audit, grants, procurement, and sub delegation) are positive, thereby confirming the European Commission can entrust budget implementation tasks to UN Women under the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM).

The joint implementation was established with UNICEF due to its mandate to safeguard children rights. Synergies with other partners was ensured through encouraging complementary joint coordinated activities, increasing outreach to targeted communities to increase their benefit from the range of services offered by the programme partners, in addition to cross programme learning and improved know-how as per description provided in the Programme Approaches section of this programme document.

#### National Steering Committee, Project Team

A management Committees (Project Steering Committee) was established to ensure coordination and follow-up (monitoring) of the project and a Project Team for the implementation of the project and contribution agreement provision.

The Project Steering Committee is composed of the Presidents of the two districts, the representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the head of Operations of EU Delegation, the heads of UN Women, UNICEF, and representative of relevant civil society organizations on a rotational basis.

2 "Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence" <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/essential-services-package-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3648>

3 Based on EVA project Mid-Term Review results

The Project Steering Committee's terms of reference focuses on provision of strategic direction and oversight to the project, facilitating collaboration between participating organizations for the implementation of the project, review and approval of the joint project document and annual workplans and resource allocations, review of implementation progress and challenges, review of annual and evaluation reports; review of audit reports (published in accordance with each participating organization's disclosure policy).

The Project Steering Committee meet twice a year and as needed and invited key project stakeholders to participate in meetings, when needed. UN Women lead the coordination of the Project Steering Committee. Formal minutes were prepared and adopted for each meeting of the Project Steering Committee, detailing any proposals made and decisions taken. The Project Manager and the project team provided necessary support to the Steering Committee.

Project operations are implemented through a Project Team that ensure effective and efficient implementation of the Project and is staffed through open competitions and selected by a recruitment panel comprising of UN Women staff with the participation of EUD as observer. Core staff assigned to the Project are hired by UN Women on contracts administered through UNDP payroll.

### 3. EVALUATION SCOPE PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND INTENDED USE

#### 3.1 Evaluation scope

The final evaluation of the Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts will be conducted at the end of project implementation and will cover the duration of the project January 2020 - December 2022. The evaluation will be conducted between October 2022 – March 2023.

The evaluation includes a data collection mission to Chisinau and to selected project sites in the district of Cahul and Ungheni, in case the epidemiological situation in the country will allow the field visits.

The evaluation shall cover and analyse all aspects of the implementation of the project.

#### 3.2. Evaluation purpose

A final evaluation of the project “*Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts*” will be conducted with a special focus on lessons learnt both from programmatic and coordination perspectives. The main purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the programmatic progress and performance of the above-described intervention from the point of view of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency and sustainability. The evaluation will not be able to fully assess the project performance, as some activities are still ongoing by the end of the year; however, it will address the questions with the results and evidence that is available to date.

The findings of the evaluation will contribute to effective programming, refining the approaches of UN Women and UNICEF to gender mainstreaming in local policymaking and decision making and greater access to effective survivor-focused multi-disciplinary services and violence prevention. It is also expected that the evaluation represents a key input to knowledge management on joint programming to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. The findings of the evaluation will moreover be used to engage policy makers and other stakeholders at local, national and regional levels in evidence-based dialogues and to advocate for gender-responsive strategies to promote inclusive local and national economic development with a particular focus on rural women as well as to combat domestic violence affecting women and children.

#### 3.3. Evaluation objectives

**The objectives of this evaluation include to:**

- Analyse the relevance and coherence of the programme objectives, strategy and approach at the local and national levels for the gender equality mainstreaming in local public policies and combating domestic violence affecting women and children.
- Assess effectiveness and a potential measurable impact of the project intervention on the target group across all communities under the project interventions.
- Assess organizational efficiency and coordination mechanisms in progressing towards the achievement of the project results, including

the achievement of gender equality mainstreaming and combatting domestic violence affecting women and children.

- Assess the sustainability of the results and the intervention in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the target group.
- Analyse how human rights-based approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the programme implementation.
- Assess how the intervention and its results relate and contribute to the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals.
- Identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories and challenges within the project, to inform future work of UN Women and UNICEF in the frameworks of gender equality and women's empowerment through implementation of gender mainstreaming and combating domestic violence against women and children.
- Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices identified during the project implementation.
- Provide actionable recommendations with respect to UN Women's and UNICEF work on gender mainstreaming and combating domestic violence against women and children.

### 3.4. Evaluation users and intended use

Targeted users of the evaluation are the personnel of the UN Women, UNICEF, the responsible parties, and the government counterparts at local and national levels, CSOs, and other UN agencies, EU, donor community and development partners present in Moldova, and the programme beneficiaries.

The evaluation should also provide specific recommendations as to the priority areas that should be considered in next Phase of the similar Projects, including interventions that require continued support, successful interventions for expansion, and recommendations on prioritizing interventions to maximize impact. It should also define recommendations to improve project management and maximize ownership by national partners.

## 4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND QUESTIONS

### 4.1 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation will be a transparent and participatory process involving relevant UN Women, UNICEF staff, other stakeholders and partners in Moldova. The evaluation will be based on gender and human rights principles and adhere to the UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct and UN Women Evaluation Policy and guidelines<sup>4</sup>.

The evaluation is defined as a final project evaluation and both a summative approach focusing on assessing the achievement of the project's results at output and outcome levels, as well as a formative, forward-looking approach capturing the lessons learned during the implementation. The evaluation methodology will furthermore follow a ToC approach and employ mixed methods including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches to account for complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate. Methods may include but are not limited to:

- Desk review of relevant documents such as project documents, progress reports, financial records, meeting minutes and monitoring reports, and secondary data or studies relating to the country context and situation.
- Online consultations and discussions with the senior management, programme and project management staff of UN Women and UNICEF and responsible partners.
- Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, surveys with direct and indirect beneficiaries, implementing partners, donor and other stakeholders.
- Field visits to and observation at selected project sites (if the epidemiological situation will be favourable)

Data from different research sources will be triangulated to increase its validity. The evaluation will also be informed by the Country Portfolio Evaluation of the UN Women Moldova Country Office Strategic Note 2018-2022, recently commissioned by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service. The pro-

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4 Please see section XI References below

posed approach and methodology will be considered as flexible guidelines rather than final requirements, and the evaluators will have an opportunity to make their inputs and propose changes in the evaluation design. The methodology and approach should, however, incorporate human rights and gender equality perspectives. It is expected that the Evaluation Team will further refine the approach and methodology and submit a detailed description in the inception report.

Comments provided by the evaluation reference and management groups will be aimed at methodological rigor, factual errors, errors of interpretation, or omission of information and must be considered by the evaluators to ensure a high-quality product. The final evaluation report should reflect the evaluator's consideration of the comments and acknowledge any substantive disagreements.

#### 4.2. Evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions

The evaluation will include the OCD DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Preliminary evaluation questions under each of criterion include the following:

##### Relevance

- To what extent was the design of the intervention and its results relevant to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries? Was the choice of interventions relevant to the situation of the target group?
- To what extent is the intervention consistent with the national development strategies in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment, combating violence against women and children, and reflect national priorities and commitments on GEWE, and the UNPFSD?
- To what extent key national partners were involved in programme's conceptualization and design process?
- To what extent has gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the programme design and implementation?
- To what extent has the project been catalytic in addressing some of the root causes of inequalities related to women's discrimination?

- To what extent is the intervention aligned with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of gender mainstreaming and combating domestic and gender-based violence?
- To what extent did the project's design process include a collaborative process, shared vision for delivering results, strategies for joint delivery and sharing of risks among implementing UN entities?

##### Coherence

- To what extent the project adheres to corporate strategic priorities of UN Women and UNICEF?
- Is the project achieving synergies between the larger UN Women's and UNICEF's portfolios and the work of the UN Country Team in the Republic of Moldova?
- Is the project achieving synergies between UN Women, UNICEF and local government counterparts?
- Is the project achieving synergies between UN Women, UNICEF and CSOs in the different locations?
- To what extent UN Women and UNICEF possess a comparative advantage in the project's areas of work in comparison with other UN entities and relevant stakeholders?

##### Effectiveness

- To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on both outcome and output levels?
- What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results? Has project achieved any unforeseen results, either positive or negative? For whom? What are the good practices and the obstacles or shortcomings encountered? How were they overcome?
- How effective have the selected programme strategies and approaches been in achieving programme results?
- How well did the intervention succeed in involving and building the capacities of rights-holders, duty-bearers, as well as the project partners?
- To what extent are the programme approaches and strategies are innovative for achieving gender

mainstreaming and combating violence against women and children? What -if any- types of innovative good practices have been introduced in the programme for the achievement of GEWE results?

- What contribution are participating UN agencies (UN Women, UNICEF) making to implementing global norms and standards for gender equality mainstreaming and combating domestic violence against women and children?
- To what extent the joint programme modality (with recipient Agency – UNICEF) led to improved communication, coordination and information exchange within the United Nations family in Moldova?

### Efficiency

- Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated and split between the participating agencies strategically to achieve the project outcomes?
- How has the joint nature of the project affected efficiency of delivery, including reduced duplication and increased cost-sharing, reduced/transferred burdens, and transaction costs? What factors have influenced this?
- Has project led to improved efficiency in the management of resources and what has been the relationship between increased/decreased efficiency and (potential) results on GEEW? Does the established levels or mechanism of “jointness” lead to better GEEW results?
- Has there been effective leadership and management of the project including the structuring of management and administration roles to maximize results? Where does accountability lie?
- Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent are the programme’s individual entity and joint monitoring mechanisms in place effective for measuring and informing management of project performance and progress towards targets? To what extent was the monitoring data objectively used for management action and decision making?

### Sustainability

- What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?
- To what extent the intervention succeeded in building individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices to local development and local governance?
- How effectively has the project generated national ownership of the results achieved, the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of national capacities to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits?
- What voice and influence do key national partners including women’s movement etc. have within the programme’s decision-making structure and hierarchy?
- What steps were taken to develop and/or reinforce the operating capacities of national partners during the implementation of the programme?
- What local accountability and oversight systems have been established?
- To what extent has the project been able to promote replication and/or up-scaling of successful practices?
- To what extent has the exit strategy been well planned and successfully implemented?

Considering the mandates to incorporate human rights and gender equality in all UN work and the UN Women Evaluation Policy, which promotes the integration of women’s rights and gender equality principles into evaluation, these dimensions will require special attention for this evaluation and will be considered under each evaluation criterion.

It is expected that the evaluation team will develop an evaluation matrix, which will relate to the above questions (and refine them as needed), the areas they refer to, the criteria for evaluating them, the indicators, and the means for verification as a tool for the evaluation. Final evaluation matrix will be approved in the evaluation inception report.

## 5. EVALUATION PROCESS AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

### 5.1. Evaluation process

The evaluation process has five phases:

- Preparation: gathering and analysing programme data, conceptualizing the evaluation approach, internal consultations on the approach, preparing the TOR, establishment of the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), stakeholders mapping and selection of evaluation team.
- Inception: consultations between the evaluation team and the EMG, programme portfolio review, finalization of stakeholder mapping, inception meetings with the ERG, review of the result logics, analysis of information relevant to the initiative, finalization of evaluation methodology and preparation and validation of inception report.
- Data collection and analysis: in depth desk research, in-depth review of the project documents and monitoring frameworks, in online interviews as necessary, staff and partner survey/s, and field visits.
- Analysis and synthesis stage: analysis of data and interpretation of findings and drafting and validation of an evaluation report and other communication products.
- Dissemination and follow-up: once the evaluation is completed UN Women is responsible for the development of a Management Response, publishing of the evaluation report, uploading the published report on the GATE website, and the dissemination of evaluation findings.

The UN Women CO is entirely responsible for phases 1 and 5 outlined above which will not foresee the involvement of the independent evaluation team.

### 5.2. Management structure for the joint evaluation

An evaluation management group comprising of senior management of the participating UN agencies (UN Women and UNICEF) and their delegated programme staff will be established to oversee the evaluation process, make key decisions, quality assure and jointly approve the different deliverables.

The UN Women Moldova Programme Specialist, who was providing overall programmatic support for the EVA project, but was not involved in direct management of the programme, will serve as the evaluation task manager responsible for the day-to-day management of the evaluation and ensures that the evaluation is conducted in accordance with the Evaluation Policy of the UN Women, United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations system and other key guidance documents.

The establishment of an external evaluation reference group will facilitate participation of the key stakeholders in the evaluation process and will help to ensure that the evaluation approach is robust and relevant to staff and stakeholders. Furthermore, it will make certain that factual errors or errors of omission or interpretation are identified in evaluation products. The reference group will provide input and relevant information at key stages of the evaluation: terms of reference, inception report, draft and final reports and dissemination of the results. The composition of the evaluation reference group will be defined by the evaluation management group and external stakeholders will be appointed based on their involvement in the implementation of the project.

## 6. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION AND REQUIREMENTS

An evaluation team consisting of an international consultant as a Team Leader and a national consultant as a Team Member supporting in all substantive aspects of the evaluation. Both have some experience of each of the following: conducting evaluations, gender equality, women's empowerment and desirable child protection. The international consultant as team leader is responsible for coordination during all phases of the evaluation process, ensuring the quality of outputs and application of methodology as well as timely delivery of all evaluation products in close collaboration with the evaluation task manager and the evaluation management group. The national consultant will provide support to the international consultant in all the aspects of

conducting the evaluation, data collection including translation and interpretation where necessary.

In further detail, the duties and responsibilities of the international consultant are as follows:

- Leading the inception phase and developing an inception report outlining design, approach and methodology of the evaluation and an indicative workplan of the evaluation team within the framework of this ToR.
- Directing and supervising the national consultant in carrying out collection, research and analysis of relevant documentation and other data, and reporting.
- Overseeing and assuring quality of data collection and leading the analysis of the evaluation evidence.
- Preparing for meetings with the evaluation management group, evaluation reference group and other stakeholders to review findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- Leading the preparation of the evaluation communication products.

### 6.1. Required skills and expertise of the International Consultant

#### Competencies

- Sensitivity and adaptability to culture, gender, religion, nationality and age.
- Strong analytical, writing and reporting abilities.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, ability to lead a team and negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders.
- Commitment to quality products and deadlines.
- Qualifications and experience

#### Education:

- At least a master's degree in economics, social sciences, international relations, gender studies or a related area.

#### Experience:

- At least 5 experience conducting evaluations of strategies, policies and/or development programmes and projects.
- At least 2 years of proven experience of designing

and leading or participating in gender-responsive and human rights-based evaluations utilizing participatory approaches and methodologies.

- Ability to produce well-written analytical and evaluation reports (provide links to at least 3 reports).
- Previous experience working in Europe and Central Asia and/or in Moldova.
- Experience with the United Nations or other international organizations.
- Proven experience of evaluation of EU funded project is an asset.

#### Language requirements:

- Language proficiency in both written and spoken English. Knowledge of Russian will be an asset.

Consultant should have proven commitment to the core values of the United Nations, in particular respecting differences of culture, gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, language, age, HIV status, disability, and sexual orientation, or other.

## 7. EVALUATION TIMEFRAME AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS

### 7.1 Expected deliverables

The evaluation team is expected to deliver:

- **An inception report:** The evaluation team will present a refined scope, a detailed outline of the evaluation design and methodology, evaluation questions, and criteria for the approach for in-depth desk review and field work to be conducted in the data collection phase. The report will include an evaluation matrix and detailed work plan. A first draft report will be shared with the evaluation management group and, based upon the comments received the evaluation team will revise the draft. The revised draft will be shared with the evaluation reference group for feedback. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the final inception report.
- **Presentation of preliminary findings:** A Power-Point presentation detailing the emerging findings of the evaluation will be shared with the

evaluation management group for feedback. The revised presentation will be delivered to the reference group for comment and validation. The evaluation team will incorporate the feedback received into the draft report.

- **A draft evaluation report:** A first draft report will be shared with the evaluation management group for initial feedback. The second draft report will incorporate evaluation management group feedback and will be shared with the evaluation reference group for identification of factual errors, errors of omission and/or misinterpretation of information. The third draft report will incorporate this feedback and then be shared with the reference group for final validation. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the revised drafts.
- **The final evaluation report:** The final report will include a concise Executive Summary and annexes detailing the methodological approach

and any analytical products developed during the course of the evaluation. The structure of the report will be defined in the inception report.

- **Evaluation communication products:** Online presentation of the preliminary findings at the closing event of the project in 2023 (date TBD), a PowerPoint/Prezi presentation of the final key evaluation findings and recommendations, and a 2-pager/infographics on the final key findings, lessons learned and recommendations in a format preferably adjustable for individual project sites both in English and Russian.

Payment will be issued in three instalments upon the satisfactory submission of the deliverables cleared by the evaluation task manager to certify that the services have been satisfactorily performed: 15% upon the signing of the contract, 20% upon approval of evaluation inception report, 25% upon the submission of the draft report and 40% upon the validation of the final evaluation report and communication products.

## 7.2. Evaluation time frame

The joint evaluation will be conducted between end November 2022 and March 2023. The preliminary calendar for the process is detailed in the table below.

Task	Timeframe	Nr. of days
Inception phase January 2022		
Initial desk review of background documentation	16 January 2023	2
Inception meeting with EMG and ERG	16 January 2023	1
Inception report (including two rounds of revision)	31 January 2023	5
Data collection phase January 2023 – February 2023		
Documents review, (online) interviews	31 January 2023	4
Visit to project sites	15 February 2023	7
Analysis and reporting phase		
Drafting and presentation of preliminary findings (including one round of revision)	28 February 2023	3
Preparation and submission of report (including two rounds of Revision)	20 March 2023	10
Review and submission of final report and communication products (PPT and a brief)	10 May 2023	4
Total		36



# ANNEX 8.6 VISUAL ADDS FROM THE FIELD MISSION CONSULTATIONS



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