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FINAL REPORT

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE
**“STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITIES AND
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS TO ADVANCE
WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY IN
TÜRKİYE - STRONG CIVIC SPACE FOR GENDER
EQUALITY” PROJECT OF UN WOMEN TÜRKİYE
(2021-2024)**

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ACRONYMS

AB	Advisory Board
ASAM	Association for Social Development and Aid Mobilization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEiD	Association for Monitoring Gender Equality
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DISK-AR	Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey Research Center
DOA	Description of Action
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ENKAD	Association of Women with Disabilities
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
HLFS	Household Labor Force Survey
ILO	International Labor Organization
KEDV	Foundation for the Support of Women's Work
KII	Key Informant Interviews
EU	European Union
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, transgender/gender Diverse, Queer, Intersex and Other
NEET	Neither in Education, Employment, or Training

OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PA	Partnership Agreement
SC	Steering Committee
SGD	Sustainable Development Goals
SPoD	Social Policies, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association
STGM	Civil Society Development Center
TAPV	Turkish Family Health and Planning Foundation
TKDF	Federation of Women's Associations of Türkiye
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TÜİK	Turkish Statistical Institute
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
VAW	Violence against Women
VAWG	Violence against Women and Girls
WWHR	Women for Women's Human Rights

Executive Summary

Project Context and Description

The "Strengthening Civil Society Capacities and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to Advance Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Türkiye / Strong Civic Space for Gender Equality" project was implemented from 2021 to 2024 during a period of significant challenges in Türkiye. These included the COVID-19 pandemic, economic volatility, political developments affecting civic space, and the devastating 2023 earthquake. The project aimed to strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations (CSO) to advocate women's rights and gender equality through small grants, training programs, network building, and policy dialogues.

Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope

This final evaluation assessed the project's overall performance across the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, with an additional focus on human rights, gender equality, and disability inclusion as required by Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS) criteria. The evaluation sought to ensure accountability to stakeholders, generate evidence-based insights for learning, and provide recommendations to enhance strategies supporting women's rights and gender equality in Türkiye.

The evaluation covered the entire project implementation period (2021-2024) and geographical scope across 20 cities in Türkiye, examining all project components and implementation modalities including small grants to CSOs, partnership agreements with organizations, capacity development programs, research activities on women in rural areas and women with disabilities, data literacy training initiatives, support for CSO participation in international forums, and multi-stakeholder dialogue facilitation.

This evaluation is intended for multiple stakeholders: UN Women Country and Regional Offices to refine programming approaches; the European Commission to inform future funding decisions; civil society organizations to build on successful approaches; government stakeholders to enhance collaboration with civil society; and the broader donor community to guide resource allocation for gender equality work in challenging contexts.

Methodology

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. Methods included 33 Key Informant Interviews (31 women, two men) with partner CSOs, small grantees, trainers, mentors, trainees, UN Women and EU staff, and policy stakeholders; two online surveys - one with 69.4% organizational response rate, with 92% women respondents and another with 47.4% response rate, all women, who received network support for international forum participation; and four in-depth case studies of diverse CSOs (SPoD, Katre Women's Association, Fisherwomen's Association, and Changing Steps Association). The evaluation methodology was designed to be gender-responsive while maintaining a human-rights-based approach, with the project's Theory of Change serving as the primary framework for assessment.

Relevance

The evaluation finds that the "Strong Civic Space for Gender Equality" project demonstrated high relevance and strategic importance in advancing women's rights and gender equality in Türkiye. The project's design and implementation effectively addressed the needs and priorities of diverse stakeholders, particularly CSOs and women's rights advocates operating in an increasingly challenging environment.

The project maintained strong alignment with national development priorities while adapting to significant contextual changes, including Türkiye's economic crisis, the 2023 earthquake, and evolving political dynamics affecting civic space. Its focus on strengthening CSO capacities in critical areas - including access to justice, combating violence against women, women's economic empowerment, and gender-responsive climate action - proved particularly relevant given the country's position among OECD countries with the highest levels of gender inequality.

UN Women demonstrated unique advantages in implementing this project, leveraging its neutral positioning and feminist ethics to facilitate meaningful engagement even in politically sensitive contexts. The project's participatory approach and emphasis on local ownership fostered trust and collaboration among stakeholders, while its adaptability enabled rapid responses to emerging challenges, particularly evident in the post-earthquake response.

The intervention's relevance was further enhanced by its comprehensive support mechanisms, including small grants, capacity building, and networking opportunities, which were tailored to meet the diverse needs of both established partner CSOs and grassroots organizations. This multifaceted approach proved particularly valuable in supporting women's rights organizations amid shrinking civic space and economic challenges.

The project's emphasis on evidence-based advocacy and data generation addressed critical gaps in gender-sensitive research and monitoring, while its focus on multi-stakeholder partnerships strengthened the collective capacity of civil society to advance gender equality objectives. This strategic alignment with both immediate operational needs and longer-term advocacy goals ensured the project's sustained relevance throughout its implementation period.

Coherence

The project demonstrated strong coherence with UN Women's Strategic Plan and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) Türkiye (2021-2025), while effectively aligning with international frameworks for gender equality. This alignment was particularly evident in the project's comprehensive approach to civil society strengthening and its emphasis on evidence-based advocacy for gender equality.

The evaluation found effective collaboration among key stakeholders, with the project fostering significant synergies through innovative approaches to coordination. The Policy Dialogue Series, which comprised seven sessions and engaged a total of 468 participants from diverse

sectors, exemplified successful multi-stakeholder engagement. The project's activities complemented existing gender equality initiatives while avoiding duplication, creating value through targeted interventions that filled critical gaps in civil society support.

UN Women's coordination efforts proved particularly effective in facilitating collaboration between civil society organizations and government stakeholders, despite the challenging political context. The project, maintained coherence with broader development objectives through strategic partnerships and knowledge-sharing platforms, leveraging these relationships to enhance the collective outcome of gender equality initiatives.

The project's coherence was further strengthened by its integration of disaster risk reduction and gender-responsive crisis management, which proved crucial during the 2023 earthquake response. This adaptive approach demonstrated how the project successfully maintained programmatic coherence while responding to emerging needs and challenges in the implementation context.

Through its design and implementation, the project established clear linkages between different intervention levels - from grassroots capacity building to policy advocacy - ensuring a cohesive approach to advancing gender equality objectives. This interconnected strategy enhanced the overall effectiveness of the project's contributions to strengthening civil society in Türkiye.

Effectiveness

The project demonstrated significant effectiveness in delivering its planned outputs and making substantial contributions to strengthening civil society capacities for gender equality in Türkiye. The evaluation reveals that most targets were met or exceeded, with notable achievements across multiple components of the intervention.

One of the project's key strengths lies in its comprehensive capacity-building strategy. The Small Grants Program exceeded expectations by providing 40 small grants to 36 grassroots CSOs, surpassing the target of 26. Activities promoting global exchanges and partnerships nearly doubled their targets, with international knowledge exchanges reaching 19 against a target of 10, while support to new or existing networks and alliances exceeded the target of five by reaching seven.

The project effectively enhanced CSOs' capacities across multiple domains. Qualitative findings revealed significant improvements in advocacy skills (50% of respondents), CSO governance (33.33%), and overall institutional capacity (25%). Partner organizations reported increased ability to engage in evidence-based advocacy, while small grantees demonstrated improved technical and administrative capabilities.

Knowledge generation and data literacy components showed particular success, with knowledge on gender data among participants increasing by 61.6%, slightly surpassing the target of 60%. The project also effectively supported research initiatives, completing three comprehensive studies on women in rural areas, access to justice, and women with disabilities, contributing to overcoming gender-sensitive data gaps.

Despite significant external challenges, including economic instability, the 2023 earthquake, and a constraining political environment, the project demonstrated remarkable adaptability. UN Women's coordination and feminist ethics-based approach facilitated effective implementation even under difficult circumstances. The project's response, especially to the earthquake showcased its ability to adapt while maintaining focus on core objectives.

Unexpected positive outcomes included increased organizational visibility for CSOs, enhanced technical capacities beyond initial targets, and strengthened networks among civil society actors. The project's effectiveness in fostering solidarity and collaboration among CSOs emerged as a crucial achievement, particularly valuable given the challenging operational context in Türkiye.

Efficiency

The project demonstrated strong operational efficiency in its implementation, particularly through exceptional coordination with external partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. The project team operated with remarkable effectiveness, showing exemplary communication and support to CSOs and individual activists, while maintaining strategic focus despite challenging circumstances.

The allocation and use of resources proved highly effective, particularly in terms of financial and technical support. The project team demonstrated exceptional resource management while operating under challenging circumstances, including economic instability and unforeseen crises such as inflation and the earthquake. Financial resources were efficiently utilized to achieve planned outcomes, with a clear focus on maximizing effectiveness. Technical resources, such as training modules and mentorship programs, were effectively deployed, enabling significant capacity-building for CSOs and individual activists.

However, the evaluation identified challenges in human resource allocation, particularly affected by Türkiye's economic volatility. While the project's human resources were utilized effectively overall, inflationary pressures sometimes led to funding falling below minimum wage requirements for some CSO staff. The UN Women corporate requirements and procedures, while ensuring accountability, posed challenges for some CSOs in terms of financial reporting and documentation requirements.

The project team's coordination proved instrumental in mitigating challenges. Their ability to maintain consistent communication with all involved parties ensured that each stakeholder had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This level of coordination not only facilitated the timely completion of activities but also strengthened trust and collaboration among CSOs, trainees, and mentors, creating a more cohesive and supportive working environment.

The project's management structure and staff capacity proved to be vital assets in navigating challenges, with the team's adaptability and proactive approach ensuring outputs were delivered effectively, even under difficult circumstances. The coordination between project counterparts and UN Women was highlighted as a key factor in maintaining project momentum despite external pressures and internal bureaucratic procedures.

Sustainability

The evaluation reveals strong prospects for the sustainability of project outcomes, despite operating in Türkiye's challenging civic space. The project's effectiveness in generating country ownership, establishing stakeholder partnerships, and developing capacities for sustainability demonstrate promising progress, though some risks remain.

The findings indicate high levels of ownership among beneficiary organizations, with 97.2% of small grantees reporting that project activities contributed to embedding gender equality norms in their communities. The project's success in building institutional capacity is evidenced by significant improvements in advocacy skills (50% of respondents), CSO governance (33.33%), and overall organizational effectiveness (25% of respondents).

Stakeholders' capacities were significantly enhanced through the project's comprehensive approach to capacity development. CSOs demonstrated improved resilience and adaptability, particularly evident in their response to the 2023 earthquake and economic challenges. The project's emphasis on supporting and establishing networks and platforms has created sustainable frameworks for continued collaboration. Among the seven networks, the one led by the Turkish Family Health and Planning Foundation (TAPV) was developed from the ground up through UN Women support, while the other six were already established. However, certain challenges to sustainability persist. The volatile economic environment in Türkiye, characterized by high inflation and currency instability, poses risks to CSOs' financial sustainability. Limited public funding for civil society initiatives and shifts in the political landscape continue to create operational constraints for organizations working on gender equality.

The project's investment in knowledge generation and data literacy has created sustainable resources for future advocacy efforts. Partner organizations and small grantees report increased capacity for evidence-based advocacy, with improved abilities to generate and utilize gender-responsive data. This enhanced technical capacity contributes to the long-term sustainability of gender equality initiatives.

To enhance the sustainability of achieved results, continued attention is needed to address both internal and external challenges. This includes promoting broader sector reform, strengthening strategic guidance, and ensuring long-term financial resources for CSOs and government institutions. The formalization of participation mechanisms and establishment of sustainable funding sources remain crucial for maintaining the achieved results and advancing gender equality in Türkiye.

Conclusions

The project has made significant contributions to strengthening civil society capacities for gender equality in Türkiye, demonstrating remarkable adaptability and effectiveness despite a challenging operational context. Several key conclusions emerge from the evaluation:

The project exceeded most of its quantitative targets, supporting 36 grassroots organizations against a target of 26, while fostering substantial qualitative improvements in CSO capacities.

This success in expanding reach and effectiveness occurred despite significant external challenges, including economic volatility and natural disasters.

UN Women's approach, grounded in feminist ethics and participatory principles, proved particularly effective in building trust and fostering collaboration. The non-hierarchical partnership model facilitated genuine engagement with stakeholders, contributing to strong ownership of project outcomes among beneficiary organizations.

The project demonstrated exceptional responsiveness to emerging challenges, particularly evident in its rapid adaptation to the 2023 earthquake and ongoing economic crisis. This adaptability, combined with UN Women's strategic positioning and credibility, enabled continued support for vulnerable groups even during periods of crisis.

Capacity development achievements were notable across multiple levels - individual, institutional, and environmental. CSOs reported enhanced advocacy skills, improved governance practices, and strengthened technical competencies. The project's emphasis on evidence-based advocacy and data generation has created sustainable resources for future gender equality initiatives.

However, the evaluation also identified areas requiring attention. These include inconsistencies in gender-disaggregated data collection, challenges in maintaining adequate human resource funding due to economic volatility, and the need for strengthened monitoring mechanisms to track long-term influence.

The project's success in fostering networks and coalitions among CSOs has created sustainable frameworks for continued collaboration, though the sustainability of these achievements requires ongoing support given Türkiye's challenging civic space environment.

Overall, the project has established a robust foundation for advancing gender equality through civil society strengthening, while offering valuable lessons for future interventions in similar contexts.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen the financial sustainability mechanisms for CSO support to address the challenges posed by economic volatility through contingency funding, flexible budget allocation systems, and specific provisions for maintaining adequate human resource funding amid inflationary pressures.
2. Enhance the capacity development framework to ensure sustained institutional growth among CSOs by developing standardized training modules, mentorship programs, and systematic monitoring of capacity development outcomes that address the needs of both first-time grantees and established organizations.
3. Strengthen data collection and monitoring mechanisms across all stakeholder groups by developing standardized tools, providing targeted training on gender-disaggregated data collection, and supporting CSOs in developing their own monitoring systems.
4. Enhance the integration of disability inclusion across all project components through specific guidelines, accessibility standards, partnerships with disability rights organizations, and disability-specific indicators in monitoring frameworks.

5. Develop a comprehensive crisis response framework that addresses political, economic, and environmental challenges, including rapid response protocols and flexible funding mechanisms that can be activated during emergencies.
6. Strengthen networking and collaboration mechanisms among CSOs through structured platforms for regular interaction, thematic working groups, and joint advocacy initiatives.
7. Enhance the financial and administrative training framework for CSOs through comprehensive onboarding programs, practical financial management training, and ongoing support mechanisms to help organizations navigate UN administrative procedures effectively.
8. Strengthen the sustainability framework for project outcomes by developing exit strategies from the project design phase, creating toolkits for organizational sustainability, and establishing mechanisms for continued networking post-project.

Introduction

Operating from April 2021 to September 2024 with a budget of €4,455,000, the Strengthening Civil Society Capacities and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to Advance Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Türkiye / Strong Civic Space for Gender Equality Project sought to enhance the capacities of CSOs, strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships, and promote systemic changes across policy, social norms, and institutional practices. The initiative addressed critical areas of gender inequality, including combating violence against women and girls (VAWG), women's economic empowerment, access to justice, and gender-responsive climate action. It also emphasized expanding advocacy networks and fostering innovative partnerships.

As Türkiye faces significant challenges related to entrenched gender inequalities and constrained civil society spaces, this Project emerges as a critical response to support women's rights organizations and other rights-based CSOs. By reinforcing these organizations' ability to advocate for gender equality, women's rights, policy change, and implement transformative interventions, the Project has sought to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

This evaluation, conducted as the Project concludes, serves multiple purposes. It provides an independent assessment of progress toward stated objectives, evaluates the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the interventions, and examines how the Project has integrated gender equality and human rights principles in its implementation. It also identifies lessons learned and provides actionable recommendations for future programming.

The report begins with a review of the Project's background and context, offering insights into the sociopolitical and cultural factors shaping its implementation. Subsequent chapters explore the evaluation's purpose, scope, methodology, and findings, structured around the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. The final sections synthesize conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations to guide future initiatives in advancing gender equality through strengthened civil society capacities in Türkiye.

1. Background and Evaluation Context

1.1 Gender Equality and Civil Society Landscape in Türkiye

Türkiye's pursuit of gender equality has been characterized by both progress and persistent challenges. Despite ratifying key international frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Türkiye ranks 35th out of 36 OECD countries in gender equality (Gender Equality Monitoring Report of Türkiye, 2021-2022). While Türkiye has implemented various legal reforms and policies to promote gender equality, including amendments to the Constitution, Civil Code, and Penal Code, gender disparities persist in various spheres of life (Müftüler-Baç, 2012). This positioning underscores the systemic barriers to achieving gender parity across critical domains including employment, education, political representation, and access to justice.

Women's Economic Empowerment and Labor Force Participation

Women's labor force participation in Türkiye remains at only 37.1% compared to 72.4% for men (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2024), with slightly varying figures from the Association for Monitoring Gender Equality (CEID) showing 35.8% versus 71.2% for men in 2023 (CEID, 2025). Broadly defined female unemployment reached 33.9% in May 2024, the highest among all unemployment categories (DISK-AR, 2024).

The economic crisis since 2018 has disproportionately impacted women, pushing more into informal employment—from 42.4% in 2018 to 47.8% in 2023, versus 33.2% for men (KEDV, 2024). Women-headed households face 23% higher risk of poverty (Aslan, 2020). Regional disparities are stark, with women's participation in earthquake-affected areas dropping to 26.5% in TR63 and 25.1% in TRC1 regions, though post-earthquake employment patterns vary by city (CEID, 2025).

Women's economic empowerment faces additional constraints: only 54% have access to formal financial institutions (Data2X, 2022; World Bank, 2022), while unpaid care work averages 4.3 hours daily compared to 0.9 hours for men, significantly limiting economic opportunities (UN Women Türkiye, 2023).

Political Representation and Civic Space

Women's political representation has grown to 20.1% of parliamentary seats following the May 2023 elections, up from 17.3% in 2018 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023), though local representation remains minimal with women holding only 3.5% of mayoral positions and 11.2% of municipal council seats after March 2024 elections (Ministry of Interior, 2024).

The political landscape reflects rising anti-gender tendencies, with official discourse shifting from "gender equality" to "gender justice" and "women's empowerment within the family," prioritizing women's roles as mothers over equal citizenship (Özkazanç, 2021; Unal, 2023). Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention in March 2021, executed through presidential decree without parliamentary debate, sparked widespread protests and marked a watershed moment in this anti-gender turn (Adal, 2019).

The government justified withdrawal by claiming the Convention was "hijacked by a group attempting to normalize homosexuality" and incompatible with "Turkish family values" (Aşık & Mocan, 2024), reflecting broader rejection of gender equality frameworks in favor of family-

centered approaches (Akkan, 2018; Ayhan, 2019). This decision has limited legal protections against gender-based violence while legitimizing anti-gender rhetoric.

This stance is evident in the Twelfth Development Plan (2024-2028), which frames demographic concerns as justification for limiting women's public participation, emphasizing "strengthening the family" against perceived threats from "global uniformization and de-gendering movements" (CEID, 2025, p. 35).

The legal framework has become increasingly restrictive through Law No. 7262 (December 2020), which expanded government oversight of CSOs and increased penalties for violations (CIVICUS, 2023), disproportionately impacting women's rights organizations that rely on international partnerships to maintain independence.

Key Contextual Factors Affecting Gender Equality

Violence Against Women and Girls

Gender-based violence remains critical in Türkiye, with 36% of ever-married women reporting partner violence according to the last comprehensive survey in 2014 (Hacettepe University). The decade-long absence of updated studies has created a data gap, prompting women's organizations to fill this void. The We Will Stop Femicide Platform recorded 276 femicides in 2023 and 164 in the first half of 2024 (We Will Stop Femicide Platform, 2024), while TKDF documented a 38% increase in violence hotline calls between 2022-2023 (TKDF, 2024).

Türkiye's 2021 withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention significantly weakened protection mechanisms, leaving Law No. 6284 as the only legal framework (CEID, 2024a). This law lacks the Convention's comprehensive approach and monitoring mechanisms, though women's organizations continue advocating for its proper implementation (CEID, 2024b).

Institutional support remains inadequate—women's shelters increased minimally from 145 to 149 between 2020-2023, with capacity rising from 2,743 to 2,805, despite legal obligations for larger municipalities. Türkiye still lacks a 24/7 national helpline for gender-based violence (CEID, 2025). Digital violence and violence against women in politics represent emerging concerns inadequately addressed in current policies, as documented by the Earth Development Cooperative and UN Women.

Access to Justice

Women's access to justice faces significant barriers, with a 35% decrease in women's legal aid applications between 2020-2023 despite rising needs (Justice and Development Foundation, 2023). The economic crisis has severely limited women's ability to afford legal services.

Geographic distance from courts, particularly in rural areas, creates additional barriers. For women facing domestic violence or seeking divorce, lack of economic independence often prevents pursuing legal remedies. Marginalized groups—including refugees, women with disabilities, and ethnic minorities—face compounded obstacles when accessing justice systems.

Post-earthquake conditions have exacerbated these challenges through damaged court facilities and documentation loss among survivors, particularly affecting women who may not have been named on property deeds or official documents.

Economic Crisis and Its Gendered Impact

Türkiye's economic crisis since 2018 has brought currency depreciation (over 80% against USD), high inflation peaking at 85.5% in October 2022 and remaining at 75.5% as of June 2024 (TÜİK, 2024), disproportionately affecting women, particularly in female-headed households.

The broadly defined unemployment rate has shifted significantly—by 2023, unemployed women (3.09 million) exceeded men (3.00 million), with women's broad unemployment rate at 30.6% compared to 18.3% for men (CEID, 2024). The crisis has pushed more women into informal employment, increasing from 42.4% in 2018 to 47.8% in 2023, versus 33.2% for men (KEDV, 2024).

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these inequalities, with women experiencing higher job losses in service sectors and informal economy. During pandemic restrictions, women's unpaid household work increased by 77%, adding 4.5 hours daily to domestic tasks and childcare, significantly limiting paid work participation (CEID, 2025). This economic vulnerability directly impacts women's autonomy and ability to leave abusive situations (Dedeoğlu, 2021).

Cultural Norms and Patriarchal Attitudes

Traditional gender roles create structural barriers to equality, with women bearing disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work. Turkish Statistical Institute data reveals household tasks, particularly childcare (94.4%), are overwhelmingly defined as women's responsibilities (CEID, 2024a). These cultural expectations directly limit women's public participation. Kandiyoti's (2016) "patriarchal bargain" concept—where women trade freedoms for protection within family structures—remains powerful despite modernization. This creates what Dedeoğlu (2012) terms a "double burden" for working women navigating professional and domestic responsibilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic intensified these patterns, with women's unpaid work increasing by 77%, adding 4.5 hours daily to domestic tasks (CEID, 2024a). As Kandiyoti (2020) observed, the pandemic "shattered the illusion that modern women live in," revealing persistent traditional expectations even in "modern" households. Similar dynamics followed the 2023 earthquakes, where gender-blind disaster responses reinforced traditional roles. Research in affected areas documented how temporary housing increased women's domestic labor while limiting employment access (Genç, 2023; CEID, 2024a).

These norms manifest in attitudes toward violence—benevolent sexism correlates with greater tolerance of intimate partner violence when women challenge traditional boundaries (Sakallı-Uğurlu & Glick, 2002), explaining persistent violence despite public condemnation (CEID, 2024b).

The neo-patriarchal turn in policymaking (Özkazanç, 2020) is reflected in frameworks like the Twelfth Development Plan, conceptualizing women primarily within familial roles rather than as equal citizens (CEID, 2024a), influencing service delivery including shelters that emphasize family reconciliation over women's safety.

Climate Change, Natural Disasters, and Gender-Responsive Action

Climate change disproportionately affects women in Türkiye, particularly in rural areas where livelihoods depend on agriculture. Extreme weather events, water scarcity, and decreased productivity have increased women's workload as primary providers of household water, food, and fuel (UNDP, n.d.). Despite this disproportionate impact, women represent only 23% of climate decision-making bodies, limiting gender-responsive approaches to adaptation (UNDP, n.d.).

The February 6, 2023 earthquakes (53,537 deaths, 107,213 injuries) magnified gender inequalities. Temporary housing disrupted routines, increasing women's domestic labor while limiting paid employment. Collective shelters lacked adequate lighting, privacy, and gender-sensitive design, creating safety concerns and vulnerability to harassment (Paksoy et al., 2024).

UN Women's April 2023 brief documented specific challenges for women and girls in accessing services, relief items, and healthcare, with particular difficulties for pregnant women, elderly women living alone, and those with chronic conditions (UN Women, 2023).

Intersectional Inequalities

Intersectional discrimination disproportionately affects minority women, refugees, and other vulnerable groups, with natural disasters further amplifying these inequalities:

- **Ethnic and religious minorities:** Kurdish women face multiple forms of discrimination based on both gender and ethnicity, including barriers to education in their native language and higher rates of poverty. In earthquake-affected regions, Kurdish women face additional language barriers in accessing aid and services.
- **Women with disabilities:** Only 14.2% participate in the labor force compared to 37.1% of women without disabilities (TÜİK, 2024). Women with disabilities report significantly higher rates of exclusion from humanitarian assistance programs following the earthquakes.
- **Refugee women:** Of approximately 1.8 million Syrian women in Türkiye, only 15% are estimated to be employed in the formal sector, with many working in precarious, low-paid, and often exploitative conditions in the informal economy (UN Women & ASAM, 2023).
- **LGBTIQ+ individuals:** Face severe discrimination in employment, housing, and access to services, with transgender women particularly vulnerable to violence and social exclusion.

The intersection of the ongoing economic crisis, pre-existing gender inequalities, and earthquake impacts has created layered vulnerabilities that require targeted and gender-responsive recovery approaches. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has highlighted the heightened vulnerability of female-headed households in the aftermath of the February 6th earthquake, noting their increased challenges in accessing housing assistance and livelihood recovery programs. (UNFPA, 2024).

The Role of Civil Society in Advancing Gender Equality

CSOs have played a significant and multifaceted role in promoting gender equality in Türkiye, with a rich and complex history characterized by diverse forms of activism responding to significant political and social changes. The women's movement in Türkiye, far from being

monolithic, encompasses organizations with varying ideological positions, strategies, and priorities, yet many have contributed to advocating for women's rights, providing services, and influencing policy changes, sometimes through collaboration and sometimes through parallel efforts (Keysan, 2019).

Despite a restrictive environment, women's organizations continue to make significant contributions in key areas:

- **Data collection and monitoring:** In the absence of official statistics on gender-based violence, organizations like the We Will Stop Femicide Platform and the Federation of Women's Associations of Türkiye (TKDF) have taken on the critical role of documenting femicides and violence against women. CEID reports that TKDF documented a 38% increase in calls to their violence hotline between 2022 and 2023.
- **Legal advocacy:** CSOs have played a crucial role in defending Law No. 6284 on Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women following Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention. According to CEID, women's organizations consistently advocate for proper implementation of the law and against any attempts to weaken it, as it remains the only existing legal framework addressing VAW.
- **Service provision:** Women's organizations continue to provide critical services for survivors of violence, including legal aid, counseling, and in some cases shelter. These services have become even more important in earthquake-affected regions, where CEID's report documents how women's organizations stepped in to address gender-specific needs that were overlooked in official disaster response efforts.
- **Coalition-building:** The 2022 CEDAW Shadow Report was prepared by a coalition of 54 women's and LGBTIQ+ organizations, reflecting the movement's ability to collaborate effectively despite ideological differences (CEDAW Shadow Report Coalition, 2022).

CSOs face mounting challenges:

- **Legal restrictions:** Law No. 7262 on Preventing Financing of Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, enacted in December 2020, has expanded government oversight of civil society organizations, allowing authorities to remove NGO executives and replace them with trustees, while increasing administrative fines and prison sentences for violations (CIVICUS, 2023).
- **Restricted public demonstrations:** Since 2016, International Women's Day marches on March 8 have faced increasing restrictions or outright bans in major cities. In March 2024, police intervention in several cities prevented women from exercising their right to peaceful assembly, with many participants detained (Gazete Duvar, 2024; The New Arab, 2024).
- **Funding challenges:** Restrictions on foreign funding and international partnerships have created significant operational challenges for women's organizations that rely on such support (CIVICUS, 2023).
- **Ideological pressure:** The policy documents are increasingly framing gender issues within a family-centered approach rather than a rights-based perspective focused on gender equality. This shift is evident in key documents like the Twelfth Development

Plan (2024-2028), which emphasizes "strengthening the family" and demographic concerns rather than gender equality.

Adaptation Strategies

Despite these challenges, women's organizations continue to adapt and find ways to advance gender equality:

- **Digital advocacy:** Organizations are increasingly utilizing digital platforms to maintain advocacy efforts when physical gatherings are restricted.
- **Local networking:** When national-level advocacy faces obstacles, many organizations have shifted focus to building stronger networks at the local level.
- **Documentation and reporting:** Systematic documentation of rights violations and gender-based violence has become a key strategy to maintain accountability in the absence of official data collection.
- **International engagement:** While facing domestic constraints, many organizations maintain connections with international networks and mechanisms to leverage external pressure for gender equality.

This complex gender equality landscape forms the critical backdrop for evaluating the "Strong Civic Space for Gender Equality" Project. The project operates amid shrinking civic space, climate vulnerabilities intersecting with gender inequalities, and economic precarity disproportionately affecting women. Implementation required navigating these challenges while identifying strategic entry points. This evaluation therefore approaches the project's design, implementation, and results with sensitivity to these contextual factors. It examines how effectively the project navigated constraints while capitalizing on enabling factors to strengthen civil society capacities for gender equality work.

1.2 The Project: Strengthening Civil Society Capacities and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to Advance Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Türkiye

The "Strong Civic Space for Gender Equality" project was implemented from April 2021 to September 2024 by UN Women Türkiye, with funding from the European Commission (EC). With a total budget of €4,455,000, the project aimed to address persistent gender inequalities in Türkiye by empowering CSOs to act as agents of transformative change and fostering multi-stakeholder collaborations.

1.2.1 Project Objectives

The project was designed with three specific objectives:

- To strengthen the institutional capacities of women-led and rights-based CSOs, enabling them to advocate effectively for gender equality and women's rights.
- To enhance the ability of CSOs to generate and utilize gender-sensitive data and research for evidence-based advocacy.
- To promote multi-stakeholder partnerships that advance systemic progress toward gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, particularly those from marginalized groups.

The project built on UN Women's previous initiatives in Türkiye, leveraging existing partnerships and lessons learned. It addressed key thematic areas, including combating VAWG, women's economic empowerment, access to justice, and gender-responsive climate action. It also emphasized the importance of intersectionality, targeting refugee women, women with disabilities, and rural populations to ensure inclusivity.

1.2.2 Project Strategies and Implementation Mechanisms

The project utilized various overarching strategies to achieve its objectives. To clearly differentiate, "strategies" represent the project's overarching conceptual approaches, whereas "implementation mechanisms" refer explicitly to the concrete activities and modalities operationalized by the project.

Strategies

Capacity Building:

- Delivered structured training programs and mentorship initiatives to strengthen CSO capacities in advocacy, networking, organizational development, gender-responsive data collection and analysis, and gender-responsive climate action.
- Provided small grants exclusively to build institutional capacities of grassroots and smaller CSOs, specifically targeting (1) introduction and improvement of organizational systems, tools, and processes; (2) training of workforce in technical and managerial skills; and (3) procurement of essential organizational equipment (e.g., laptops, computers, scanners, copiers, printers).
- Signed Partnership Agreements (PAs) with established CSOs, enabling them to implement substantial projects addressing persistent gender inequalities in areas such as elimination of violence against women, women's economic empowerment, access to justice, and gender-responsive climate action.

Knowledge Generation and Advocacy:

- Supported the generation and dissemination of gender-sensitive research and data, particularly targeting rural women, women with disabilities, and access to justice, to inform evidence-based policymaking and advocacy efforts.
- Facilitated advocacy efforts grounded in research findings to influence national and local policies and practices related to gender equality.

Multi-Stakeholder Engagement:

- Conducted national and local-level policy dialogues involving government stakeholders, civil society organizations, and international organizations to enhance cooperation and integrate gender equality into policy frameworks and practices.
- Organized targeted meetings and dialogue series rather than permanent platforms to support multi-stakeholder interaction and policy integration on gender equality.

1.2.3 Implementation Structure and Geographic Coverage

The project was implemented nationally and in a decentralized manner across 20 cities in Türkiye. It integrated national-level interventions with local initiatives, focusing specifically on regional disparities and local gender equality priorities.

Implementation Mechanisms:

- **Small Grants Program:** Institutional capacity-building support provided to grassroots and smaller CSOs across various regions.
- **Partnership Agreements:** Facilitating established CSOs to implement targeted interventions addressing key gender equality issues.
- **Capacity Building Programs:** Structured training and mentorship, specifically the Data Literacy and Gender Responsive Climate Action Programs, enhancing CSO capabilities in gender-sensitive programming.
- **Research Initiatives:** Producing focused research on rural women, women with disabilities, and women's access to justice.
- **Policy Dialogue:** Organizing structured interactions between civil society organizations and governmental stakeholders at national and local levels.
- **International Engagement:** Supporting CSOs and individual activists in participating in global gender equality forums, fostering international collaboration and knowledge exchange.

National-Level Activities:

- Partnership Agreements with well-established CSOs focusing on substantial interventions such as combating violence against women, women's access to justice, gender-responsive climate action, and women's economic empowerment.¹
- Conducting comprehensive national research studies, such as "Research on the Status, Needs, and Priorities of Rural Women in Türkiye" and "Research on the Status and Needs of Women with Disabilities," in collaboration with government entities such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK).²
- Organization of national-level policy dialogues, such as the "Policy Dialogue Series on Care Work and Care Economy," bringing together diverse stakeholders including government officials, academia and civil society representatives.³
- Implementation of modular, nationwide training programs such as the "Gender Data and Statistics Capacity Development Programme" and the "Gender Responsive Climate Change Action and Disaster Risk Reduction Programme".⁴

Decentralized/Local-Level Activities:

¹ First Progress Report, p. 4; Second Progress Report, p. 4.

² Second Progress Report, p. 4.

³ Second Progress Report, p. 5.

⁴ Second Progress Report, p. 4-5.

- Provision of small grants targeting grassroots and local-level women's CSOs to build institutional capacities (including equipment, tools, and staff training), addressing regional disparities and specific local needs across 20 cities.⁵
- Facilitation of localized initiatives through Partnership Agreements supporting interventions specifically tailored to regional contexts, such as enhancing women's community leadership in Gaziantep and economic empowerment of young women in Gaziantep, Mardin, and Şanlıurfa.⁶
- Supporting local dialogue and networking among CSOs, local government, and community leaders, thereby creating context-specific opportunities to integrate gender equality into local policies and practices.⁷

1.2.4 Target Groups and Beneficiaries

The project targeted diverse stakeholder groups who both participated in implementing and benefited from the project activities:

Civil Society Organizations:

- Women's rights and women-led CSOs (36 small grantees and 10 partner CSOs), receiving financial and technical support to enhance organizational capacities and implement programs advancing gender equality.
- Grassroots women's organizations in 20 cities, benefiting from training and institutional capacity development.
- CSOs representing specific marginalized groups, including refugee women (e.g., Rabita Syrian Women Association, Syrian Women's Network) and Association of Women with Disabilities (ENKAD).
- Rights-based CSOs focused on thematic areas including climate action, youth development, and gender equality.

Public Institutions and Government Bodies:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (collaborating on rural women's research).
- Ministry of Family and Social Services (participating in policy dialogues).
- Ministry of Justice (participating in access to justice initiatives).
- TÜİK (collaborating on data collection).
- Local municipalities (e.g., Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, Çankaya Municipality providing eldercare services).
- The Union of Municipalities of Türkiye (participating in policy dialogues on care economy).

Other Key Stakeholders:

- Healthcare professionals (receiving capacity development on responding to gender-based violence).
- Women and girls benefiting from services and programmatic interventions (6,594 women and girls reached directly).

⁵ First Progress Report, p. 4; Second Progress Report, p. 12-13.

⁶ Second Progress Report, p. 10.

⁷ Second Progress Report, p. 12.

- Young women who are neither in education, employment, or training (NEET) in Gaziantep, Mardin, and Şanlıurfa.
- Women survivors of earthquakes receiving legal and psychosocial support.
- Individual activists and advocates (19 supported to attend international forums).
- Academia and research institutions (collaborating on research initiatives).
- Media professionals (participating in gender data training to improve reporting, resulting in a 61.6% increase in knowledge).
- Social partners including trade unions and business associations (participating in policy dialogues).

1.2.5 Governance Structure

The governance structure consisted of two main bodies as outlined in the Description of Action (DOA) (p. 30-31):

1. **Steering Committee (SC):** Provided high-level strategic guidance for the implementation of the Action. The SC membership comprised senior staff of the UN Women Türkiye Office, the EU Delegation in Türkiye, as well as EU member states' Embassies providing significant support to women's CSOs in Türkiye (such as the Swedish and Dutch Embassies). Additionally, STGM (Civil Society Development Center) and Sivil Düşün were invited to the SC to reflect on issues related to CSOs in general. The SC met at least once a year and held ad hoc meetings as needed.
2. **Advisory Board (AB):** Composed of independent experts, representatives of academia, Council of Europe Ankara Office, relevant Governmental entities such as the General Directorate on the Status of Women's within the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, Equal Opportunities Committee of the Parliament, Ombudsman, and the Tük. The AB played both a technical advisory role and facilitated contacts between different stakeholders in multi-stakeholder dialogue, providing space for government-civil society discussions, joint learning, and exchange of experiences.

UN Women held the secretariat and the chair of both bodies, ensuring coordination between the strategic and advisory functions of the governance structure.

1.2.6 Implementation Context and Adaptations

The project's implementation period (2021-2024) coincided with significant national and global challenges that required strategic adaptations:

COVID-19 pandemic impacts on civil society operations

The project shifted to digital platforms for training, networking, and advocacy activities, expanding participation opportunities for CSOs from diverse regions while reducing logistical constraints. This digital transformation maintained momentum during pandemic restrictions while unexpectedly broadening the project's reach.

Economic volatility affecting CSO sustainability

To counter inflation and economic instability, the project reallocated budgets and intensified capacity-building initiatives focused on organizational sustainability. Small grants were

strategically deployed to support grassroots organizations most vulnerable to economic pressures, with flexible funding arrangements that acknowledged the changing financial landscape.

Political developments influencing civic space

In response to political shifts including Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, UN Women leveraged its position as a neutral intermediary to maintain essential stakeholder relationships. The project reinforced alignment with enduring national frameworks like the 11th National Development Plan and Women's Empowerment Strategy to ensure continued relevance amid political fluctuations.

2023 earthquake requiring rapid response and adaptation

When the Maraş earthquake struck, the project quickly mobilized existing partnerships with organizations in affected regions. Training priorities shifted to equip local partners with skills for trauma-informed support, while small grant allocations were adjusted to enable field assessments in earthquake zones. The project's previous investments in neighborhood action plans and local networks provided a foundation for rapid community response.

Throughout these challenges, the project maintained a feminist ethics framework and commitment to CEDAW recommendations, particularly General Recommendation 37 regarding gender-responsive disaster risk reduction, which proved especially valuable in earthquake response efforts.

2. Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope

2.1 Evaluation purpose and objectives

This evaluation was conducted at the conclusion of the "Strong Civic Space for Gender Equality" Project to serve three primary purposes:

1. **Accountability:** To determine whether the project delivered its promised results to stakeholders, donors, and beneficiaries.
2. **Learning:** To capture valuable insights from both successes and challenges that can strengthen future gender equality initiatives in Türkiye.
3. **Decision-Making:** To inform strategic choices for the next phase of programming by UN Women, the European Commission, and civil society partners.

The timing of this evaluation is particularly significant as it coincides with the conclusion of a critical implementation period during which Türkiye experienced substantial political shifts, economic challenges, and natural disasters, providing an opportunity to assess adaptability in complex contexts.

Intended Users and Uses

The evaluation is intended for multiple stakeholders:

- **UN Women Country Office and Regional Office:** To refine programming approaches and strengthen civil society partnerships in Türkiye
- **European Commission:** To inform future funding decisions and partnership strategies
- **Civil Society Organizations:** To build on successful approaches and address identified gaps
- **Government Stakeholders:** To enhance collaboration with civil society on gender equality initiatives
- **Donor Community:** To guide resource allocation for gender equality work in challenging contexts

Objectives

The evaluation sought to:

1. Assess the project's relevance to national priorities, beneficiary needs, and UN Women's strategic framework in Türkiye
2. Determine the effectiveness of the project in achieving its stated outcomes and outputs
3. Measure the efficiency of resource utilization and implementation approaches
4. Evaluate the sustainability of project results beyond the funding period
5. Analyze the project's coherence with other gender equality initiatives in Türkiye
6. Examine how gender equality, human rights and disability inclusion principles were integrated throughout the project cycle
7. Document the project's adaptability to changing contexts, including responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023 earthquake

2.2 Scope of the Evaluation

The Final Evaluation covered the timeframe from 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2024, encompassing the entire implementation period of the "Strong Civic Space for Gender Equality" Project. The evaluation assessed the project's activities and achievements across its geographical coverage in Türkiye, which included both national-level interventions and decentralized activities in 20 cities.

The evaluation examined all components of the project, including:

1. Support for CSO capacity building in critical areas where gender gaps persist:
 - Access to justice
 - Combating violence against women and girls
 - Women's economic empowerment
 - Sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data generation
 - Gender-sensitive crisis response
 - Environment and climate action
2. Strengthening and expanding the constituency of gender equality advocates through:
 - Knowledge creation and sharing
 - Network building
 - Platform dialogues
 - Access to intergovernmental, EU and international fora
 - Strategic partnerships development

The evaluation covered all implementation modalities used in the project:

- Small grants to CSOs
- Partnership agreements with organizations
- Capacity development programs
- Research activities on rural women and women with disabilities
- Data literacy training initiatives
- Support for CSO participation in international forums
- Multi-stakeholder dialogue facilitation

The assessment included both direct interventions with CSOs and broader efforts to strengthen the enabling environment for gender equality work in Türkiye. This comprehensive scope allowed for a thorough evaluation of the project's contribution to advancing women's rights and gender equality through civil society strengthening.

3. Evaluation Approach, Methods and Tools

3.1. Evaluation Approach

The evaluation employed a **theory-based approach**, guided by the project's Theory of Change (ToC). This approach assessed the validity and effectiveness of the project's intervention logic and its contributions to advancing women's rights and gender equality in Türkiye. The evaluation was structured around the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, integrating UN Women's emphasis on human rights and gender equality.

A **contribution analysis** was central to the approach, focusing on:

- Determining the project's contributions to outcomes in a context with multiple influencing factors.
- Validating the causal pathways outlined in the ToC.
- Identifying alternative explanations for observed results.

Methodology Overview

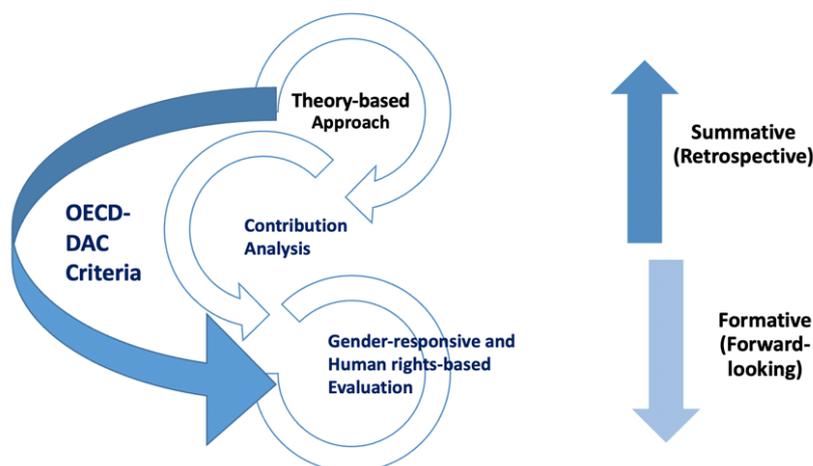


Figure 1: Methodology Overview

This evaluation employed a rigorous mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to ensure comprehensive assessment and robust triangulation. The methodology was designed to be gender-responsive while maintaining a human-rights-based approach, with the project's ToC serving as the primary framework for assessment. Gender-responsiveness was operationalized through several specific strategies:

- Ensuring representation of project stakeholders in data collection, which naturally resulted in predominantly women respondents (94% women in Key Informant Interviews-KIIS-, 92% in small grantee survey, and 100% in network survey) reflecting the gender composition of organizations involved in the project
- Including questions about gender-based barriers and opportunities in all stakeholder interviews
- Selecting case studies to represent diverse women's organizations addressing different aspects of gender inequality
- Analyzing all data through a gender lens to identify gender-specific patterns in project implementation and outcomes
- Employing an evaluation team with expertise in gender analysis and feminist evaluation approaches
- Ensuring safe spaces for women participants to openly discuss sensitive gender-related challenges in the Turkish context

3.2 Analysis of the Theory of Change

The project was guided by UN Women's strategies and methodologies in advancing women's rights and gender equality. The project's Theory of Change, as outlined in the DOA, states:

If civil society organizations in Türkiye, particularly women's CSOs, have increased resources and capacities to advance the rights of women and girls, in fields where

gender gaps persist in line with Türkiye's national and international commitments and in consideration of COVID-19 impacts;

If civil society organizations have increased access to and expertise in gender responsive research and data generation to address the current knowledge gaps and to use in programming and in evidence-based advocacy on gender equality;

If gender equality advocates defending the rights and representing the voices of different groups of women and girls, including youth and those in most marginalized and vulnerable positions, have increased opportunities and support to share knowledge, network, partner and jointly advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) with men and boys, and relevant stakeholders at the local, national, regional/EU and global levels;

Then civil society organizations will be more effective agents of transformative change towards gender equality and women's rights;

Because they will have gained additional financial and technical capacities, knowledge, alliances and networks and effectively used them towards advancing the status of women in economic, political and social life.

The evaluation team's analysis revealed that while the original Theory of Change provided a sound framework, several assumptions needed to be reconstructed based on implementation experience:

RECONSTRUCTED THEORY OF CHANGE: ASSUMPTIONS	
Causal Link Assumptions	Reconstructed Causal Link Assumptions
Political situation in Türkiye remains conducive to CSOs' engagement.	Türkiye has been less conducive as a political environment in the implementation of the project.
The impact of Covid-19 outbreak on the implementation of the activities is none or minimal.	The impact of COVID has been almost none.
Stakeholders demonstrate interest in the training and capacity development opportunities.	Stakeholders showed interest and participation in all training and CD opportunities.
Commitment and adequate capacities of beneficiary institutions to absorb assistance and to implement project activities.	Participants ready to absorb the assistance.
Civil society remains committed to build alliances and coalitions in GEWE.	The project team has adapted itself to the post-Earthquake (2023) situation as a factor outside of project management's control. Demand-driven interventions were designed.
	CD includes motivation to work on GEWE for those who are new to GEWE.
	Commitment to build alliances and coalitions in GEWE: Participation in CD involves networking with CSOs for small grantees and advocates.

Figure 2: Reconstructed ToC– Assumptions

This reconstruction of assumptions reflects how the project's theoretical framework evolved during implementation. The evaluation team's analysis revealed that while the original Theory of Change provided a sound framework, several key assumptions needed to be reconstructed based on implementation experience, as shown in Figure 2.

	Capacity Changes	Transformative Changes
Individual Level	Greater technical, operational knowledge skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained application of new skills to contribute to GEWE outcomes • Serve as catalysts within their environment to promote GEWE outcomes
	Greater awareness and commitment to collecting gender data	
	Networking within and outside the civic space	
	Providing GEWE training to stakeholders and beneficiaries	
Institutional Level	Increased CSO and advocate capacity for evidence based GEWE advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of GEWE in disaster response and increased capacity to intervene in such situations • Increased capacity to train and mentor members and other beneficiaries in GEWE related theme • Increased awareness of the need of networking in GEWE and building coalitions to promote GEWE outcomes • Increased visibility, digital and in person under the banner of GEWE • Create more efficient organization structures for advancing GEWE outcomes • Create more effective strategies and actions to advance GEWE outcomes • Partner more effectively with UN Women Türkiye to advance GEWE outcomes
	Strengthened capacity to partner with UN and UN Women Türkiye	
Environment Level	Increased policy dialogue opportunities in GEWE themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased commitment to GEWE outcomes at the municipal level • Increased norms and attitudes aligning with GEWE at the municipal level • Increased GEWE awareness and commitment for CSOs operating in fields other than gender equality • Increased GEWE awareness and commitment for private actors providing services for CSOs such as social media management companies
	Increased municipal government engagements	

Figure 3: Reconstructed ToC - Change Levels

As illustrated in Figure 3, the evaluation team identified three distinct levels where change occurred through project implementation. This multi-level approach demonstrates how the project's contributions manifested at individual, institutional, and environmental levels.

Reconstructed Theory of Change
Direct Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants have gained additional financial and technical capacities, knowledge, and awareness • Participants effectively used these capacities and knowledge towards advancing the status of women in economic, political and social life. • Civil society operates more efficiently and effectively to promote GEWE outcomes

Figure 4: Reconstructed ToC - Direct Benefits

Reconstructed Theory of Change
External Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of Covid-19 outbreak on the implementation of the activities has been minimal. • The factors outside of the management’s control had an impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Financial resource building affected due to 1) fluctuating economic crisis (inflation and exchange rate crisis) in Türkiye 2) funding-dependent character of CSOs in Türkiye ➤ Schedules and activities impacted by disaster response: The February 2023 Earthquake in Türkiye and the needs of CSOs to redirect their attention to the earthquake zone and the disruption on planned project activities ➤ The 2023 General Elections and 2024 Municipal elections: These were barriers in front of the CSOs as they implemented their interventions, due to distraction of the municipal and other external stakeholders

Figure 5: Reconstructed ToC – External Factors

The direct benefits pathway, shown in Figure 4, demonstrates how the project's interventions led to progressive improvements in civil society's capacity to promote GEWE outcomes. Figure 4 illustrates the external factors that significantly influenced project implementation and outcomes.

For Specific Objective 1 (Increased Resources and Capacities):

The initial assumption that Türkiye's political environment would remain conducive to CSO engagement proved optimistic. While CSOs demonstrated strong capacity to absorb assistance and showed readiness to implement activities, the political environment became less conducive during implementation. However, the project successfully adapted through demand-driven interventions.

For Specific Objective 2 (Research and Data Generation):

The assumption about stakeholders' interest in capacity development opportunities proved accurate, with strong participation in all training and capacity development activities. The evaluation team found that participants were particularly ready to absorb assistance related to data literacy and gender-responsive research, though the challenging economic context (inflation and exchange rate crisis) affected some CSOs' ability to sustain these activities.

For Specific Objective 3 (Networking and Joint Advocacy):

The assumption about civil society's commitment to building alliances and coalitions was validated but manifested specifically through networking among small grantees and advocates. The 2023 earthquake created unexpected opportunities for coalition-building around gender-responsive disaster response, while the 2023 General Elections and 2024 Municipal elections posed challenges to sustained advocacy efforts.

The evaluation team found that the reconstructed ToC better reflects the reality of implementation by:

- Acknowledging the less conducive political environment
- Recognizing the minimal impact of COVID-19
- Incorporating the earthquake response as an external factor
- Emphasizing the importance of demand-driven interventions
- Highlighting the role of networking specifically among small grantees and advocates

This analysis informed the evaluation's assessment of the project's relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability, particularly in understanding how external factors influenced outcomes and how the project adapted its strategies to maintain progress toward its objectives.

3.3 Evaluation Questions and Evaluation Matrix

The evaluation framework is structured around the OECD-DAC criteria outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR): relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, with an additional focus on human rights and gender equality. To operationalize these criteria, the evaluation team developed a comprehensive evaluation matrix (see Annex 3) with specific evaluation questions for each criterion:

Relevance is assessed through questions examining how the project's design met stakeholder needs, aligned with national development strategies, leveraged UN Women's comparative advantages, and maintained relevance amid changing contexts.

Coherence is evaluated by examining the project's alignment with UN Women's Strategic Plan, its support for UNSDCF implementation, synergies with other UN Women initiatives, complementarity with other actors' interventions, and coordination with government efforts.

Effectiveness is measured through questions about achievement of outcomes, contributing factors to success or failure, unexpected results, challenges encountered, effectiveness of strategies, capacity building success, monitoring mechanisms, and innovative practices.

Efficiency is analyzed by examining project management, resource allocation, management structure, timeliness of delivery, and coordination between counterparts.

Sustainability is assessed through questions about the likelihood of sustained benefits, capacity building results, national ownership, and exit strategy implementation.

Human Rights, Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion principles are evaluated by examining their integration into the project's design and implementation.

The evaluation matrix further details the specific indicators, data sources, and data collection methods used to answer each evaluation question, providing a systematic framework for gathering and analyzing evidence.

Each evaluation criterion was examined through these lenses to ensure comprehensive assessment of the project's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment.

In developing the evaluation questions, the team prioritized practicality and measurability, ensuring that each question could be answered through available data sources and planned data collection methods. Special attention was paid to avoiding redundancy while maintaining sufficient depth of inquiry across all project components.

3.4. Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Document Review and Analysis

The evaluation began with a thorough examination of both project-specific materials and broader contextual literature. Primary project documents included design documents and Description of Action, progress reports and monitoring data, training materials and participant feedback, small grant documentation and grantee reports, policy dialogue series documentation, and strategic documents like UN Women Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

The review of secondary sources encompassed academic literature on civil society and gender equality in Türkiye, focusing on evolving dynamics since the early 2010s. Grey literature included reports from development partners, civil society assessments, and policy briefs. Statistical data from sources such as the Turkish Statistical Institute, OECD reports, and the Gender Equality Monitoring Report of Türkiye provided quantitative context. The ET also examined documentation related to key events affecting the project's implementation, such as Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention and the response to the 2023 earthquake, which directly informed the assessment of how the project maintained relevance amid changing political and economic contexts.

The literature review served as a critical foundation for answering several key evaluation questions. By examining academic research on civil society and gender equality in Türkiye, the team established benchmarks to assess the project's relevance to beneficiary needs and alignment with national priorities. Secondary sources provided essential context for evaluating how effectively the project adapted to changing circumstances, particularly following Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention and the 2023 earthquake. Statistical data helped quantify gender inequalities that the project sought to address, supporting analysis of both relevance and effectiveness. This comprehensive review enabled the ET to situate project

outcomes within broader societal trends and institutional contexts, strengthening the evidence base for findings across all evaluation criteria.

The evaluation team developed data collection templates based on the evaluation matrix to systematically record insights from both project documents and secondary sources. This comprehensive review established a strong foundation for understanding both the project's specific achievements and its broader contribution to gender equality in Türkiye.

Primary Data Collection

The evaluation utilized multiple data collection methods to ensure comprehensive coverage and data triangulation:

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): The evaluation conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with individuals who possessed specialized knowledge and experience regarding the project. These semi-structured interviews allowed flexible conversations while covering essential topics. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for computer-assisted qualitative coding using MAXQDA. KIIs provided valuable insights from stakeholders who were directly involved in or affected by the project. The evaluation conducted KIIs with the following groups:

- 1. Partner Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** To assess collaboration effectiveness and project contribution, as well as to gather insights on best practices and evolving needs of CSOs regarding gender equality and women's empowerment. KIIs included all partner CSOs. These organizations were involved in policy dialogues and maintained constant consultation with the project management team. They had an impact on their own beneficiaries and other CSOs, including networks, through the support they received in this project (10 KIIs).
- 2. Small Grantees (CSOs):** In addition to the survey distributed to all small grantees, in-depth KIIs were conducted with a selected group of five small grantees. While the survey provided quantitative data on outcomes and general perceptions, the KIIs allowed for more nuanced exploration of key areas within the evaluation matrix. These interviews gathered detailed feedback on the operational aspects of the small grantee scheme, including the application process, types of support provided, and overall experience. This qualitative insight was critical for understanding the effectiveness of the scheme in supporting CSOs in their gender equality efforts. The interviews explored grantees' perceptions of UN Women's role, the relevance and adequacy of support provided, and how this support contributed to the grantees' capacity to achieve their objectives (5 KIIs).
- 3. Trainers and Mentors:** The project engaged diverse trainers and mentors to support activists and CSOs in Türkiye, covering topics from data literacy to lobbying in international forums. KIIs with these experts assessed their contributions to the project and observed impact on beneficiaries, while also contextualizing the project within the broader landscape of gender equality initiatives. These interviews provided primary data on network building and thematic trainings, activities beyond organizational grants (6 KIIs).
- 4. Trainees and Mentees:** To evaluate the impact on individual participants, KIIs were conducted with selected trainees and mentees. These individuals, who directly benefited from training and mentorship programs, provided crucial insights into how

capacity-building efforts influenced their ability to engage in international forums and advocate for gender equality, as well as the sustainability of results. The evaluation included not just CSOs but also individual advocates and students to comprehensively assess contributions to civic space (6 KIIs).

5. **UN Women and EU Delegation Staff:** To gain insights into all five DAC criteria, key staff members were interviewed. These interviews were critical for understanding the strategic and operational dimensions from the perspective of those who played central roles in design, implementation, and oversight (3 KIIs).
6. **Policy Stakeholders:** As policy dialogue was a major component of the project, and advancing women's empowerment in Türkiye necessarily entailed interaction between policy stakeholders and civil society, KIIs with policy makers who participated in the dialogues provided insights into UN Women's efforts and achievements in this area (3 KIIs).

The KIIs were conducted in Turkish or English based on participant preference, using tailored interview guides for each stakeholder group to ensure relevant and focused data collection.

The evaluation conducted 33 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with diverse stakeholder groups, with 31 women (94%) and two men (6%) participating. This gender distribution reflects the predominance of women working within the scope of the project. His comprehensive engagement ensured that women's voices and experiences were centered in the evaluation findings, aligning with both the project's gender equality focus and UN-SWAP requirements for sex-disaggregated evaluation data.

The KIIs were strategically designed to cover both national-level interventions and decentralized activities across the project's implementation in 20 cities throughout Türkiye. While physical site visits were conducted in Istanbul and Ankara (major centers for national-level activities), the KII sample intentionally included representatives from organizations operating in diverse geographical contexts. Additionally, the interviews with trainers, mentors, and trainees included questions about implementation challenges and adaptations in different regional contexts. This geographical diversity in the KII sample ensured comprehensive coverage of both nationally coordinated initiatives and their localized manifestations across Türkiye.

Online Surveys:

For the evaluation, two surveys were administered. The first survey targeted all small grantees (36 CSOs across 20 cities) who received capacity development funding as part of the project. This survey was designed to gather quantitative data across all five evaluation criteria outlined in the evaluation matrix. To ensure accessibility and ease of use, the survey was translated into Turkish and distributed online via Google Forms, a platform widely recognized and commonly used within Turkish civil society, ensuring familiarity among respondents.

For the Syrian Women Network, an English version of the survey was provided to accommodate their language preferences. The survey questions were included in the annex section of this report.

In addition to structured, close-ended questions, the survey also included open-ended questions to capture more detailed responses. The qualitative data collected through these open-ended questions was uploaded to MAXQDA during the analysis phase. This allowed for consistent and thorough analysis of all qualitative data and facilitated comparisons across different beneficiary groups. The evaluation significantly surpassed its initial target response rate of 50% set during the inception phase, achieving a 69.4% organizational response rate (25 out of 36 small grantee CSOs participated). Of the 25 respondents to this survey, 23 (92%) were women and two (8%) were men, reflecting the strong representation of women in the project's partner organizations. This higher-than-anticipated participation strengthened the reliability and representativeness of the survey data, providing robust evidence for evaluation findings.

The second survey on 'UN Women Network Support' was conducted to evaluate the support provided to individual advocates under the UN Women project. This support specifically targeted the enhancement of international advocacy capacities by facilitating participation in international fora, including travel, preparatory meetings, and follow-up activities. The open-ended structure of the survey allowed for rich, detailed feedback directly from the beneficiaries. A total of nine respondents out of 19 individuals who received this support completed the survey, representing a 47.4% response rate. All nine respondents (100%) were women, which aligns with the project's focus on enhancing women's advocacy capacities in international settings.

Case Studies: Four in-depth case studies were conducted to provide detailed insights into project implementation and outcomes:

1. SPoD (Social Policies, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association)
2. Katre Women's Association
3. Fisherwomen's Association
4. Changing Steps Association

These case studies were strategically selected during the inception phase to ensure diversity across multiple dimensions. The selection criteria included:

- **Thematic diversity:** Organizations representing different areas of gender equality work (LGBTIQ+ rights, regional women's empowerment, economic rights of women in male-dominated sectors, and youth engagement)
- **Geographic representation:** While Katre Women's Association focuses specifically on GEWE in Erzincan (eastern Türkiye), the other organizations have national reach - with the Fisherwomen's Association operating across multiple locations (Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Mersin, Adana, Rize, Muğla, and Balıkesir) covering three seas and all major metropolises, Changing Steps Association engaging volunteers and trainers from western to eastern Türkiye, and SPoD advocating for LGBTIQ+ communities nationwide
- **Target populations:** Organizations serving diverse beneficiary groups, ensuring representation of marginalized voices

The case studies involved:

- Multiple interviews with key personnel (2-3 KIIs per case study)

- Document review of project materials
- In-person site visit to SPoD and virtual engagements with the other organizations due to geographic distribution and logistical constraints
- Analysis of organizational change and project contribution

Site visits: The ET conducted a total of 13 site visits in Istanbul and Ankara, which are key project locations. These visits included locations of small grantees, partner organizations, and government institutions such as TÜİK. The in-person site visits allowed the team to directly observe project activities, facilities, and implementation contexts across diverse settings, providing valuable qualitative insights that complemented other data collection methods.

3.5 Data Analysis

The evaluation team employed a comprehensive data analysis approach utilizing MAXQDA software to process all collected data. This included uploaded document review templates, interview transcripts from KIIs, case study documentation, open-ended survey responses, and project reports and monitoring data.

The coding structure in MAXQDA was developed based on the evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, human rights and gender equality), main evaluation questions and sub-questions from the evaluation matrix, stakeholder classifications, and implementation strategies. This structured approach enabled systematic analysis of how different project components contributed to overall objectives.

Content analysis consisted of two main components. First, the comparative analysis examined differences and similarities between different stakeholder categories, such as comparing perspectives of small grantees with partner CSOs. It also looked at patterns within same stakeholder groups, geographical variations in project implementation, and synergies across different project components. Second, the contextual analysis assessed the project's alignment with national development strategies for gender equality, compared outcomes with international standards and frameworks, and evaluated the project's adaptation to Türkiye's changing political and economic context, including significant events like the 2023 earthquake.

The evaluation team ensured robust triangulation through multiple approaches. Triangulation of methods involved cross-referencing qualitative findings from KIIs with quantitative survey data, comparing document review findings with primary data collection results, validating case study findings against broader project data, and integrating statistical analysis with qualitative insights. Triangulation of sources focused on comparing perspectives across different stakeholder groups, cross-referencing project documentation with stakeholder accounts, and examining consistency between different levels of implementation.

The quantitative data from surveys was analyzed using descriptive statistics in Excel, with results integrated into MAXQDA to enable comprehensive analysis alongside qualitative data. This integration allowed for identification of patterns and trends, assessment of project outcomes across different beneficiary groups, understanding of capacity development trajectories, and measurement of project effectiveness across different components.

Throughout the analysis process, particular attention was paid to changes in CSO capacity and effectiveness, evolution of networking and advocacy capabilities, influence of external factors on project implementation, sustainability of project outcomes, and integration of gender equality and human rights principles. This systematic approach to data analysis ensured the reliability and validity of evaluation findings while enabling nuanced understanding of the project's contributions to strengthen civil society for gender equality in Türkiye.

The analysis process remained iterative, with the evaluation team regularly reviewing and discussing emerging findings to ensure comprehensive coverage of all evaluation criteria and questions. This collaborative approach helped identify both common themes and unique insights across the diverse data sources, contributing to a rich and nuanced understanding of the project's achievements and challenges.

3.6 Limitations, Risks and Mitigation Measures

The evaluation team encountered several limitations and challenges that required careful consideration and mitigation strategies to ensure robust evaluation findings.

Time Constraints Due to Operational Delays: The evaluation process commenced later than initially planned due to operational issues within UN Women, with the start date shifting from April 2024 to July 2024. This compressed timeline posed challenges for data collection and analysis.

Mitigation: The evaluation team developed a streamlined yet comprehensive methodology combining online surveys with targeted in-person data collection. The use of multiple data collection methods simultaneously helped maximize the available time while maintaining evaluation quality.

Historical Recall Challenges: Some activities and grants were completed earlier in the project cycle, potentially affecting stakeholders' ability to accurately recall specific details and outcomes.

Mitigation: The team addressed this by triangulating data from multiple sources, including project documentation, reports submitted at the time of implementation, and cross-referencing information from different stakeholders. Additionally, the team conducted multiple interviews within each case study organization to ensure comprehensive coverage.

Access to Policy Stakeholders: Securing appointments with policy stakeholders proved challenging, and when accessed, their responses tended to be generic rather than specific to project activities.

Mitigation: The evaluation team compensated for this limitation by gathering rich data about policy dialogue from multiple perspectives, including CSO participants, UN Women staff, and documentary evidence. This multi-source approach helped build a comprehensive understanding of policy engagement outcomes.

Personnel Turnover in CSOs: The high turnover of personnel working in CSOs, with staff moving between organizations or leaving the civic space altogether, posed challenges for tracking long-term outcomes and institutional memory.

Mitigation: The team worked closely with UN Women Türkiye to identify and reach out to responsible staff members from the project period, even if they had changed employment.

Additionally, the evaluation examined organizational rather than individual-level changes to account for staff transitions.

Economic Context: The severe economic crisis in Türkiye, characterized by high inflation and currency volatility, affected both project implementation and the evaluation process, particularly in assessing financial sustainability.

Mitigation: The evaluation team carefully considered economic factors in analyzing project outcomes and sustainability, incorporating questions about financial adaptation strategies in interviews and examining how organizations managed resource constraints.

These limitations were carefully considered throughout the evaluation process, and the findings and recommendations reflect these contextual challenges while maintaining methodological rigor and analytical depth. The combination of multiple data sources, robust triangulation methods, and careful attention to contextual factors helped ensure the evaluation's validity despite these constraints.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The evaluation team adhered to the highest ethical standards throughout the evaluation process, following United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG) 2020 Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and UN Women's evaluation principles. The team maintained complete independence and operated free from any conflicts of interest.

The evaluation process prioritized several key ethical considerations, particularly given the direct involvement of CSOs and activists, including women and LGBTIQ+ individuals. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were fully briefed about the evaluation's purpose, how their information would be used, and their right to withdraw from participation at any time. This was particularly important for organizations working on sensitive issues such as LGBTIQ+ rights and violence against women.

Confidentiality and data protection were paramount concerns. The evaluation team implemented strict measures to protect sensitive information and ensure that data could not be traced back to individual sources. This was especially crucial given the challenging political context for civil society organizations in Türkiye. For field visits to organizations working on sensitive issues, particular care was taken not to signal their locations or compromise their security in any way.

The team showed particular sensitivity in formulating questions for organizations that had conducted intense work in post-earthquake zones or dealt with trauma-related issues, ensuring that the evaluation process did not lead to re-traumatization while still gathering necessary information. Interview protocols were designed to be trauma-informed and respectful of participants' experiences.

All data collected during the evaluation process, including interview recordings, transcripts, and field notes, has been securely stored with access restricted to authorized team members only. This material will be retained securely until the evaluation's completion, after which it will be properly disposed of according to UN Women protocols.

The evaluation team maintained strict impartiality throughout the process while showing appropriate empathy and understanding for the challenges faced by civil society organizations. The team worked to minimize any potential burden on participating organizations, particularly smaller CSOs with limited resources, by being flexible with scheduling and offering online participation options when appropriate.

These ethical considerations were integrated into every aspect of the evaluation process, from initial design through data collection, analysis, and reporting, ensuring that the evaluation not only gathered robust evidence but did so in a way that respected and protected all participants.

4. Presentation of Findings

The findings presented in this section directly correspond to the evaluation criteria and questions outlined in Section 2 of this report. These findings emerge from a rigorous mixed-methods analysis combining quantitative and qualitative data collected through key informant interviews, online surveys, case studies, and extensive document review. Each finding is supported by multiple sources of evidence, ensuring reliability through data triangulation.

The analysis examines the project's performance across five key criteria - relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability - while integrating human rights and gender equality considerations throughout. Special attention has been paid to documenting both intended and unintended outcomes, as well as the project's adaptability to Türkiye's changing context during the implementation period. The findings regarding evaluation criteria have been numbered below in accordance with the numbering from the evaluation matrix.

4.1 Relevance

EQ1.1 How well do the intervention's design and intended outcomes meet the needs and priorities of the target beneficiaries and key stakeholders?

F1.1 The intervention's design and outcomes were found to be highly relevant to the needs and priorities of the target beneficiaries and key stakeholders. The design of the intervention was so that implementing partners, small grantees and activists would be supported to produce three distinct but interlinked outputs. The intervention's design demonstrated strong field relevance across all three outputs. Output 1 responded directly to organizational sustainability and growth needs; Output 2 addressed a growing demand for data capacity in evidence-based advocacy; and Output 3 supported coalition-building and visibility efforts.

Relevance of Output 1: Organizational Resources and Capacity Development

Evidence from multiple data sources, including surveys, progress reports and qualitative coding of the fieldwork with stakeholders, supports the conclusion that all three were found highly relevant in the field, with Output 1's emphasis ranking the highest. Notably, 94.4% of small grantees responding to the survey agreed that the partnership with UN Women aligned with their organizational needs, demonstrating a strong perception of relevance. Similarly, qualitative data coding indicates substantial emphasis on addressing specific capacity needs, with 64% of stakeholders (small grantees and partners) referencing responses to these needs. However, the data also reveals varying degrees of relevancy for different groups, which is in alignment with the design of the project.

For partner CSOs, the intervention's relevancy was most pronounced in its ability to address capacity building related to gender equality and women's empowerment (29.03%), as well as financial and strategic needs, such as responding to budgetary challenges (19.35%). Small grantees, on the other hand, highlighted the intervention's critical role in meeting immediate

capacity requirements (83%) and maintaining relevance even amidst external challenges like the earthquake (10%). These differences illustrate how the intervention successfully adapted its approach to meet the unique priorities of each stakeholder group.

Additionally, the MAXQDA code coverage data reveals a nuanced picture of relevancy. Advocates, mentees, and trainees showed the highest alignment (92%) between their needs and the project's activities, demonstrating significant improvements in individuals' capacities. Meanwhile, UN Women staff and EU Delegation responses demonstrated an institutional focus on strategic alignment (69%), reinforcing the intervention's alignment with broader organizational objectives.

Published reports support these findings. For instance, the *Mentorship Program Reports* from Adana, Ankara, and Istanbul reveal the importance of tailored and iterative capacity development for both new and experienced CSOs. Grantees consistently adapted training agendas to better fit emerging needs, a process enabled by the project's flexibility and the responsiveness of UN Women staff. One organization noted that participation in the mentorship program led to "unexpected yet crucial improvements in financial and administrative practices," which were not initially anticipated but greatly valued.

Relevance of Output 2: Gender-Responsive Data and CSO Capacity for Data Use

Output 2 addressed a critical and previously underserved area: CSOs' capacity to access, generate, and use gender-disaggregated data. This was found to be especially relevant to advocacy-focused organizations and those interested in evidence-based programming. The *Hackathon Report* (2024) illustrates how data literacy and storytelling events catalyzed both creativity and technical learning among younger participants and grassroots activists. Participants learned to collect, visualize, and apply gender data in digital advocacy campaigns—skills that many CSOs cited as new and necessary in their evolving context.

Moreover, the *Mentorship Reports* show that organizations like SPoD and Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) deepened their understanding of data infrastructure and began developing internal systems to collect and store beneficiary data more systematically. This, in turn, allowed them to tailor services and better support their target populations. In the case of SPoD, the mentorship cycle built upon earlier participation in gender data training and illustrates a learning pathway enabled by the interconnected design of the project.

The relevance of Output 2 was also reinforced by the project's responsiveness to new areas of concern. The *ENKAD (Association of Women with Disabilities) Report* on women with disabilities revealed that many of the challenges faced by this group stem from the absence of gender- and disability-disaggregated data, a gap that the project's Output 2 directly aims to address. These findings reinforce that the design of Output 2 met both strategic policy needs and on-the-ground service delivery gaps.

Relevance of Output 3: Networks, Dialogue, and Advocacy

Output 3 focused on strengthening gender equality networks and facilitating dialogue among CSOs, government stakeholders, and international partners. Qualitative data, including coded interview segments and the *Policy Dialogue Meeting Report*, revealed that this was one of the

most appreciated and impactful aspects of the intervention—particularly in terms of creating safe and collaborative spaces for dialogue between diverse actors. The board meetings and dialogue platforms allowed feminist and rights-based actors to communicate with state representatives on a relatively equal footing, a format rarely available in the Turkish civic landscape.

Additionally, the engagement of CSOs in high-profile international advocacy processes—such as the *Global Alliance for Care* and their localized policy notes (e.g., *Bakım için Küresel İttifak Bilgi Notu*)—demonstrates that Output 3 helped local actors scale their voices to regional and global platforms. This was highly relevant in a political climate where domestic advocacy spaces had narrowed. Some CSOs also reported that being included in global gender equality frameworks raised their visibility and validated their work domestically.

Evidence from the project’s networking outputs indicates that participation in multi-stakeholder platforms encouraged cross-CSO collaboration and intergenerational dialogue. The success of Output 3 also lies in its role as a connector, linking CSOs from rural and urban areas, from service provision to rights-based advocacy, thereby enriching the ecosystem of Türkiye’s gender equality movement.

EQ1.2 To what extent does the project align with the national development strategies for gender equality and women’s empowerment?

F1.2 The evaluation assesses the extent to which the project aligned with Türkiye's national development strategies for GEWE and finds that the UN Women Civic Space Project demonstrated strong alignment with Türkiye’s national development strategies for GEWE, while also navigating substantial political and legal shifts that occurred during the project’s implementation.

Key national policy documents, including the Eleventh Development Plan (2019–2023), the National Action Plan on Combating Violence Against Women (2021–2025), and Türkiye’s commitments under CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, emphasize strengthening women’s participation in decision-making, combating gender-based violence (GBV), and improving access to justice and social services. While the terminology used in official strategies often refers to “equality between men and women” rather than the broader scope of gender equality, the project’s core activities were in alignment with several of these objectives. For instance, Output 1 addressed women’s empowerment and leadership; Output 2 supported the production and use of gender-sensitive data to inform decision-making; and Output 3 fostered multi-stakeholder policy dialogue, directly contributing to participatory governance.

However, the enabling environment for civil society weakened during the project cycle. One major setback was Türkiye’s withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention in 2021, which was a foundational international framework for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. While this withdrawal represented a broader political regression on gender equality and women's rights, the project maintained its relevance and strategic alignment by focusing on institutional strengthening of CSOs and promoting evidence-based

advocacy, especially through Outputs 2 and 3. For example, activities supporting women's access to justice and gender-responsive service provision continued through the strengthening of grassroots CSO capacities and data collection efforts, particularly among organizations working with marginalized groups such as refugee and rural women.

Moreover, the passage of the Law on the Prevention of the Financing of the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (Law No. 7262) in December 2020 introduced new administrative burdens and restrictions on civil society, including expanded government oversight on fundraising and increased requirements for reporting. These regulations disproportionately affected rights-based organizations, including those working on GEWE. This law formed a backdrop to the increasing securitization of the civic space, contributing to a challenging environment for the project's theory of change, which had assumed a conducive civic space for CSOs. As a result, the reconstructed ToC incorporated this risk and sought to adapt accordingly.

The evaluation finds that UN Women was able to navigate this context through a combination of strategic coordination, adaptive implementation, and its positioning as a neutral and trusted actor. Stakeholder interviews across civil society, UN Women, and the EU Delegation confirm that UN Women's role as a multilateral actor, with established relationships across government, international donors, and civil society, enabled it to act as a bridge and mitigate potential political sensitivities. This was particularly evident in its ability to facilitate dialogue platforms—such as the April 2024 Policy Dialogue Meeting on Care Economy—that brought together diverse actors despite political constraints. UN Women's institutional credibility and its UN mandate contributed to its legitimacy and access, allowing the project to continue building partnerships and pushing forward gender equality outcomes even when national politics became less favorable.

The effectiveness of this adaptive approach is evident in feedback from CSOs and stakeholders, who continued to perceive the project as aligned with national priorities. This alignment, however, was not solely with shifting government rhetoric or party policies, but rather with the enduring priorities expressed in Türkiye's development plans, policy commitments, and the needs articulated by civil society actors working on GEWE.

EQ1.3 How does UN Women compare with other UN entities and key partners in Türkiye in terms of its unique advantages in this area of work?

F1.3 Across all stakeholder groups—advocates and trainees, partner CSOs, and small grantees—UN Women was consistently seen to hold distinctive advantages.

UN Women's reputation as a global brand with minimal political baggage allowed it to navigate sensitive contexts effectively, ensuring continued engagement with stakeholders and alignment with GEWE objectives. This unique positioning proved critical in maintaining the project's relevance and in fostering stakeholder confidence, as reflected in the unanimous recognition of UN Women's distinct value across all beneficiary groups, including advocates, partner CSOs, and small grantees.

By adopting adaptive strategies, such as continuous consultation with stakeholders and leveraging its neutral stance, UN Women successfully mitigated the challenges posed by political risk factors. This approach ensured that the project’s activities not only aligned with national development strategies but also addressed emerging needs within the constrained civic space, demonstrating the robustness of its design and implementation under complex conditions.

In the words of one of the experts who contributed to the project activities: “In an environment where the existence of civil society, the work of civil society is so marginalized and criminalized, the fact that the United Nations is providing this support has a great meaning.”⁸

Code System	Advocates, Mentees and Trainees	Partner CSOs	Small Grantees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Relevancy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● unique advantage of UN Women 	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%

Figure 1: UN Women's Unique Value Addition Across Stakeholder Groups

As indicated in the MAXQDA-coded field data (see Figure 1), 100% of coded responses within each stakeholder group identified at least one unique advantage of working with UN Women. This figure does not refer to survey agreement rates but to qualitative interview responses coded under the "unique advantage of UN Women" node, demonstrating consistent, unsolicited recognition of added value.

The field data is categorized below, listing all the advantages identified by the stakeholders themselves in survey and KII results.

1. **Legitimacy and Credibility:** UN Women provides a sense of legitimacy and neutrality in contexts where civic space is challenged. Its association with the UN brand ensures a neutral and respected position, particularly in politically sensitive environments and for coordination with policy circles.
2. **Focus on GEWE:** In the perception of the stakeholders, unlike other organizations, UN Women prioritizes gender equality and women empowerment as core values, ensuring that these areas are central to all its initiatives.
3. **Professionalism and Expertise:** Stakeholders highlighted UN Women's professional approach, deep expertise in gender issues, and capacity to lead policy development and advocacy efforts both locally and globally.
4. **Support for Local and Small Organizations:** UN Women is praised for its inclusive approach, particularly for supporting smaller CSOs and organizations in rural areas. It tailors its resources to meet local needs without imposing overly restrictive conditions.
5. **Collaborative and Inclusive Approach:** Stakeholders appreciated UN Women's partnership model, characterized by mutual respect, shared goals, and a lack of hierarchical structures, making it a feminist-oriented collaborator.

⁸ KII notes

6. **Global Reach and Network Facilitation:** UN Women's ability to connect local organizations with global platforms and stakeholders fosters opportunities for learning, collaboration, and sustainability.
7. **Adaptability and Sensitivity:** UN Women demonstrates flexibility in its operations and sensitivity to local needs and realities, adapting its strategies based on the evolving civic space and organizational needs.
8. **Strategic Resource Mobilization:** UN Women effectively channels resources towards transformative projects and aligns funding with its advocacy goals, ensuring optimal use for gender-focused initiatives.
9. **Feminist Ethics in Action:** UN Women's adherence to feminist principles not only informs its internal culture but also its program design and implementation, ensuring alignment with broader gender equality goals.

EQ1.4 To what extent has the project maintained its relevance amid changes in the country's political and economic context?

F1.4 Political, economic and disaster related challenges have emerged during the life cycle of the project. The project maintained its relevance in meaningful ways, and this is most clear both in desk review data and the data from the fieldwork.

Changes in the political and economic context

The project's interventions remained relevant amidst changes in the political and economic context by strategically aligning with shifting national dynamics and maintaining a flexible, need-driven approach. **First**, the project's design inherently addressed foundational issues in gender equality and women's empowerment, which remain persistent priorities despite political volatility. The decision to focus on long-term institutional capacity building and thematic areas such as economic empowerment, access to justice, and combating violence against women ensured that the project could adapt to the broader national agenda, even under challenging circumstances.

Second, the UN Women team employed exceptional coordination strategies to mitigate risks stemming from political and economic crises, including Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention and increased operational costs for CSOs. By leveraging their position as a neutral, globally recognized organization, UN Women fostered trust and collaboration with local stakeholders, enabling the project to maintain its trajectory despite the civic space's restrictions. This strategic adaptability allowed the project to realign resources and focus areas to remain influential while upholding feminist ethics and commitments to CEDAW recommendations. This realignment of resources has been achieved through cost reallocations within project budgets; through increased use of digital platforms for training, networking, and advocacy, thereby reducing logistical constraints and enabling broader participation, including from rural and earthquake-affected regions and through deep engagements with all stakeholders, including policy stakeholders to keep the project activities moving in difficult times.

Changes in the economic context have proven to be more difficult to overcome but the difficulty did not relate to the relevancy of the project. If anything, in the scarcer resources allocated to

civil society and in the inflationist environment, the funding needs of the CSOs have increased, rendering the project ever more relevant. However, the project's budget allocations due to the exchange rate crisis and limits to budget increases remained behind inflation rates and this difference between planned budget and actual expenditure needs caused human resources issues as explained in the challenges section under the issue of effectiveness.

Disaster-related changes

The project's intervention remained highly relevant in the aftermath of the devastating Maraş earthquake, demonstrating both adaptability and a continued commitment to supporting the civic space and gender equality efforts. Small grantees reported that enhanced budgets enabled them to conduct meaningful field analyses in the earthquake regions, further emphasizing the project's flexibility in responding to the disaster. Partners noted that revising project activities to meet the needs of women directly affected by the earthquake led to more effective engagement and support. The meetings and activities conducted months after the earthquake were highly appreciated by the beneficiaries, many of whom expressed relief at being remembered and supported during such a critical period. Statements such as "we felt forgotten, but your arrival proved otherwise"⁹ reflected the emotional and practical significance of these interventions.

The earthquake also underscored the importance of resilience and local organizing, which were central to the project's goals. Previous efforts, such as neighborhood action plans developed through earlier UN Women initiatives, proved instrumental in fostering solidarity and mutual support during the disaster. This continuity highlights how the project's focus on building localized networks and empowering civic actors contributed to a durable and significant response to unforeseen crises, reinforcing the relevance of UN Women's intervention in strengthening civil society under challenging circumstances.

UN Women's ability to remain relevant after the Maraş earthquake can also be attributed to its proactive inclusion of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and gender-responsive approaches in its project activities even before the disaster struck. Prior to the earthquake, UN Women had conducted online surveys and produced a report aimed at formulating a capacity development program for CSOs. This program sought to enhance CSOs' advocacy, monitoring, and program development capacities in relation to gender-responsive environment, climate, and DRR policies and programs. By embedding DRR within its capacity-building efforts, the project was already aligned with the urgent needs that arose in the post-earthquake period.

Moreover, providing resources to empower women under such challenging circumstances was deeply embedded in the project's design, guided by feminist ethics and international standards such as CEDAW General Recommendation 37. This recommendation emphasizes the importance of ensuring women's rights and gender equality in disaster risk reduction and climate resilience efforts. It underscores the need for women's meaningful participation and leadership in formulating and implementing disaster-related policies and programs. UN Women's adherence to these principles ensured that the project's response to the earthquake was not only relevant but also transformative, addressing immediate needs while laying the groundwork for long-term resilience and empowerment.

⁹ KII notes

4.2 Coherence

EQ2.1 Alignment with UN Women’s Strategic Plan and Mandate

F2.1 The project demonstrates strong alignment with the UN Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025, particularly across its four thematic impact areas: governance and participation in public life, women’s economic empowerment, ending violence against women and girls, and women, peace and security, humanitarian action, and disaster risk reduction (p. 10–14, UNW/2021/6).

These impact areas are underpinned by systemic outcomes such as women’s leadership and agency, the production and use of gender-disaggregated data, and the strengthening of feminist movements—each of which were central components of the Civic Space Project.

The project’s support for small grantees and grassroots organizations, including through mentorship, training, and advocacy platforms, is a direct contribution to advancing “women’s voice, leadership, and agency” (UN Women Strategic Plan, 2021: 17). UN Women’s Strategic Plan stresses that “a safe and enabling environment for all women and girls... is essential to strengthen their voice and agency” (p. 17), a goal directly echoed by the project’s focus on resourcing feminist movements and facilitating meaningful participation of civil society in policymaking.

The project’s investment in data and evidence-based advocacy, including gender-disaggregated surveys and research (such as the Hackathon Report and the ENKAD report on women with disabilities), aligns closely with the Strategic Plan’s outcome on the production, analysis and use of gender statistics, sex-disaggregated data, and knowledge. These activities contribute to closing persistent data gaps and informing responsive policy action, particularly at the local and national levels.

Moreover, the provision of capacity-building and financial support to small organizations—many of which operate in economically precarious regions and post-disaster zones—supports the Plan’s priority on women’s economic empowerment. This is particularly relevant as the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, and rising operational costs disproportionately impacted women-led CSOs. The project’s localization strategy enabled organizations to remain operational, engage in advocacy, and deliver gender equality programming despite these structural challenges.

As one stakeholder noted during fieldwork: “The program isn’t just about funding but about strengthening the feminist movement’s roots and building sustainable change.”¹⁰ This quote exemplifies the coherence between project design and the Strategic Plan’s emphasis on long-term transformation and systemic resilience.

Finally, the project’s inclusive and participatory implementation model also reflects the Strategic Plan’s guiding principle of “leaving no one behind,” particularly in its focus on

¹⁰ KII notes

intersectionality, local leadership, and enabling marginalized voices, such as those of women with disabilities, to take part in civic and political life.

EQ2.2 Contribution to UNSDCF Türkiye (2021–2025)

F2.2 The project plays a pivotal role in advancing the UNSDCF for Türkiye, particularly under Outcome 1.2: "By 2025, women and girls have improved and equal access to resources, opportunities, and rights, and enjoy a life free of violence and discrimination."

Addressing Gender Inequality through Holistic Interventions

The project contributes to this outcome by addressing systemic gender inequalities through comprehensive interventions. These include capacity-building for women-led CSOs, development of evidence-based advocacy tools, and fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships. For example, the project's research on the status and needs of rural women, conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, has provided critical insights into the barriers faced by women in rural settings. These findings have informed both advocacy efforts and policy recommendations, directly aligning with UNSDCF priorities.

The project's small grants program for grassroots organizations has expanded access to resources for gender equality. This funding mechanism has directly addressed the UNSDCF goal of increasing opportunities for women and girls, particularly in contexts where gender gaps persist. Additionally, by supporting initiatives such as advocacy for women with disabilities and through inclusion of LGBTQI+ and refugee and migrant women's CSOs the project ensures inclusivity and intersectionality in its approach.

Synergistic Efforts with UN Agencies

The project significantly enhanced synergies within the broader United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Türkiye, effectively integrating its gender equality initiatives into collaborative UN efforts. One notable area of synergy was capacity-building and advocacy coordination through joint events and shared strategic initiatives. The Policy Dialogue Series on the care economy exemplified this collaborative effort, aligning directly with the UNSDCF thematic priority on inclusive social protection and care systems. Through this dialogue series, UN Women partnered with International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), collectively addressing the complexities and gendered implications of care work in Türkiye

These inter-agency dialogues facilitated the alignment of local and national efforts with global gender equality frameworks, providing participants valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange and strategic alignment. One participant emphasized: *"The discussions allowed us to connect our work to broader policy frameworks, creating pathways to influence national and international gender equality agendas."* Furthermore, collaborative publications like the joint UN policy briefs on the care economy (for example, the "Global Alliance for Care" concept note and information brief) contributed to evidence-based advocacy, ensuring coherent messaging across the UN system on policy priorities such as economic empowerment, unpaid care labor, and women's economic rights.

Building Data-Driven Advocacy Capacities

The UNSDCF emphasizes evidence-based planning and monitoring. The project has directly contributed by equipping CSOs with tools and skills to generate and utilize gender-sensitive data. The development of the "Modular Gender Data and Statistics Capacity Development Programme" reflects a strong alignment with UNSDCF's emphasis on building capacities for data-driven decision-making. A grantee remarked: "The gender data training enabled us to base our advocacy on solid evidence, making our case more compelling to policymakers."¹¹

EQ2.3 Synergies with Other Stakeholders

F2.3 The project demonstrated a strong capacity to foster meaningful collaboration across CSOs, public institutions, and academic actors, each playing a distinct and complementary role in the ecosystem for advancing gender equality. Evaluation findings consistently highlighted "synergy" as a recurring theme across stakeholder testimonies, suggesting that the project did not merely fund isolated activities but actively cultivated shared spaces, partnerships, and dialogue among sectors that often operate independently.

One of the most substantial achievements of the project was the facilitation of CSO learning and collaboration in collective environments such as training and mentorship where they engaged with experienced experts from civic space. For instance, multiple small CSOs reported that their engagement in advocacy work was enriched through these mentorship relations. As one mentee noted: *"We not only received funding, but we became part of a network—this changed how we think about advocacy and our place in the feminist movement."* The hackathon further strengthened CSO-to-CSO collaboration by encouraging co-design of gender equality advocacy tools, leading to digital products that were jointly developed and shared among grassroots organizations.

The project also engaged strategically with public institutions through its policy dialogue and advocacy activities. The Care Economy Policy Dialogue Series is one key example: it convened representatives from ministries, municipalities, and women's organizations to collectively discuss gender-responsive social protection systems. These events provided rare opportunities for local CSOs—especially those in rural or conservative provinces—to engage directly with policymakers. In some cases, as observed in the fisherwomen case study, participation in these dialogues enabled CSOs to gain visibility and secure seats at decision-making tables in relevant ministries. The collaboration was not limited to dialogue alone; in certain small grant projects, local municipalities partnered with grantee organizations to co-host events and outreach campaigns, suggesting an increasing openness of local government actors to feminist civil society. A participant noted: "By creating platforms for dialogue, the project has made it possible to engage with stakeholders we had no access to before, amplifying our collective impact."¹² Furthermore, the project's collaboration with government entities, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, on research and advocacy for rural women's needs exemplifies its synergy with stakeholders. This effort fills critical gaps in

¹¹ KII notes

¹² KII notes

gender-focused policy frameworks. Insights from fieldwork revealed the importance of this coordination: "The research on rural women helped us address gaps in data, providing actionable insights to policymakers and CSOs alike."¹³

Academic institutions were mobilized primarily through research-based components of the project, particularly under Output 2 related to gender data. For example, the Gender Equality Academy and data literacy training programs often included university faculty as trainers or advisors. In one instance, a CSO collaborated with a faculty member to reflect on a gender data collection tool that would later be integrated into their local advocacy strategy. These collaborations also enhanced the scientific rigor and credibility of CSO-led data initiatives, bridging the gap between activism and evidence-based policy work.

The following quote from one small grantee organization sums up the synergy that was inherent in the Project: "During these collaborative activities, we met many new stakeholders and enriched our ecosystem with individuals and institutions from both academia and civil society that could contribute to our association."

The evaluation finds that the project demonstrates strong coherence by effectively aligning with the UN Women's Strategic Plan, the UNSDCF Türkiye (2021–2025), and Türkiye's national frameworks. Through its design and implementation, the project has ensured synergies between stakeholders, complemented other initiatives, and integrated efforts within the broader UN system and national gender equality landscape.

4.3 Effectiveness

EQ3.1 To what extent have the project's expected outcomes and outputs been achieved?

F3.1 The project made substantial contributions toward achieving its intended outcomes and outputs across all three pillars of intervention: (1) strengthening the institutional capacity of CSOs, (2) advancing gender-sensitive data and research, and (3) fostering multistakeholder partnerships for advocacy. The triangulated evidence from quantitative indicators, progress reports, and qualitative data confirms that most targets were either met or exceeded, while also contributing meaningfully to longer-term changes in the gender equality and civic space ecosystem in Türkiye.

Strengthening Institutional Capacity of CSOs

Capacity development was at the core of the project's design and implementation. The Small Grants Programme—a flagship mechanism for direct support—surpassed its initial target by supporting 36 grassroots, women-led CSOs, compared to the planned 26. Among them, four CSOs specifically worked with or were led by refugee women, fully achieving the sub-target for marginalized groups.

¹³ KII notes

Evidence from surveys with small grantees shows that 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their CSO had gained new skills due to project support. The areas of skill enhancement included digital communications, project management, strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation. This was further substantiated by qualitative fieldwork, which indicated that institutional resilience improved through the project, even amidst economic crises and post-disaster recovery.

Importantly, the increased capacity translated into concrete improvements in advocacy and service delivery. For example, one CSO reported that using its newly acquired data management skills to improve consultations with LGBTQI+ beneficiaries, while another developed a community-level advocacy strategy on gender-responsive DRR, showing a clear link between capacity inputs and enhanced advocacy outputs. Several CSOs also developed sustainability plans, entered new partnerships, or diversified their funding sources, indicating a more strategic and resilient organizational posture.

Advancing Gender-Sensitive Data and Research

Output 2 focused on equipping CSOs and other stakeholders with the tools and resources necessary to engage in data-informed advocacy and program implementation. The project met or exceeded its targets in this area:

- Three research studies were completed—on rural women, women with disabilities, and women’s access to justice¹⁴—directly addressing evidence gaps and informing stakeholders across sectors.
- Citizen-generated data initiatives reached five, surpassing the target of three.
- The knowledge increase among training participants on gender data was 61.6%, slightly above the 60% target.
-

These efforts contributed to strengthening a culture of data-informed advocacy. For example, SPoD, a small grantee, developed a data infrastructure to track the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals seeking counseling services. This initiative, initiated under the grant and continued beyond the project cycle, exemplifies how CSOs transitioned from passive recipients of training to active producers of knowledge, reinforcing their role in rights-based advocacy.

Progress was also made in cultivating good practices. The Hackathon on gender-sensitive data brought together grassroots actors, academics, and policy influencers to co-create innovative tools, showcasing how the project helped bridge technical knowledge gaps while contributing to policy-relevant knowledge production.

Strengthening Multistakeholder Partnerships and Advocacy

¹⁴ Women in Rural Türkiye: Navigating Barriers in Access to Resources, Services, and Decision-Making, 2024; Status, Needs, and Priorities of Women with Disabilities in Türkiye: A Rights- Based Research, 2024; Advocacy Strategy Report of Civil Society Organizations on Women’s Access to Justice, 2024.

The third outcome area aimed to create enabling platforms and networks that amplify the voices of gender equality advocates. Outputs in this area exceeded expectations:

- Nineteen international exchanges were supported, nearly doubling the initial target of 10.
- Seven new national or regional networks were established, exceeding the goal of five.
- Platforms such as the Policy Dialogue Series on the care economy convened over 200 participants, promoting structured engagement between CSOs, government, and academia.

Qualitative interviews revealed that these activities not only increased visibility for small and mid-sized CSOs but also expanded their access to policy processes and institutional allies. For instance, participants in the Policy Dialogue on Care spoke of how they used the platform to raise underrepresented policy concerns, such as the care burden on women during emergencies.

Furthermore, CSOs working in post-earthquake zones were able to initiate new collaborations with local authorities, illustrating how partnerships facilitated through the project had practical outcomes for service delivery and policy engagement. One grantee explained: “Before this project, we didn’t have access to certain stakeholders in our municipality. Now, we’re invited to sit at the same table.” The increased access for advocacy work also extended to international advocacy. In the words of a partner CSO: “It [the Project] had a structure that brought us together and enabled us to contribute to these global issues that concern us.”

EQ3.2 Has the project led to any unexpected results, whether positive or negative?

F3.2 Both the UN Women reporting and the evaluation team’s fieldwork findings demonstrate unexpected positive results.

. Small CSOs reported the most unexpected positive outcomes.

- 1) **Increased Reach and Visibility:** The project enabled CSOs to reach broader and more diverse audiences than initially anticipated through digital platforms and social media. This visibility expanded their influence nationally and internationally, as well as among target groups. “Thanks to the more intensive use of digital platforms, we managed to reach a much larger audience than expected. Online training and events attracted interest not only locally but also from across Türkiye and internationally.”¹⁵ Additionally, this reach translated into broader participation by the targeted beneficiaries, as highlighted by multiple stakeholders: “Training programs exceeded the targeted number of participants, becoming a significant indicator of the project’s success.”¹⁶
- 2) **Capacity Development in New Areas:** CSOs unexpectedly developed new technical and administrative capacities. These included project management skills, financial management, and navigating bureaucratic processes. “The bureaucracy and reporting

¹⁵ Survey data

¹⁶ Survey data and KII notes

process became so heavy that we had to expand our team, which gave us the opportunity to train new members in project management. This, in turn, increased our technical capacity in unexpected ways.”¹⁷ There was also a sense of pride of having successfully completed a UN Women support and its activities, raising their perceived competence. We observed the latter even in one partner organization.

- 3) **Context-Specific Success Stories:** Unique achievements tailored to specific fields, such as connecting women fishers with institutional support or delivering critical interventions in earthquake-affected areas, stood out as project highlights. “Through field visits in the earthquake zone, we identified the current situation of women fishers and their families. By connecting local institutions with fishers, we were able to provide significant support to many families.”¹⁸ Similarly, some CSOs demonstrated innovative adaptability by redirecting project goals to address emerging needs, such as caregiving labor, while still aligning with the project's overarching objectives

EQ3.3 How successful was the intervention in engaging and building the capacities of stakeholders/beneficiaries?

F3.3 The project was effective in addressing the diverse needs of its stakeholders, ensuring that resources were allocated to foster capacity-building in ways that align with the actors' starting points and goals. Significant capacity building has taken place that is broken down below.

Qualitative data helps us to differentiate different stakeholders and see the relative contribution of the project to their respective skill sets and capacities. The qualitative data provides a nuanced understanding of how the project's outputs contributed to the enhancement of various skills and capacities across different actors, highlighting diverse outcomes depending on the stakeholder group. Below is a comparison and contrast based on the skill and capacity categories.

1. Increased Advocacy Skills

- **Small Grantees:** Small grantees demonstrated notable improvement in advocacy skills, often integrating these into their organizational strategies. This reflects the project's emphasis on empowering grassroots organizations to navigate and influence the local civic space effectively.
- **Partner CSOs:** While partner CSOs also reported increased advocacy skills, the emphasis appeared more on scaling their existing advocacy efforts rather than foundational skill development, highlighting their more advanced starting point.

2. Increased Capacity for Digital Communications

- **Small Grantees:** Small grantees benefitted significantly from training and resources that helped them utilize digital tools for outreach and organizational visibility. This

¹⁷ Survey data and KII notes

¹⁸ Survey data

aligns with the project's goal of fostering inclusivity and reach, especially for underrepresented groups.

- **Advocates and Trainees:** This group showed improvements in their ability to amplify their voices on digital platforms, which was particularly crucial for sharing gender equality messages in restrictive environments.

3. Increased Capacity for Volunteer Relations

- **Partner CSOs:** Partner CSOs frequently highlighted their enhanced ability to manage and engage volunteers effectively, allowing them to expand their networks and operational reach.
- **Small Grantees:** For small grantees, this capacity translated into stronger grassroots engagement, ensuring the sustainability of their initiatives by mobilizing local support.

4. Increased General Skill Set

- **All Stakeholders:** Across all stakeholder groups, there was a reported increase in general skills, including organizational management and project planning. However, the degree varied, with small grantees reporting more transformative outcomes compared to the incremental growth observed in partner CSOs.

5. Increased Monitoring Capacity

- **Partner CSOs:** Partner CSOs benefitted from tailored capacity-building sessions, which improved their ability to monitor and evaluate their programs effectively. This directly contributed to the sustainability and accountability of their initiatives.
- **Small Grantees:** The improvements were more foundational, helping small grantees establish baseline monitoring practices, which are critical for their growth and future partnerships.

6. Increased Visibility

- **Small Grantees:** Small grantees saw marked improvements in their visibility within their communities and among national and international networks. This is significant for smaller organizations that often struggle with recognition.
- **Partner CSOs:** While partner CSOs also enhanced their visibility, their focus was more on strategic visibility for advocacy and partnerships.

7. Strengthened Gender Awareness

- Across all stakeholders, increased GEWE awareness was a recurring theme. Small grantees reported newfound capacities to mainstream gender issues within their communities and institutions. As one grantee that focuses on development stated,

“The project gave us the tools to reframe livelihood challenges under the lens of women’s issues, fundamentally changing how we approach solutions”¹⁹.

8. Strengthened Civic Engagement:

- Engagement with non-CSO actors also expanded significantly. Partnerships were built with municipalities, ministries, and private institutions, creating a more robust network for advocacy and collaboration. As one partner CSO noted, “These dialogues gave us the opportunity to influence policies in ways we hadn’t been able to before, ensuring women’s voices were heard in critical decision-making spaces”²⁰.

9. Strengthened Capacity to Establish and Sustain Networks

- The Project contributed to the civic space by enhancing the ability of CSOs—particularly small and grassroots organizations—to build and sustain networks. **Quantitative evidence** from the project’s survey of small grantees underscores this achievement. A substantial **83.3%** of respondents reported that the project helped them establish or strengthen networks with other CSOs. Additionally, **80.6%** of respondents indicated that they were now more confident in initiating or joining multi-stakeholder platforms. These findings reflect the project’s effectiveness in enabling organizations—many of them first-time grantees—to transition from relatively isolated operations to more networked and collaborative practices. This quantitative data is reinforced by **qualitative fieldwork**, which revealed that many CSOs established new partnerships through project-supported trainings, dialogues, and mentorship cycles. Several CSOs formed issue-based alliances or thematic working groups that extended beyond the project’s life cycle. As one respondent expressed: “Through this project, we didn’t just connect with organizations like ours but also discovered institutions and networks working on similar issues in entirely different regions. These connections are still active and growing.”²¹ The project also supported **in-person convenings and regional forums**, which played a catalytic role in building these networks. One striking result from the MAXQDA-coded data showed that increased access to **network opportunities** was one of the most frequently mentioned unexpected positive outcomes across both small grantees and partners.

Both small grantees and partner CSOs emphasized the value of tailored support that considered their specific needs and capacities. Across all groups, increased advocacy, monitoring, and general organizational skills were consistent themes. Small grantees tended to report foundational growth in key capacities, such as digital communications and monitoring, while partner CSOs leveraged the project’s resources to build on their existing capacities.

¹⁹ KII notes

²⁰ KII notes

²¹ KII notes

EQ3.4 What challenges or obstacles have been encountered, and how were they addressed?

F3.4 The project faced substantial external challenges that disrupted its operations and it addressed all of them in various ways. 1) The recent earthquake in Türkiye posed logistical and operational difficulties, disrupting planned activities and affecting the overall timeline of some interventions. 2) Additionally, the financial crisis in Türkiye, characterized by soaring inflation and a volatile exchange rate, created significant constraints. These economic challenges had directly affected project funding and implementation. Specifically, human resource allocations for CSOs sometimes fell below minimum wage due to inflation, reducing the intended financial support's sufficiency. Rising costs also forced some CSOs to abandon or change their plans to procure some services or resorting to their volunteer bases for some of these services. 3) There were also political challenges due to the changing legal and cultural environment regarding GEWE.

Earthquake as a challenge:

Partner organizations noted that they had to reformulate their project activities entirely to respond to the pressing needs of earthquake survivors. New initiatives, such as support centers for women, youth, and children, emerged as direct outcomes of these adaptations. These centers became vital in addressing the immediate needs of affected populations, ensuring that the project's objectives aligned with the evolving realities on the ground. Statements like “we shifted formats to directly serve earthquake victims”²² illustrate the project's flexibility in transforming its focus while maintaining its overarching goals.

Key partners further highlighted that local governance collaborations had to be reconsidered due to the earthquake's disruption. Some partners redirected their efforts toward chambers of commerce and industrial unions, such as the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce and Mardin Organized Industrial Zone Association. This shift demonstrates a pragmatic response to operational challenges, ensuring that civic activities continued through alternative channels. As one partner reflected, “we turned to local actors, focusing on chambers to sustain our collaborations,”²³ highlighting the project's ability to reconfigure its networks to maintain relevance and efficacy.

Moreover, stakeholders underscored that the project's response to the earthquake was not merely reactive but strategically integrated into its broader framework of gender equality and civil society strengthening. The creation of women's support centers and youth-focused programs exemplifies the project's ability to address intersecting challenges of gender vulnerability and disaster recovery. The reliance on pre-existing organizational structures, combined with innovative partnerships, ensured that the project's interventions were both effective and sustainable, even in a drastically changed environment.

²² KII notes

²³ KII notes

The earthquake response emphasized the importance of flexibility and partnership as core tenets of the project's strategy. Through a combination of local engagement, adaptive planning, and a continued focus on gender equality, the project successfully reaffirmed its relevance in a time of unprecedented national crisis. This adaptability not only preserved but also expanded the project's reach, underlining its importance in Türkiye's civic space during a period of heightened vulnerability. Desk review findings point to a report in post-earthquake period titled as "Rapid Assessment: Impact of Türkiye's Kahramanmaraş Earthquake on Civil Society Organizations Working on Women's Rights and Gender Equality". The report demonstrates the dexterity shown by the UN Women in the face of disaster. The manner in which the report was gathered is also innovative. There were four consultation meetings with CSOs in the earthquake zone and there was also a separate consultation meeting with the City Platform of Diyarbakır, comprised of over 200 organizations. Such consultations focusing solely on the needs of women is evidence of the fact that the project team overcame the challenges of the earthquake and did so in coherence and relevance with the rest of the project design.

Challenges and Responses to Financial and Exchange Rate Crises

The financial and exchange rate crises significantly affected the project's implementation, introducing challenges in budget management, allocation of resources, and the completion of planned activities. However, a mix of strategic revisions, adaptive measures, and external support ensured the continuation of critical activities. Below is an analysis of the challenges and how they were addressed, categorized for clarity:

Inflation and Rising Costs

Inflation dramatically increased the costs of planned activities, making initial budget estimates obsolete. Examples include higher transportation, accommodation, and material costs. A small grantee noted: "When we designed the project, the allocated budget seemed sufficient. However, due to inflation, we had to revise or cancel some training programs."²⁴

This challenge was addressed through budget revisions and prioritization. For instance, some CSOs reported relying on voluntary contributions to fill the funding gap.

Exchange Rate Volatility

The project's reliance on Turkish Lira (TL)-based budgets, while receiving funds in foreign currencies like Euros, created challenges during periods of exchange rate fluctuations. For instance, one small grantee stated: "Exchange rate fluctuations caused difficulties in managing costs. UN Women mitigated these issues by updating the exchange rate mid-project to avoid further disruptions."²⁵

Human Resources and Minimum Wage Adjustments

²⁴ Survey data and KII notes

²⁵ Survey data and KII notes

Inflation also affected human resource costs, with some small grantees reporting difficulties in maintaining staff at minimum wage levels. As one expert observed: "It is against human rights to pay below the minimum wage, but rising inflation and static budgets forced us to reconsider project roles."²⁶ Some staff shifted to part-time positions as a solution to the minimum wage issue, though some grantees still struggled to align payments with labor market realities.

Flexibility and Adaptation

UN Women exhibited financial flexibility within the limits of its operational framework. By allowing some grantees to revise their planned activities and budgets, the project adapted to unforeseen economic pressures. For example: "The ability to reallocate funds and adjust the scope of activities, such as switching from physical to digital training, helped mitigate the consequences of rising costs."²⁷ The UN Women overall feministic work ethic and availability to the questions of all stakeholders also eased their financial frustrations.

Strengthening Financial Oversight

Despite the challenges, the project strengthened the financial management capacities of grantees. As a positive outcome, many small grantees reported an unexpected improvement in their financial management skills, even in the face of economic hardship. This was seen as an unintended yet valuable capacity-building result.

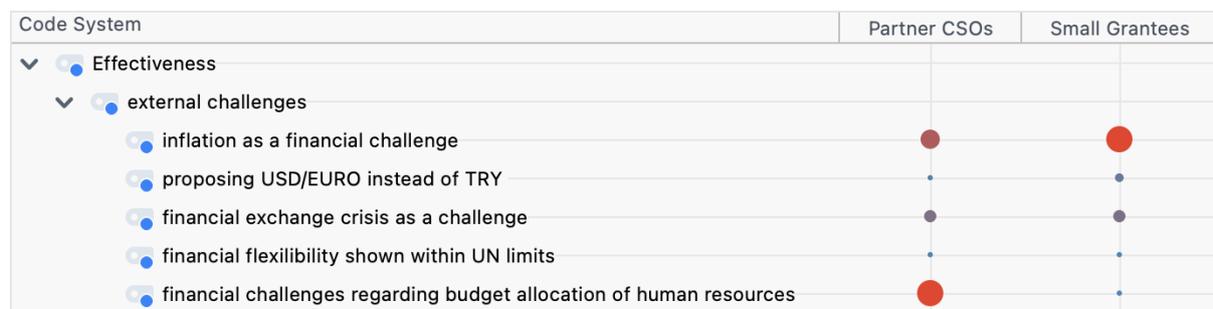


Figure 6: External Challenges

Figure 6 presents coded segments from stakeholder interviews, visualized using MAXQDA software. Each colored dot indicates the presence of coded data related to a specific external financial challenge (e.g., inflation or exchange rate issues) experienced by either partner CSOs or small grantees. The size of the dot reflects the frequency of references made to that specific challenge, with larger dots indicating higher mention rates in the data. Both partner CSOs and small grantees were significantly affected by inflation, with this challenge being the most frequently mentioned across stakeholder types. Partner CSOs also reported notable difficulties related to budget allocation for human resources, while exchange rate fluctuations were a shared but less prominent concern.

While the financial and exchange rate crises posed significant obstacles, the project successfully navigated these through adaptive measures, enhanced financial management, and strategic flexibility. The ability of UN Women to mitigate risks and support grantees

²⁶ KII notes

²⁷ Survey data

ensured the continued relevance and effectiveness of the project's interventions in a volatile economic environment.

Political and Cultural Challenges

Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention emerged as a critical challenge, symbolizing a setback for gender equality initiatives and altering the landscape of civic engagement. Stakeholders reported a heightened atmosphere of risk, with frequent restrictions and uncertainties for CSOs. For example, one respondent described the environment as “working under constant threat of closure, investigation, or detention”²⁸. Such political shifts required organizations to develop resilience and adapt strategies to continue operations effectively.

The capacity to engage with governmental bodies was another critical issue. While UN Women aimed to act as a bridge, “the closed doors”²⁹ of institutions such as the Ministry of Family and Social Services limited direct dialogue and access. Participants emphasized the importance of enhancing UN Women’s coordination with these bodies to foster more inclusive and transformative policy dialogues. One participant noted, “UN Women’s support in opening closed doors for CSOs remains invaluable, though stronger institutional ties could amplify these efforts.”³⁰

The broader political atmosphere in Türkiye, characterized by increased authoritarian measures and reduced space for civil discourse, and ironically the frequent elections during the project’s implementation period created additional hurdles. For instance, election periods shifted governmental priorities, delaying collaborations and diminishing focus on gender-related programs. The political environment's influence extended beyond bureaucracy, as some participants expressed the need to compromise on language and approaches to navigate these constraints. This was particularly challenging for projects addressing sensitive topics like LGBTQI+ rights, with one trainee stating, “We work under the constant shadow of closure or backlash, which is exhausting both physically and emotionally.”³¹

Despite these challenges, the project demonstrated significant adaptability. The promotion of robust advocacy strategies is a notable intervention. More importantly, the solidarity networks formed through the project as well as non-hierarchical, solidarity-driven partnership and collaboration offered crucial support during crises, fostering a sense of resilience and collective action.

Cultural constraints emerged as a localized but significant barrier to project implementation, particularly in regions where female employment and public participation are not widely accepted. One partner organization reported that in certain urban centers, strong patriarchal norms led some participants to withdraw from project activities, often due to family or community pressure. In some cases, support offered to women was subsequently reversed by family members who either disapproved or feared social backlash. These challenges—operating largely within the private sphere—proved difficult to mitigate through programmatic

²⁸ KII notes

²⁹ KII notes

³⁰ KII notes

³¹ KII notes

interventions. KIIs suggest that such resistance was not widespread but was closely tied to specific geographies and topics, underscoring the importance of culturally sensitive and context-specific strategies in future programming.

EQ3.5 Has the project implemented effective monitoring mechanisms to track progress towards its goals?

F3.5 The project implemented effective monitoring mechanisms to track progress toward its goals. The project’s monitoring systems were both structured and reflexive, ensuring progress could be meaningfully tracked and integrated into decision-making.

Evidence from internal documents, including the Performance Monitoring Framework (CSO Phase I) and the first and second progress reports confirms that the project was guided by a robust results-based management framework. This framework included clear indicators, baselines, and targets across outputs and outcomes, which enabled systematic data collection and analysis throughout the implementation period. Up-to-date indicator progress sheet also provides evidence of the effectiveness of the monitoring mechanisms.

Monitoring was conducted using a combination of tools, including grantee reporting templates, training feedback forms, and monitoring visits, complemented by UN Women’s internal tracking of quantitative indicators (e.g., number of CSOs reached, trainings delivered, advocacy initiatives supported). In addition, evaluation fieldwork triangulated these results with qualitative evidence from small grantees and partner CSOs, confirming that the monitoring mechanisms were not only in place but also responsive and adaptive to contextual developments (e.g., earthquake, financial crises). Furthermore, lessons and findings from internal reflection processes—such as end-of-programme mentorship reports and hackathon feedback—informed the strategic realignment of certain activities, showing a clear feedback loop between monitoring and programmatic adaptation.

EQ3.6 Have any innovative best practices been introduced in the project to achieve GEWE results?

F3.6 Ten best practices have been identified during the fieldwork and desk research.

Fostering Synergies Between Organizations: Collaborative initiatives, such as rural women-focused panels or women with disabilities workshops that were designed to be very participatory incorporating all relevant stakeholders, highlighted the value of collective action in amplifying gender equality advocacy. These efforts created influential networks that brought women’s voices to the forefront and strengthened the gender-responsive focus of organizational partnerships. “We came together with other organizations to organize a panel on rural women’s rights. It allowed us to share experiences and create a joint voice for our advocacy.”³²

Empowering Gender Equality Advocacy: The project enhanced the advocacy skills of CSO members and volunteers, equipping them to lead gender-sensitive campaigns effectively. These efforts resulted in increased visibility for women’s issues and a strengthened focus on

³² KII notes

addressing systemic gender inequalities. This is innovative because the UN Women’s focus on GEWE meeting advocacy gaps in Turkish civil society in this expansive and extensive manner is new. “Our advocacy became sharper, more focused. We now address gender inequalities directly and effectively, especially when engaging with municipalities.”³³

Enhanced Visibility and Public Engagement: Small grantees developed innovative gender-focused public engagement activities, such as gender memory walks, to challenge societal norms and raise awareness about gender inequality. These initiatives not only increased organizational visibility but also positioned gender equality as a central public concern. “The gender memory walk created such a buzz in our community.”³⁴.”

Institutional Capacity Building with a Gender Lens: Capacity-building efforts focused on integrating gender sensitivity into project management, digital communication, and governance. This enhanced institutional practices by embedding gender-responsive strategies into operational and leadership frameworks which resulted in an overall cultural effect on the organization “Especially in the field of gender equality, the activities that encouraged us to think from a different perspective and helped spread this perspective within the organization and adapt it to daily life have transformed our mixed organizational structure, which has existed for many years.”³⁵ .”

Integrating Gender Sensitivity into Decision-Making: The project supported efforts to address gender gaps in policy and practice, particularly in male-dominated sectors like fisheries. By incorporating women’s perspectives into decision-making, it advanced gender equality and challenged traditional power structures. “For the first time, women in our community participated in the decision-making processes related to our sector.”³⁶

Developing Gender-Responsive Educational Tools: Tailored educational materials, such as brochures on CEDAW recommendations, empowered women with knowledge of their rights. These tools improved access to justice and helped close gender gaps in legal literacy and advocacy. “The brochures on CEDAW were simple but powerful; women started to understand their rights in ways they never had before.”³⁷

Innovative Gender-Focused Program Design: Initiatives such as feminist social work workshops and online psychological and legal support services designed and implemented by partner organizations addressed gender-based challenges innovatively. These programs provided targeted solutions that catered to women’s specific needs and fostered empowerment: “The feminist social work workshops transformed how we approach women’s issues, giving us the tools to support them more holistically.”³⁸

Grassroots Mobilization for Gender Equality: The formation of strong women’s groups facilitated grassroots advocacy for gender equality. These groups played a critical role in driving change at the local level, ensuring that women’s voices were central to community

³³ KII notes

³⁴ KII notes

³⁵ Survey response

³⁶ KII notes

³⁷ KII notes

³⁸ KII notes

development efforts. “The women’s group we formed is now a force in the community; they speak up for gender equality in every local meeting.”³⁹

Gender-Sensitive Training and Awareness-Raising: Training programs emphasized gender-sensitive methodologies, equipping CSOs to deliver effective gender education in their communities. This created a ripple effect of empowerment, where individuals became catalysts for broader societal change. “After the training, I felt equipped to educate others about gender equality, and now, I see the impact in my own community.”⁴⁰

Responsive Adaptation to Gendered Needs: The project’s flexibility allowed for piloting gender-responsive initiatives, such as online support systems, to address urgent needs effectively. This was important in the disaster response efforts after the earthquake. This adaptability ensured that the interventions remained relevant and inclusive during times of crisis. “The online support system we developed became a lifeline for women who could not physically access our services.”⁴¹

4.4 Efficiency

EQ4.1 Has the project been implemented and managed efficiently?

F4.1 The project has been implemented and managed efficiently.

Based on the evaluation’s comprehensive analysis of project documentation, KIIs with project stakeholders, and surveys of CSOs, the overall efficiency of the project’s implementation and management has been found to be highly positive. A key factor contributing to this success was the exceptional coordination with external partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. The project team maintained consistent communication with all parties involved, ensuring that each stakeholder had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This level of coordination not only facilitated the timely completion of activities but also strengthened trust and collaboration among CSOs, trainees, and mentors, creating a more cohesive and supportive working environment.

Another critical strength was the project team’s flexibility and adaptability in managing changes and addressing unexpected challenges. Türkiye’s recent economic and environmental crises, including the earthquake and financial instability, posed significant obstacles to project implementation. Despite these hurdles, the team exhibited remarkable agility in revising plans, reallocating resources, and ensuring that the core objectives of the project were not compromised. For example, in response to inflationary pressures and rising costs, the team worked closely with CSOs to find cost-effective solutions and adjust budgets where necessary. This proactive approach enabled the project to maintain its momentum and continue delivering meaningful outcomes, even under adverse conditions.

EQ4.2 Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been strategically allocated to achieve the project outcomes?

³⁹ KII notes

⁴⁰ KII notes

⁴¹ KII notes

F4.2 The allocation and use of resources within this large-scale project were found to be highly effective, particularly in terms of financial and technical support.

Despite operating under challenging circumstances, including economic instability and unforeseen crises such as inflation and the earthquake, the project team demonstrated exceptional resource management. Financial resources were efficiently utilized to achieve the planned outcomes, with a clear focus on maximizing effectiveness. Technical resources, such as the training modules and mentorship programs, were also effectively deployed, enabling significant capacity-building for CSOs and individual activists. These efforts ensured the project's success in delivering key outputs and fostering tangible outcomes in the areas of gender equality and civil society empowerment. As one small grantee reported back when asked for the factors behind the success of their use of funds and their delivery of outputs: "We were able to get the full amount we wanted in terms of budget, we received time flexibility, our UN consultant who guided us, guided us correctly."⁴²

The responsiveness of the project team in reallocating resources to meet emerging demands was another notable strength. For instance, adjustments were made to address inflationary pressures on costs for venues and services, and to provide support to CSOs grappling with operational challenges. This flexibility ensured that the project maintained its focus and continued to meet its objectives despite the external challenges, demonstrating the team's capacity for strategic and adaptive resource management.

However, the evaluation identified a need for improvement in the allocation of human resources. While the project's human resources were utilized effectively overall, they were not always sufficient to meet the needs of the CSOs. This was particularly significant given that strengthening human capacity is itself a primary objective of the project. In some cases, human resource allocations fell short of expectations due to inflationary pressures, leading to gaps in support. One subcategory of human resources relates to the financial bureaucracy of the UN in general, the significant documentation required for the use of resources and the reporting requirement. One respondent reported this as follows: In projects where so much documentation is collected, it may be necessary to work with an accountant. It may be good to explicitly include a line item in the budget for this, or to indicate it as an 'eligible expenditure item'⁴³.

The evaluation also found an area where improvements could be made: the content and timing of the financial and administrative training that is given to the CSOs to ensure smooth project implementation. The CSOs benefited from the training. However, due to the length of the period of the project, CSOs entered the project cycle at different periods and the training is suggested to be scheduled so that each CSO can benefit from it at the beginning of their particular cycle. Sometimes CSOs had to change the coordinators for their UN Women projects, new coordinators also require training to ensure less burden on the UN Women staff as they compensate for the coordinator's lack of financial training by doing several questions and answers sessions on the phone. Also, the financial training can include more exercises geared towards practical matters, to ensure that CSOs experience a simulation of what is to

⁴² KII notes

⁴³ KII notes

come in terms of financial reporting. “More hands-on training should be provided. Therefore, we had some difficulties in the reporting processes each time.”⁴⁴

EQ4.3 Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?

F4.3 Despite several obstacles and in general the politically inconducive environment of Türkiye, the outputs have been generally delivered in timely manner.

The desk review, the survey results and the KIIs of fieldwork collectively show that this inconducive environment did not stop the UN Women’s Civic Space project and its implementing partners from delivering the outputs. The small grantees also emphasized the timely completion of the outputs. The four grantees who reported negatively to being on schedule declared the earthquake as the main reason for the changes in the schedule.

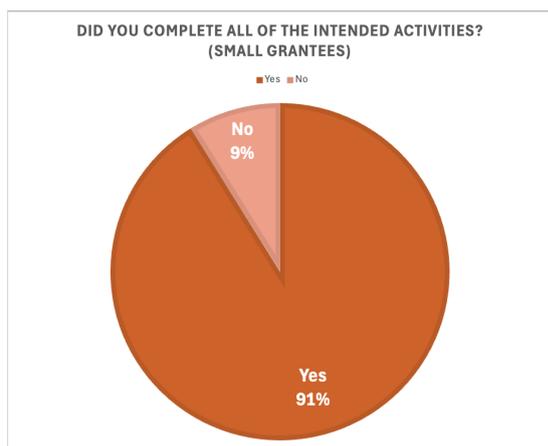


Figure 7: Completion Rate of Intended Activities Activity Timeline

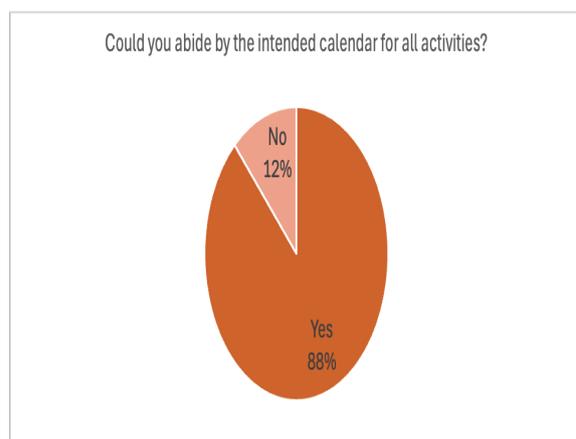


Figure 8: Adherence to

EQ4.4 Is the coordination between project counterparts and UN Women leading to improved project results?

F4.4 The evaluation found that the coordination between UN Women and its project counterparts was exceptional and a critical factor in achieving the project’s results.

Our qualitative coding findings from all survey and interview data show that 100% of all respondents reported effective coordination from the UN Women staff between project counterparts and their own agency. This coordination was distinguished by its grounding in feminist ethics and principles of equality, which were mutually agreed upon and appreciated by all stakeholders. Unlike traditional donor-recipient relationships, where hierarchical structures often dominate, the relationship fostered by UN Women was marked by genuine partnership and collaboration. CSOs, experts, and other stakeholders emphasized the absence of donor-driven hierarchies, noting that the collaborative atmosphere allowed for open dialogue, mutual respect, and shared decision-making. This approach not only ensured smooth project implementation but also empowered the CSOs and individual activists, creating a strong sense of ownership over the outcomes. The alignment of shared values and ethics strengthened trust among stakeholders, contributing significantly to the project's

⁴⁴ KII notes and survey findings

success. This co-ordinational capacity of the UN Women staff also contributed to the overcoming of, what is generally mentioned as “inflexibility of UN bureaucracy”, ensuring smooth project implementation in the face of language and bureaucratic barriers faced by the partners and small grantees. A remarkable finding is as follows: the partners and small grantees generally report different levels of difficulty or ease in terms of efficiency, due to their vastly differing institutional capacities and their differing budgets and roles. For example, there is vast difference in how they perceive UN bureaucracy. Although the partners have bigger institutional capacities, their expanded activities and budgets create a larger interface with UN bureaucratic rules, so they reported higher dissatisfaction in that realm. However, MAXQDA analysis shows that in terms of finding the coordination of UN Women efficient and supportive, partners and small grantees both reported positively. So, this coordination was appreciated by vastly differing CSOs in similar manner. The coordination is also found to be very efficient by the EU delegation, the funding agency.

Code System	Partner CSOs	Small Grantees
▼ Efficiency		
UN Women effective communication with CSOs (+)	34,48%	65,52%
UN bureaucracy as inflexible	71,43%	28,57%
UN Women staff supportive towards CSOs	40,91%	59,09%
UN Women staff flexible	40,00%	60,00%

Figure 9: Assessment of UN Women's Organizational Effectiveness by CSO Type

Figure 9 presents coded stakeholder perceptions of UN Women's organizational efficiency, disaggregated by CSO type. The percentages reflect the share of coded segments from each group (Partner CSOs and Small Grantees) referencing specific themes, such as communication effectiveness, staff support, flexibility, and perceived bureaucratic barriers. The visualization shows that Small Grantees more frequently highlighted UN Women's effective communication and staff support, while Partner CSOs more commonly cited concerns about bureaucratic inflexibility. These patterns suggest varying stakeholder experiences with UN Women's operational modalities, underscoring the importance of differentiated engagement strategies.

The advisory board meetings and steering committee meetings are another interface for the UN Women to coordinate and for the project counterparts to come together. The participants reported high efficiency for that coordination: “... those meetings are not only sessions where we are nurtured, where we give information, but also where people learn from one another.”⁴⁵ These meetings not only ensured good project implementation practices but also ensured a feedback cycle on the project and on Türkiye and GEWE issues as many political and legal shifts occurred in that front.

4.5 Sustainability

The sustainability section of this evaluation examined the extent to which the benefits of the project are likely to endure beyond its conclusion. This analysis was guided by key questions

⁴⁵ KII notes

that explore the project's lasting influence, including the likelihood that its benefits will continue to create positive change, the success of the intervention in strengthening individual and institutional capacities of stakeholders and beneficiaries, and the level of voice and influence afforded to key national partners, including the women's movement, within the project's decision-making processes. Furthermore, we assessed how effectively the project fostered national and local ownership of the achieved results.

Overall, the data indicates that this was a highly sustainable project, even in Türkiye's fragmented and challenged civic space. Despite significant political risks, the project consistently delivered capacity-building efforts that were well-received by small grantees, with many participants reporting substantial opportunities for networking. These networks have played a crucial role in supporting the sustainability of positive outcomes, particularly in advancing civic capacity-building efforts. Through these findings, the section highlights the project's resilience and its contribution to long-term empowerment in a complex socio-political environment.

EQ5.1 What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be sustained over a long period after the project's conclusion?

F5.1 There is a varying likelihood across different benefits regarding sustainability.

The benefits of the project are multifold, and various actors indicated varying degrees of sustainability. Small grantees demonstrated a very high degree of competence in the continuation of the activities and the lasting significance of the benefits. 78% of the small grantees reported that the project contributed to the sustainability of the CSO itself, as it built up several capacities. For some small CSOs this funding was one of the first funds that they received and for others it funded their core activities so that their doors did not close for that year. So, high degree of institutional sustainability due to the project is one area where small CSOs differ from the larger partners. One such excellent example for CSO benefit sustained over a period beyond the project's boundaries is earthquake region. The psychologists were trained to give GEWE sensitive consultations to women through the support of this project are still counselling these women. "Some of the psychologists, not all, but some of them continue to see those earthquake victims."⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Survey data

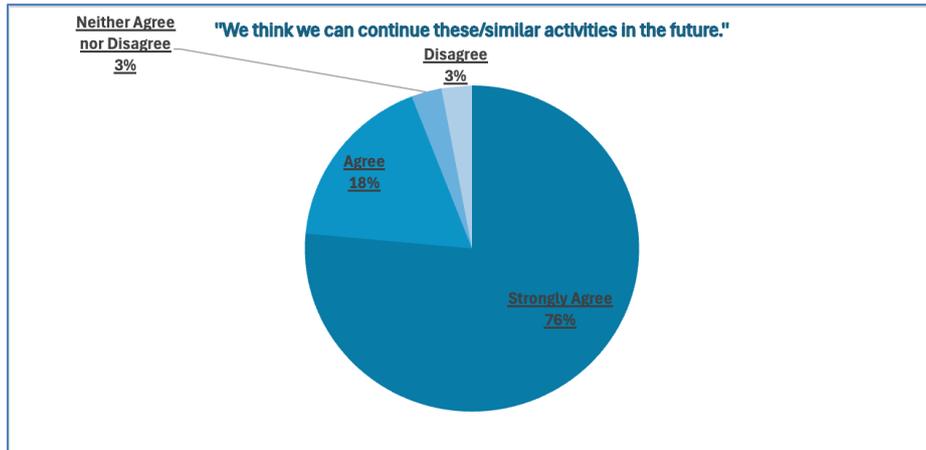


Figure 10: CSOs' Self-Assessment of Activity Sustainability

A quarter of the partners identified the project as a direct contribution to institutional sustainability. However, the majority of partners highlighted increased interaction in the civic space as a more significant and positive contributor to sustainability. This is also reported by the funding agency: “UN Women was able to create several occasions for interaction and exchange of information capacity between the different organizations spread in the country.”⁴⁷ The partners emphasized those occasions as contributing to their sustainability since scattered nature of the civic space and increased political risk to GEWE advocates mean that establishing solidary networks is a fundamental pillar of sustainability.

EQ5.2 How successful was the intervention in building the individual and institutional capacities of stakeholders/beneficiaries?

F5.2 The evaluation findings demonstrate that the intervention was highly successful in building individual and institutional capacities among stakeholders and beneficiaries.

⁴⁷ KII notes

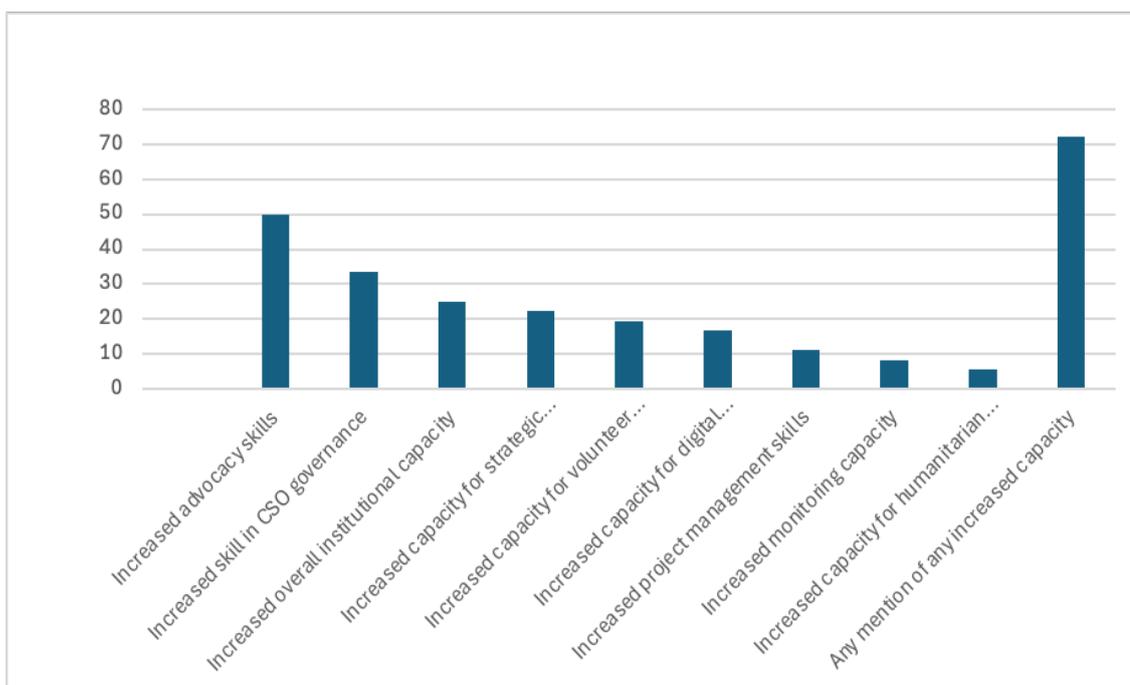


Figure 11: Frequency Table for Increased Capacity and Skills for all Stakeholders

This success is reflected in both the specific data from partner CSOs and small grantees, and the overall trends across all stakeholders. Notably, 72.22% of respondents mentioned at least one capacity area in which they experienced improvement, underscoring the broad influence of the project on diverse civil society actors.

Advocacy skills emerged as the most frequently reported area of improvement, with 50.00% of respondents citing enhanced capacity in this domain. This aligns with the project's ToC regarding the empowering of CSOs to influence policy and public opinion effectively. Increased skills in CSO governance (33.33%) and overall institutional capacity (25.00%) were also widely noted, indicating that the project strengthened the foundational structures and leadership capacities necessary for organizational sustainability. These findings were consistent with the data from partner CSOs, where advocacy skills (33.33%) and overall institutional capacity (26.67%) were also among the most significant areas of improvement.

The project's support for strengthening international advocacy capacities was perceived as valuable by participating advocates. 10 respondents to the online survey composed of open-ended questions designed to understand the process and impact of the international advocacy support highlighted learning how to contribute more effectively to international mechanisms and reported sharing this knowledge within their teams. Several participants indicated they improved their understanding of international advocacy processes and the functioning of UN mechanisms. Others emphasized the motivational effect of being part of an UN-supported initiative and expressed a desire for continued engagement in similar programs to build on the skills and awareness gained through this opportunity.

For small grantees, capacity-building efforts were similarly influential but spanned a broader range of areas. Notable improvements were observed in governance skills (19.05%) and

advocacy skills (21.43%), with additional strengths in volunteer relations (12.70%) and strategic planning (11.90%). These trends are mirrored in the overall data, where 22.22% of stakeholders indicated increased capacity for strategic planning and 19.44% highlighted improved volunteer relations. Importantly, digital communications capacity, an essential skill in today's advocacy landscape, emerged as significant for 16.67% of stakeholders overall, with 13.33% of partner CSOs and 9.52% of small grantees specifically acknowledging advancements in this area.

Increased visibility was a prominent outcome of the project, as reflected in 29.17% of the overall data coded. This enhancement played a crucial role in empowering organizations to amplify their voices and engage more effectively with stakeholders and beneficiaries. The qualitative findings support this, with many respondents reporting that even being part of UN Women meetings increased their visibility which in turn created further networking opportunities and increased sense of competence.

While some areas, such as monitoring capacity (8.33%) and humanitarian aid capacity (5.56%), were less frequently mentioned, this aligns with the project's strategic focus on governance, advocacy, and institutional capacity rather than operational or emergency response skills. The project's emphasis on these strategic capacities ensured that it addressed the core needs of CSOs, enabling them to sustain and expand their effectiveness. Overall, the project successfully built critical capacities across a diverse range of stakeholders.

EQ5.3 What voice and influence do key national partners including women's movement etc. have within the project's decision-making structure and hierarchy?

F5.3 The data overwhelmingly reflects that the project cultivated a collaborative and inclusive atmosphere, where national partners felt heard and valued.

Most respondents in our fieldwork noted that their needs and priorities were consulted either before or during the project design phase, allowing them to see themselves as integral contributors to the process rather than subordinate actors. This collaborative approach was further highlighted by respondents describing the relationship with UN Women staff as one of shared empathy and understanding – “dertleriyle dertleştik (we shared in each other's struggles/concerns)” - which fostered trust and mutual respect.

The AB meetings were a key mechanism through which this partnership was operationalized. These meetings served as effective platforms for partners to exchange information, provide feedback, and engage in meaningful dialogue on gender equality issues. Many respondents praised the meetings as a space where diverse voices were brought together, contributing to the richness of the project's strategic direction. The opportunity to give feedback in these settings was seen as a vital element of the project's participatory ethos.

However, not all respondents felt fully empowered within the decision-making processes. One partner expressed a desire for greater influence in the board meetings, particularly regarding financial implementation changes. While they appreciated that their concerns were

acknowledged— “notlar alınıyor dinleniyor (notes are taken, [we are] being listened to)”⁴⁸— there was uncertainty about the extent to which their feedback was ultimately reflected in project decisions. This highlights a potential area for improvement in ensuring that participatory mechanisms are not only consultative but also demonstrably influential in shaping project outcomes. Yet the financial decisions are where there are UN bureaucratic boundaries and fostering change in that area is limited in any case.

EQ5.4 How effectively has the project fostered national and local ownership of the achieved results?

F5.4 The evaluation findings reveal that the UN Women project has been highly effective in fostering both national and local ownership of the results achieved, particularly within the complex and dynamic civic space of Türkiye.

Data collected from small grantees demonstrates a strong sense of ownership over the collaboration and its outcomes. A significant majority, 66.7%, reported feeling strongly aligned with and supportive of the project’s content and cooperation framework, while an additional 30.6% expressed agreement. This sense of ownership is critical in ensuring the sustainability of gender equality initiatives at both the grassroots and organizational levels.

In addition to small grantee responses, data from a broader range of stakeholders further underscores the project’s success in promoting ownership through its emphasis on GEWE. 45% of respondents cited increased awareness of GEWE among their members as well as larger beneficiaries as a direct outcome of the project, while 30% highlighted the establishment of new best practices toward achieving GEWE outcomes. These findings suggest that the project has not only facilitated capacity building but also fostered a shift in normative attitudes and practices toward gender equality. By embedding these principles within the project’s structure and implementation, UN Women has ensured that GEWE is not just a project deliverable, but a value internalized by stakeholders and contributing to sustainable, yet slow and long-term progress of national ownership.

The project has been notably effective in supporting GEWE mainstreaming across its stakeholders. The data shows that 66.67% of partner CSOs and 33.33% of small grantees incorporated GEWE into their organizational frameworks and strategies. This alignment reflects the project’s success in embedding GEWE principles within its partners, ensuring that the positive outcomes of the project are sustained beyond its timeline. Furthermore, 69.23% of partner CSOs indicated that the project was directly responsive to their needs concerning GEWE, underscoring the project’s relevance and ability to adapt to the specific priorities of its stakeholders.

Additionally, the project has catalyzed changes in normative attitudes toward GEWE. Notably, 66.67% of small grantees and 33.33% of partner CSOs reported changes in attitudes and practices within their organizations or communities. These changes, combined with an

⁴⁸ KII notes

increased awareness of GEWE among 78.57% of small grantees and 21.43% of partner CSOs, suggest a broader cultural shift facilitated by the project. The data reveals a strong sense of ownership and sustainability among small grantees, with 97.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that project activities contributed to embedding norms of gender equality and women's empowerment in their communities.

The ability of the project to produce tangible outputs, such as GEWE data (reported by 22.22% of small grantees and 55.56% of partner CSOs) and policy documents (66.67% for both groups), further exemplifies its strategic approach. These outputs not only provide valuable tools for advocacy but also reinforce the institutional capacity of the participating organizations, ensuring their sustained engagement with GEWE objectives.

4.6 Human Rights and Gender Equality

EQ6.1 To what extent have gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the project's design and implementation?

F6.1.1 The project generally integrated inclusive practices addressing diverse and marginalized groups, demonstrating commitment to intersectionality in both design and implementation.

The project integrated gender and human rights principles into its design and implementation. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of inclusive practices that addressed the needs of marginalized groups, including women with disabilities, LGBTQI+ individuals, and refugees. For instance, one partner highlighted the multilingual nature of their work, which included materials in Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, and even Zazaki: "This was a multilingual effort, and it had a significant impact. Including Zazaki for the first time made a big difference." In the project team's choice of stakeholders, partners, small grantees, trainees and advocates, there is enough geographical and identity diversity that makes it coherent in its implementation. The stakeholders themselves also reported being inclusionary in their project implementation and towards their beneficiaries. 94% of all small grantee CSOs agreed with the statement that they were generally inclusionary. The existence of SPOD and Syrian Women Association among the grantees also show migrant and gender transformative sensitivities during project implementation. One core project member noted, "We were able to address LGBTQI+ issues discreetly but effectively by supporting organizations like SPoD while navigating the political challenges". This illustrates how the project balanced advocacy with operational realities, ensuring that critical gender issues remained central to its activities without causing harm to the beneficiaries themselves.

F6.1.2: The project demonstrated effectiveness in addressing the needs of refugee women and women with disabilities through tailored programs, with nearly half of small grantee CSOs including disability considerations.

The inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly refugees and women with disabilities, was a prominent feature of the project. Syrian refugee women benefited from tailored programs

that addressed their unique challenges. According to a survey from the Syrian Migrant Women Association, these programs enhanced their organizational capacities and fostered greater community engagement. Another notable achievement was the organization of workshops and initiatives aimed at building advocacy skills among women with disabilities, ensuring their voices were amplified in policy dialogue. Having one of the partners focusing on disability and also several other disability focused activities and reports is really a notable achievement under this criterion. 47% of small grantee CSOs reported inclusion of disability in their project activities.

F6.1.3: The project showed areas for improvement in systematic data collection and formalized disability inclusion guidelines, despite overall integration of gender and human rights principles.

While the project demonstrated commitment to human rights and gender equality principles, certain areas require improvement. One challenge was the inconsistent collection of gender-disaggregated data by partner and small grantee CSOs. This gap limited the project's ability to comprehensively track and analyze the contribution of its interventions on diverse gender groups. Furthermore, while disability considerations were included in the project design, stakeholders highlighted the need for clearer guidelines to ensure their systematic integration into activities and outcomes. Addressing these issues in future projects would enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of interventions, ensuring that no group is left behind.

5. Conclusions and Lessons Learned

5.1. Conclusions

The project demonstrated a transformative influence across multiple domains of civil society strengthening, showcasing exemplary alignment with its objectives and flexibility in navigating complex challenges. Key conclusions include:

- 1. Effective Adaptation in Crisis Demonstrates Resilience Model:** The project's ability to exceed targets despite Türkiye's financial crisis, exchange rate volatility, and devastating earthquakes reveals that crisis-responsive programming with built-in flexibility can maintain effectiveness even in volatile environments. This adaptability was particularly crucial for maintaining support to vulnerable groups during multiple concurrent crises.
- 2. Feminist Approach Yielded Tangible Empowerment Results:** The feminist ethics and equality-focused approach fostered genuinely transformative relationships between UN Women and its partners. Stakeholders consistently reported that this non-hierarchical, empowering methodology created deeper engagement and more sustainable capacity development than traditional donor-recipient relationships.
- 3. Expanded Reach Indicates Unmet Demand:** The project's success in supporting 10 CSOs instead of the planned 5 and reaching 36 grassroots CSOs against a target of 26, reveals significant unmet demand for feminist civil society support in Türkiye. This suggests that current funding levels may be insufficient to address the scale of need.
- 4. Multi-Level Capacity Building Creates Systemic Change:** The project's comprehensive approach to capacity development —addressing individual skills, institutional governance, and advocacy capabilities simultaneously —created more resilient organizations. The emergence of meaningful civic interactions and informal networks among participants, particularly smaller CSOs, indicates the beginning of a stronger feminist civil society ecosystem.
- 5. Persistent Challenges Threaten Sustainability:** While the project achieved significant results, the challenging operating environment for CSOs in Türkiye continues to pose risks to long-term sustainability. The restrictive legislative framework, limited funding opportunities, and ongoing economic instability could potentially erode gains made during the project period without continued support.
- 6. Data Gaps Reveal Systemic Weaknesses:** Inconsistencies in CSOs' collection of gender-disaggregated data and limited disability inclusion metrics point to broader capacity gaps in the sector. These weaknesses suggest that many organizations still lack the systematic approaches needed for comprehensive rights-based programming.

Implications for Future Programming

These findings reveal several critical insights for future civil society strengthening efforts:

- The success of the feminist collaborative approach demonstrates its potential as a distinctive and effective methodology for UN Women's civil society engagement globally.

- The ability to exceed targets despite multiple crises suggests that demand-driven, flexible programming models can be more effective than rigid, predetermined approaches.
- The persistent challenges in Türkiye's civic space indicate that technical capacity building alone may be insufficient without complementary efforts to address the enabling environment for civil society.
- The informal networks emerging among project participants represent an important but fragile foundation that requires deliberate nurturing to evolve into sustainable collaboration mechanisms.

These conclusions point to the need for strategic recommendations that address both the immediate operational lessons and the longer-term systemic challenges facing feminist civil society in Türkiye.

5.2 Lessons Learned

Flexibility as a Success Factor: The project demonstrated that adaptability to rapidly changing political and economic contexts serves as a cornerstone for effectiveness. The evaluation observed how adaptive management strategies enabled the project to mitigate risks and address unforeseen challenges throughout implementation.

Feminist Ethics as a Guiding Principle: The evaluation found that the non-hierarchical, participatory approach adopted by UN Women was instrumental in building trust and fostering collaboration. This approach helped overcome typical tensions between donors and grantees while contributing to normative changes in GEWE awareness among stakeholders.

Leveraging Digital Platforms for Greater Reach: The increased use of digital platforms during the project period allowed CSOs to expand their audience significantly, reaching national and international participants. The evaluation noted how digital tools amplified effectiveness, particularly for smaller organizations seeking to build visibility beyond their immediate communities.

Importance of Contextual Relevance: The inclusion of disaster risk reduction components and a focus on marginalized groups ensured the project's continued relevance amidst crises. The evaluation revealed that in countries prone to disasters and subject to political and financial oscillations, project designs that acknowledge these contextual realities in their theory of change prove more resilient.

Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation: The evaluation found that while UN Women's monitoring was meticulous, as evidenced in the project documentation, grantee organizations demonstrated varying levels of monitoring capacity. The project experience highlighted the value of consistent and comprehensive data collection, particularly gender-disaggregated and disability-focused data, for accurate assessment and learning.

Sustainability Considerations: While the project succeeded in building capacities, the evaluation identified that maintaining these achievements requires continued

engagement. Stakeholder feedback consistently emphasized how initial capacity gains could be reinforced through ongoing support mechanisms to ensure lasting impact.

6.Recommendations

The evaluation team has developed these recommendations based on a thorough analysis of the findings and conclusions, ensuring they are actionable, practical, and responsive to stakeholder needs. The recommendations emerged from extensive data collection through surveys, interviews, and case studies, complemented by stakeholder consultations and validation processes.

To ensure the recommendations' validity and relevance, the evaluation team engaged with diverse stakeholders, including CSO representatives, trainers, mentees, and policy actors. This collaborative approach enabled the incorporation of multiple perspectives and experiences, resulting in recommendations that reflect both immediate needs and long-term strategic considerations for strengthening civil society's role in advancing gender equality in Türkiye.

<p>Recommendation 1:</p> <p>For: UN Women Türkiye Country Office</p> <p>Priority: High</p>	<p>Strengthen the financial sustainability mechanisms for CSO support to address the challenges posed by economic volatility.</p> <p>Suggested actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop contingency funding mechanisms to address inflation-related challenges • Create flexible budget allocation systems that can adapt to exchange rate fluctuations • Establish emergency response funds for crisis situations like natural disasters • Include specific budget lines for human resources to ensure compliance with minimum wage requirements • Consider multi-year funding commitments to enhance programmatic sustainability <p>Based on findings: F3.4 (financial and human resource challenges) and F4.2 (resource allocation)</p>
<p>Recommendation 2:</p> <p>For: UN Women Türkiye Country Office</p> <p>Priority: High</p>	<p>Enhance the capacity development framework to ensure sustained institutional growth among CSOs.</p> <p>Suggested actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop standardized but customizable training modules for different CSO categories

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create staged learning pathways that build progressively on acquired skills • Establish mentorship programs that pair experienced CSOs with emerging organizations • Implement comprehensive monitoring systems to track capacity development outcomes • Design specialized support mechanisms for first-time grantees <p>Based on findings: F3.1 (capacity building outcomes) and F5.2 (capacity sustainability)</p>
<p>Recommendation 3:</p> <p>For: UN Women Türkiye Country Office</p> <p>Priority: High</p>	<p>Strengthen data collection and monitoring mechanisms across all stakeholder groups.</p> <p>Suggested actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop standardized data collection tools for CSOs • Provide targeted training on gender-disaggregated data collection • Create user-friendly reporting templates that capture qualitative and quantitative insights • Establish regular data quality review processes • Support CSOs in developing their own monitoring and evaluation systems <p>Based on findings: F3.5 (monitoring mechanisms) and F6.1.1 (data inclusion gaps)</p>
<p>Recommendation 4:</p> <p>For: UN Women Türkiye Country Office and Partners</p> <p>Priority: Medium</p>	<p>Enhance the integration of disability inclusion across all project components.</p> <p>Suggested actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop specific guidelines for disability inclusion in project design • Create accessibility standards for all project activities • Establish partnerships with disability rights organizations • Include disability-specific indicators in monitoring frameworks • Provide targeted support for CSOs working with women with disabilities <p>Based on findings: F6.1.1 (intersectionality and disability inclusion)</p>
<p>Recommendation 5:</p> <p>For: UN Women Türkiye Country Office</p>	<p>Develop a comprehensive crisis response framework that addresses political, economic, and environmental challenges.</p>

<p>Priority: High</p>	<p>Suggested actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create rapid response protocols for emergency situations • Establish flexible funding mechanisms for crisis periods • Develop guidelines for adapting activities during emergencies • Build CSO capacity for crisis management • Create networks for emergency resource sharing <p>Based on findings: F1.4 (relevance amid political/economic change) and F3.4 (crisis and adaptation)</p>
<p>Recommendation 6:</p> <p>For: UN Women Türkiye Country Office</p> <p>Priority: Medium</p>	<p>Strengthen networking and collaboration mechanisms among CSOs.</p> <p>Suggested actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create structured platforms for regular CSO interaction • Develop thematic working groups for specific issues • Support joint advocacy initiatives • Facilitate knowledge sharing between experienced and emerging CSOs • Establish regional coordination mechanisms • Ensure feedback loops by providing timely and meaningful responses to participants involved in consultations, enhancing learning and trust. <p>Based on findings: F2.3 (synergies with stakeholders) and F3.3 (networking capacity)</p>
<p>Recommendation 7:</p> <p>For: UN Women Türkiye Country Office</p> <p>Priority: High</p>	<p>Enhance the financial and administrative training framework for CSOs.</p> <p>Suggested actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop comprehensive onboarding programs for new grantees • Create practical, exercise-based financial management training • Provide ongoing support for administrative procedures • Establish peer learning mechanisms for financial management • Create simplified guidelines for UN administrative procedures

	Based on findings:F4.2 (resource allocation challenges) and F4.4 (coordination and efficiency)
<p>Recommendation 8:</p> <p>For: UN Women Türkiye Country Office</p> <p>Priority: Medium</p>	<p>Strengthen the sustainability framework for project outcomes.</p> <p>Suggested actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop exit strategies from the project design phase • Create toolkits for organizational sustainability • Support CSOs in diversifying funding sources • Establish mechanisms for continued networking post-project • Develop guidelines for maintaining institutional memory • Ensure that feedback from consultative processes—such as advisory board meetings—is transparently addressed and visibly integrated into decision-making, to reinforce stakeholder ownership and influence. <p>Based on findings: F5.1 (sustainability of benefits), F5.3 (stakeholder influence in decision-making), and F5.4 (national/local ownership)</p>

**UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND
THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN.
A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND
GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO
ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING
THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

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