



## EVALUATION BRIEF



# ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

## Evaluation of UN Women's regional programme "Implementing Norms, Changing Minds"

April 2020

Photo: UN Women

### What was evaluated?

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) constitutes a severe public health concern that prevents women and girls from enjoying their full human rights, and urgent and continuous action is required to tackle it in all its forms.

The adoption of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), as well as the harmonization of national legislation with the European Union's (EU) *acquis communautaire* as part of the accession process, has created an opportunity for UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECA RO) to bring a regional perspective to human rights-based programming in the Western Balkans and Turkey in relation to regional and international agreements and EU normative frameworks for accession countries related to gender equality, discrimination and ending violence against women.

The regional programme, 'Implementing Norms, Changing Minds' (1 February 2017 - 31 January 2020) aims to end gender-based discrimination and violence against women in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia) and Turkey with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged groups of women. The programme's envelope amounted for 5,681,220.39 euros.

The programme supports the development of an enabling legislative and policy environment on eliminating violence against women and all forms of discrimination; promotes favourable social norms and attitudes to prevent gender discrimination and violence against women; and pursues empowering women and girls (including those from disadvantaged groups) who have experienced discrimination or violence to advocate for and use available, accessible, and quality services. The programme channels its interventions through and to civil society organizations, and in particular to women's organizations, with an emphasis on those working with and representing women from minority and disadvantaged groups.

An independent evaluation of the programme was conducted from July to December 2019 to provide systematic insights into the implementation process and results achieved. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the achievement of results and performance of the programme; identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories and challenges; identify strategies for replication and up-scaling; provide actionable recommendations for future programme development and maximize ownership by partners; and assess the value added of UN Women regional programming. The evaluation adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards and ethical code of conduct and UN Women evaluation policy and guidelines, and applied OECD DAC evaluation criteria.

\* For the European Union, this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence. For UN Women, references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

## What did the evaluation conclude?



### Conclusion

1

The programme has helped maintain VAWG on the policy and political agenda even in environments not entirely conducive to gender equality mainstreaming and the elimination of violence against women and girls (EVAWG).



### Conclusion

2

The programme is supporting the EU accession process of Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) beneficiaries by aligning activities with the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and meeting the needs of women, especially minority and marginalized groups.



### Conclusion

3

Women's networks were strengthened through the programme. These good practices in strengthening networks, especially for EVAWG purposes, could be further improved and replicated.



### Conclusion

4

The programme understood the challenge of moving away from traditional information, education and communication activities to behavioural change methods and took a multi-faceted approach to change attitudes on VAWG.



### Conclusion

5

Initiatives that used peer-to-peer and grassroots engagement strategies achieved positive results in educating and empowering women and communities, especially minority and marginalized communities.



### Conclusion

6

To maintain regional progress, a formal regional interinstitutional mechanism with structured dialogue between civil society organizations (CSOs), government and EU institutions would support the sustainability of the programme and the results achieved.



### Conclusion

7

The programme allowed for experimentation and some innovation when it comes to engaging influencers, changing behaviours among individuals and changing professional practice. However, to change behaviours of individuals, including men and boys, the professional practices of media members and service providers require sustained training or mentoring.



### Conclusion

8

The programme has supported the review or development of case management tools, including protocols related to domestic VAWG, that incorporate an intersectional approach to service provision; however, the programme's work related to specialized services for victims and survivors, while important, has been more limited.



### Conclusion

9

The programme's initiatives that adopted peer-to-peer and grassroots engagement to educate and empower women and community members, especially minority and marginalized communities, achieved positive results.



### Conclusion

10

The programme has strengthened civil society able to perpetuate EVAWG law and policy advocacy, communication advocacy, and service provision.

## How can UN Women improve?



### Recommendation 1

Further support the participation of CSOs in the creation and monitoring of an enabling environment for EVAW through shadow reporting, reforms, and tracking for accountability the actions of national governments against the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW.



### Recommendation 2

Adjust and replicate innovative practices and skill development among service providers to improve women's access to VAW support services.



### Recommendation 3

Strengthen internal measurement, tracking and reporting on results achieved within direct UN Women activities and CSO implementing partners' activities so that results, including results of initiatives that can be up-scaled, and lessons learned can be captured across the region.



### Recommendation 4

Adjust the Regional Forum methodology to facilitate dialogue and reflection on successful pilot initiatives that can be replicated to advance the implementation of the Istanbul Convention across the region.



### Recommendation 5

Continue to strengthen women's organizations' implementation strategies across the programme by i) sharing good practices for strengthening networks for EVAWG advocacy among networks of women's organizations, especially those representing or involving minority and marginalized women, so that their political agency is enhanced, and ii) communicating key findings from the research studies undertaken within the programme.



### Recommendation 6

Adjust call for proposal methods to engage grassroots women's organizations, especially organizations from minority or marginalized groups, and build capacity for results-based planning and measurement by i) encouraging joint proposals between larger women's CSOs and organizations representing minority and marginalized groups, grassroots organizations, or rural organizations to widen the coverage, strengthen capacities, and deepen intersectional approaches to EVAWG initiatives and ii) offering a results-based planning and measurement workshop prior to the call deadline.



### Recommendation 7

Prepare an implementation strategy based on the experience gained by CSOs during the programme that incorporates an intersectional approach to the empowerment of women victims and survivors of VAW that can be replicated by CSOs, especially CSOs offering legal aid and other support services to women.



### Recommendation 8

Prepare an impact assessment methodology in order to evaluate the impact of the Istanbul Convention's implementation in the region and plan for future EVAWG initiatives.



### Recommendation 9

Strengthen regional cooperation among national gender equality mechanisms through regular conferences, regional research, campaigns or similar initiatives. Ensure civil society participation in this regional mechanism.



### Recommendation 10

Strengthen joint UN Women and EC advocacy efforts on EVAWG among governments in the region.



## EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY



Summative evaluation



Formative evaluation



Data collection among 7 IPA beneficiaries covered (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey)



270 interviews conducted



96 beneficiaries of the programme identified, interviewed and stretched over 7 categories



Over 1000 documents and communication products reviewed



5 evaluation approaches, including human-rights based (HRBA), gender-responsive, theory-based, system thinking and feminist evaluation theory



Mixed methods of document review, interviews, and facilitated reflection



144 interview templates quality reviewed



19 principal questions included in the final evaluation matrix

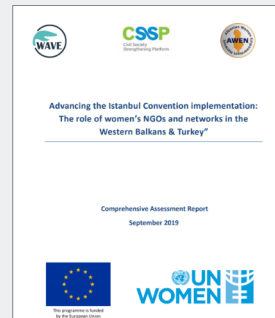
## Programme Resources



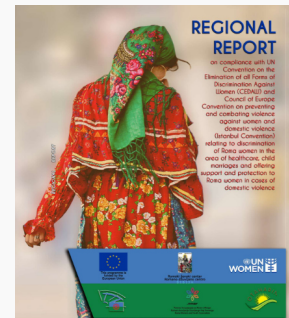
Report: Second Regional Forum Promoting the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Western Balkans and Turkey



Mapping of Sexual Violence Services in the Western Balkans and Turkey



Advancing the Istanbul Convention implementation: The role of women's NGOs and networks in the Western Balkans and Turkey



Regional report on discrimination of Roma women in the area of healthcare, child marriages and support and protection in cases of domestic violence



- Funding intersectional violence against women and girls (VAWG) services
- Data collection 'by and for' minoritized women
- The value of intersectionality in understanding violence against women and girls
- 2018 Public Perceptions of Gender Equality and Violence Against Women in the Western Balkans and Turkey

[More resources here](#) ►

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