EVALUATION REPORT

GENDER-RESPONSIVE CLUSTER EVALUATION

FOR THE PROJECTS "BUILDING DEMOCRATIC, PEACEFUL AND GENDER-EQUAL SOCIETY IN UKRAINE" (2017–2021) AND "DECENTRALIZATION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT REFORMS: TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN UKRAINE" (2018–2022)

UN WOMEN UKRAINE
17 JULY 2021

UN
WOMEN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATH	AMALGAMATED TERRITORIAL HROMADAS
CEDAW	CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
CM	COMMUNITY MOBILIZER
CME	COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION FOR EMPOWERMENT
CO	COUNTRY OFFICE
CSO	CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION
CSWG	COMMUNITY SECURITY AND SOCIAL COHESION WORKING GROUP
DKK	DANISH KRONE
DV	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
EQ	EVALUATION QUESTION
ET	EVALUATION TEAM
EVAWG	ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS
FGDS	FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS
GBV	GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
GE	GENDER EQUALITY
GEWE	GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT
GOU	GOVERNMENT OF UKRAINE
GRB	GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING
HRBA	HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH
IDPS	INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS
IMAGES	INTERNATIONAL MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY SURVEY

KIIS	KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS
LAP	LOCAL ACTION PLAN
LGCC	LOCAL GENDER COORDINATION COUNCIL
LNOB	LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND
M&E	MONITORING AND EVALUATION
MCTD	MINISTRY OF COMMUNITIES AND TERRITORIES DEVELOPMENT
MIA	MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
NAP	NATIONAL ACTION PLAN
NGO	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
NOK	NORWEGIAN KRONE
OECD-DAC	ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE
PPER	PARITY, PARTICIPATION, EQUALITY AND RIGHTS (FRAMEWORK)
RGA	RAPID GENDER ASSESSMENT
RP	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
SDGS	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
SHGS	SELF-HELP GROUPS
SN	STRATEGIC NOTE
TOC	THEORY OF CHANGE
TOR	TERMS OF REFERENCE
UFF	UNITY FOR THE FUTURE

UFPH	UKRAINIAN FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH
UN WOMEN	UNITED NATIONS ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
UNDAF	UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK
UNDP	UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
UNEG	UNITED NATIONS EVALUATION GROUP
UNFPA	UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND
UNPF	UNITED NATIONS PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK
UNSCR 1325	UNITED NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325 (2000) ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY
USAID	UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
UWF	UKRAINIAN WOMEN'S FUND
WEE	WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
WPS	WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Evaluation Team would like to express its deep appreciation for all the support provided by both the UN Women project team personnel and the UN Women Country Office staff in the provision of relevant documentation, the identification of project stakeholders and beneficiaries and related logistical support for key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

The team also would like to thank all of the Ukrainian stakeholders and beneficiaries, donors and other UN agencies based in Ukraine who so generously shared their experience and insights with them to support the evaluation process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UN Women in Ukraine commissioned a cluster evaluation of its work in two projects that contributed to the three priority outcome areas of its Strategic Note (SN): (1) Governance, Leadership and Participation; (2) Eliminating Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG); and (3) Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The evaluation specifically assessed the work done to date in the following two projects that operate primarily in eastern Ukraine: (1) **"Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine"** (December 2017 – April 2021), funded by the Government of Norway; and (2) **"Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms: Transformative Approaches to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ukraine"** (February 2018- December 2022), funded by the Government of Denmark.

The purpose of the cluster evaluation was to assess the extent to which results were achieved as per the project agreements, document lessons learned and obtain data and analysis that will help inform the future decision-making of the Ukraine Country Office (CO), donors, other UN agencies, Ukrainian CSOs and the Government of Ukraine (GoU).

The specific **objectives** of this cluster evaluation are to:

1. Analyse and review the Theories of Change (ToCs) and key assumptions made in light of the current context.

2. Analyse the relevance of UN Women's approach to the implementation of the initiatives at the national, regional and local levels against the outcomes of UN Women's SN.

3. Assess the effectiveness of the projects' interventions on target regions and communities.

4. Assess organizational efficiency and the coordination mechanisms related to the achievement of the projects' results.

5. Analyse and harvest/document any outcomes that have contributed or are contributing to transformative gender changes at the individual and institutional levels.

6. Assess the sustainability of the results and the interventions in advancing gender equality in the targeted regions and communities.

7. Identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, and challenges to inform the future work of UN Women Ukraine in the areas of Governance and Participation, EVAWG and WPS.

8. Identify strategies for replicating and upscaling the identified best practices of the interventions during the implementation of the remaining period of the Ukraine CO's SN.

The projects share a common methodological approach and similar ToCs. The Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project also has been working at the national level with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), with a focus on the development of a unified police curriculum on gender-based violence (GBV) and gender policy development, as well as with the Ministry of Communities and Territories Development (MCTD) and the MIA to enhance their capacities to implement gender-sensitive reforms and support the development of different policies. Both projects have sought to assist the GoU in its democratic reform process through initiatives designed to facilitate the decentralization of gender-responsive planning and budget processes and the GoU's WPS National Action Plan (NAP). The projects have also used a combination of the development of WPS local action plans and application of the Community Mobilization for Empowerment (CME) approach[1] to address community priority needs at the regional and

---

1   The CME approach is broken down into 10 steps: (1) arriving in the community; (2) establishing self-help groups; (3) conducting community profiles; (4) building the capacity of mobilized groups; (5) identifying priority needs and consolidating groups; (6) facilitating interactions between communities and the authorities, lobbying for incorporating their needs in local plans/programmes; (7) identifying community-based initiatives for support with small grants; (8) implementing such initiatives/projects; (9) using monitoring for learning; and (10) conducting an evaluation and determining follow-up steps. *Norway ProDoc – Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society (2017).*

local levels and to begin to address GBV prevention and response services. UN Women and UNDP both applied the adjusted CME methodology in different eastern Ukraine communities, although there was some overlap.

METHODOLOGY

The cluster evaluation was conducted over a six-month period (January–June 2021) and was based on an extensive document review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions with 80 stakeholders and project beneficiaries: GoU officials at the national, regional, and local levels; community-level project beneficiaries, Responsible Parties (RPs), donors and development partners; and other UN agencies. The evaluation data were analysed using a four-point ranking scale based on 16 main evaluation questions with 30 indicators drawn from the original 43 evaluation questions outlined in the evaluation TOR, which also followed the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The evaluation process also examined the assumptions behind the two projects' ToCs and that of the CO's SN.

KEY FINDINGS

Relevance:

• The projects reflect a high degree of relevance to national GoU democratic reform priorities.

• At the community level, the Evaluation Team (ET) found that women and vulnerable groups identified economic security as being more important than physical security, the latter being the focus of the project support towards localizing the WPS agenda.

• The ET also observed that the projects evaluated are part of the UN Women country programme (i.e. SN), funded by different donors and development partners. The ToCs for the projects, therefore, are aligned with this programme approach. These ToCs, however, do not reflect the dependence of the projects on women and men's volunteer labour at the community level and the longer-term nature of some types of transformative change.

Coherence:

• The projects were well aligned with UN Women's SN and the GoU's priorities related to democratic reform and its WPS NAP implementation and international and regional gender equality (GE) agreements and commitments.

• The CME methodology, which was used as the main project approach to contribute to SN Outcome 1 on Governance, Leadership and Participation, has been quite successful in increasing women's participation at the community level.

• However, there is still limited current evidence of more equitable benefits resulting from this participation in terms of women's improved well-being, their access to justice or their having changed the perceptions of gender equality. This requires time, and we expect that this result should be evident by the end of the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project.

• The ET also found that some of the project approaches related to EVAW do not align with SN Outcome 2, which focuses on "transformative changes in social norms, attitudes and behaviours [being] achieved at community and individual levels to prevent GBV". Results have been achieved, but more of the work at this level has focused on improved GBV response services (not "transformative" changes/results).

• Regarding SN Outcome 3 on WPS, UN Women is clearly a leader in promoting and advancing the WPS agenda in Ukraine and specifically the localization of the WPS action plans. This approach stands as an innovative good practice that could be emulated both elsewhere in Ukraine (not only in the conflict-affected east) and more globally.

"Our girls have started socializing more because they feel like they are heard and engaged. They feel like not only can they cook borscht at home but can also be active participants in community governance and can communicate some of the issues to local authorities that impact them." SHG member

Effectiveness:

• The CME approach has contributed significantly to increasing women's participation in community-level decision-making and leadership.

• Taking the CME approach to the next level of **transformative change** in women's and girls' lives, however, will require the following: (1) further investments in capacity-building of self-help groups (SHGs) to improve data collection and analysis (e.g. community gender profile analyses) and help the SHGs prioritize recommendations to local authorities; (2) greater involvement of

these local authorities in this gender analysis process; (3) a stronger focus on gender analysis based on a human rights approach; (4) the adaptation of curricula to focus on changes in attitudes and behaviours with regard to gender stereotypes; and (5) an increased focus on engaging men and boys in all of these processes.

• UN Women has also been successful in cooperating with local and regional administrations on the development of local WPS action plans. There are some potential constraints related to the financial and human resource capacity of local authorities to implement these plans; thus, proper monitoring will be critical to ensure that the plans will translate into actual results.

• The projects have been most successful with regard to building rights holders' capacity to participate more actively in community-level decision-making and to contribute to more gender-responsive planning at the local level. There are more mixed results with regard to the training of duty bearers, and further investments to ensure adequate capacities for gender-responsive planning and budgets will be needed.

Efficiency:

• Despite significant implementation challenges created by COVID-19 restrictions and national and local elections in 2019 and 2020 respectively, both projects were able to deliver almost all planned outputs on time, in many cases surpassing planned targets. UN Women also adapted well and quickly to these different challenges.

• Overall, UN Women and its project teams have a positive reputation, with just a few concerns expressed by RPs about the impact of high staff turnover on the project implementation.

• In general, UN Women has coordinated its work with other UN agencies and donors fairly well, but there remain some challenges regarding coordination between RPs and contractors. There is also still some room for improvement in the coordination between local government and community structures, such as the SHGs.

• There is a solid M&E system in place. However, the projects' monitoring mechanisms also had some weaknesses, which derive from the log frames' design and the (high) level of results designed. Several anticipated outcomes, particularly those related to social norms change, were overly ambitious for the projects' time frames. There is a need to adjust these expectations to more realistic ones and to reflect this in the projects' ToCs.

• Monitoring data were also not always used to adjust activities and project implementation.

• The ET also found that how the diverse RPs applied the M&E system varied considerably and that there is a need for greater harmonization between the RPs and the project M&E system and process.

Sustainability:

• The projects' overall capacity-building efforts resulted in strengthening the capacities of some duty bearers, in particular of the vertical power structure dealing with gender-related issues at the regional and local levels.

• Changes in the individual capacity of SHG members as well as community mobilizers involved in the CME approach resulted in an increase in inclusive development/governance practices.

• UN Women also succeeded in promoting several of the approaches and methodologies that the projects initiated, so much so that they were replicated or scaled up in its projects in other parts of Ukraine as well as other hromadas in eastern Ukraine.

• National ownership of project results and processes is also fairly high, with the key government partners – the MIA, the MCTD and the Ministry for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories – mainstreaming gender in their operations and policies. At the local level, ownership of project results was most effectively reached through the SHG process and local WPS adoption.

Based on these findings and conclusions, the Evaluation Team offers the recommendations below.

Recommendation 1: Programme Focus

To accommodate women's and vulnerable groups' identified priority needs for economic security, the CO should incorporate "women's economic empowerment" as a new outcome area into its next SN. At the same time, the evaluation found a strong need and justification for the CO to continue working in the three existing outcome areas (Governance, GBV and WPS). That being said, it will be important to not spread resources too thin, across four SN outcome areas. This means that the CO will need to find additional financial resources to be able to take on all thematic areas effectively.

Alternatively, if the CO moves forward to address economic security, it will need to make decisions about which components of the other three outcome areas to deprioritize. Such a decision should be made in consultation with a variety of stakeholders and duty bearers and in consideration of the findings and recommendations of this report. For example, UN Women could consider concentrating on GBV prevention and consolidation of local 1325 action plan implementation, as opposed to expanding its work on CME (see Findings 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16).

Recommendation 2: Theory of Change

It is recommended that the UN Women CO revise its ToC related to SN Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 in order to (1) consider a longer-term approach to social norms change; (2) acknowledge that community mobilization approaches are heavily based upon women and men's volunteer labour; and (3) unpack and track the related change processes using a more incremental, phased approach (see Finding 4).

Recommendation 3: Coordination Processes

It is recommended that UN Women develop more systematic mechanisms to coordinate RP activities at the oblast and community levels (see Finding 23).

Recommendation 4: CME Approach

It is recommended that UN Women revisit the CME approaches to (1) make additional investments in capacity-building with SHGs to improve the quality of community gender data collection and analysis and help SHGs prioritize recommendations to local authorities; (2) facilitate greater involvement of local authorities in the community data collection and gender analysis process; (3) place a stronger focus on gender analysis based on a women's human rights approach; (4) adapt curricula to focus on attitudes and behaviours with regard to gender stereotypes; (5) put an increased focus on engaging men and boys in all of these processes; and (6) ensure that a higher percentage of community grant projects are allocated to activities that directly contribute to increased GE and GBV prevention (see Findings 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16).

Recommendation 5: Research Dissemination Plans

UN Women Ukraine should require the development of dissemination and adaptation plans for relevant research conducted in collaboration with key partners. These plans would outline steps for dissemination to key internal partners and external stakeholders, including strategies, time and resources, to adapt key approaches based on findings from any formative research (see Finding 3).

Recommendation 6: Approach to M&E

It is recommended that the UN Women Ukraine CO (1) continue working actively to strengthen UN Women and RP staff capacity in M&E; (2) design log frames and indicators to track intermediate results that are contributing to long-term results; and (3) ensure that monitoring results and research findings are used to inform programme and project implementation. The overall focus should be on designing M&E systems that capture the different phases and types of gender-transformative change (see Findings 4, 23, 24, 25).

Recommendation 7: Expansion of UN Women Field Presence

It is recommended that UN Women Ukraine expand its programme team, including in its project locations, and ensure an adequate M&E function (officer), as well as ensure sustainable GBV prevention and GRB expertise to reduce its dependence upon external consultants and to increase its visibility at the regional and local levels (see Finding 22).

Recommendation 8: Gap Analysis

It is recommended that UN Women, in coordination with other key partners, commission a gap analysis and mapping of actors in any future target communities in eastern Ukraine working specifically in thematic areas in UN Women's SN (see Finding 23).

Recommendation 9: Institutionalization of Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting Processes

As a means of strengthening sustainability and the depth/breath of gender-transformative results, it is recommended that UN Women review how to further elevate its approach to capacity-building with duty bearers related to gender-responsive planning and budgeting to a higher-level focus on the institutionalization of these processes and related changes, working with all three levels of government (see Findings 11, 31).

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. In line with this, UN Women Ukraine's Country Strategy for the 2018–2022 period covers outcomes in the following three areas of the Strategic Note (SN): (1) making gender equality priorities central to national reforms, governance, planning and budgeting; (2) ending violence against women and girls; and (3) strengthening the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

Community mobilizers at the CME workshop, 2019, Kharkiv (photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Anna Korbut)

THEORY OF CHANGE
UN Women Ukraine Strategic Note

IF	**THEN**	**BECAUSE**
Women, particularly those facing multiple forms of discrimination, equally **participate** in and **benefit** from **gender-responsive** reforms and have increased access to **justice**	All **Ukrainian women and girls** will be able to exercise their **rights equally** with men and boys and equally **contribute** to and **benefit** from **development**	National reforms, policies, plans and budgets are **more gender-responsive;** better **quality gender** data informs the development, monitoring and evaluation of effective and **evidence-based reforms;** the **justice** system provides **accountability** mechanisms for the enforcement of **laws** and policies and **ending impunity** for women's rights violations
Transformative changes in social norms, attitudes and behaviors are achieved at community and individual levels **to prevent gender-based violence** (GBV),		**Favourable social** norms, attitudes and behaviors are promoted to **prevent GBV** before it occurs/re-occurs; more **cities** have **safe** and empowering **public spaces** ensuring women and girls can fully **exercise** their **rights** and freedom of movement to **participate in public life**
Women, particularly those affected by the **conflict, equally benefit** from State **policies,** programmes and local plans related to **security, justice and recovery**		Commitments on **WPS** are effectively implemented through **security sector** and other reforms; more **gender** equality **advocates** influence **recovery, peace and security** processes
The **entire UN** system **delivers** on its commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment **(GEWE)**		

The UN Women Ukraine Country Office (CO) SN is based on a theory of change (ToC) informed by evidence-based gender analysis and national consultations and articulates the strategic impact areas and anticipated results from the 2018–2022 period. Its overarching goal is to empower women and girls and ensure full enjoyment of their human rights towards a peaceful and gender-equal society in Ukraine.

UN Women in Ukraine has supported programming based on this ToC since 2015. It is now conducting a gender-responsive evaluation of its work in the three priority outcome areas of its Strategic Note by clustering an evaluation of the following two projects:

• **"Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine"** (December 2017 – April 2021), funded by the Government of Norway

• **"Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms: Transformative Approaches to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ukraine"** (February 2018- December 2022), funded by the Government of Denmark

Both projects' outcomes are closely interlinked and aim to generate positive change both vertically and horizontally at all levels and jointly contribute to the results across the SN's three outcomes. The cluster evaluation thus assessed the progress made by the interventions towards the achievement of

the outcomes and goals set under the SN, analysed the results achieved and challenges encountered, and has recommended modifications to the main approaches underpinning the projects' components for the remaining implementation period of the SN as well as for future consideration. The evaluation also provides forward-looking and actionable recommendations in the context of the projects' interventions – and beyond – and aims to inform further management decisions, planning and programming strategies of the CO. This report represents the key findings, lessons learned and conclusions from this evaluation.

1.1 Report Structure

The evaluation report provides specific findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the evaluation questions that are aligned with the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. This summary of findings is followed by a summary of lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations.

1.2 Country Context

As outlined in Figure 2 below, Ukrainian women are affected by multiple levels of inequalities and discrimination. These inequalities have also been affected by the conflict over the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014. Existing inequalities were exacerbated due to the upheaval of the rule of law in conflict zones and increased the vulnerability faced by many groups, including women. However, such inequalities were also reduced through the push for wide-ranging reform of government processes. New law enforcement practices have opened new doors and opportunities for increasing gender equality (GE) in many areas. In general, however, the conflict in eastern Ukraine constitutes a significant humanitarian crisis for the country and region. Conflict-affected women in host communities face increased burdens in terms of family care and economic hardship as many now are the sole head of their household. Women also constitute the majority of unemployed internally displaced persons (IDPs), and they face multiple challenges that go beyond gender discrimination in the workplace, such as a lack of documentation required for employment.

Against this backdrop, Ukraine is at a unique crossroads in its history concerning both democratic reform

and progress towards gender equality. Ukraine has joined and adopted most of the key international and regional GEWE and human rights frameworks and has integrated these commitments into several national laws and policies. The principle of equal rights of women and men[2] is enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine, and the country has adopted a solid policy and legal framework related to gender equality.

The ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine has further aggravated women's well-being, as the likelihood of experiencing all forms of violence in eastern Ukraine is significantly higher among the conflict-affected women (79 per cent, compared to 58 per cent of non-impacted women). Women remain underrepresented in decision-making, recovery and peace processes, have limited access to economic resources and are subject to gender discrimination.

Although Ukraine signed the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (DV), it has not yet been submitted to Parliament for ratification. Nevertheless, in recent months, there have been several state programmes and laws adopted or amended that aim at combating GBV and equalizing the rights of parents to statutory parental leave.[3] Despite this, implementation and effective mechanisms for enforcement, accountability and M&E are not entirely in place. Although there have been recent notable improvements, GE and the women's rights agenda require systematic attention and support to ensure adequate implementation and monitoring of the Government's comprehensive reform agenda.

In the conflict-affected regions of eastern Ukraine, while decentralization reform provides the conditions needed to strengthen local governance, ongoing conflict and limited progress in peace negotiations have had a negative impact on motivating community members to actively engage in the development of sustainable solutions for recovery and

---

2   Ukraine, Verkhovna Rada, *Constitution of Ukraine* (dated 28 June 1996). Available at https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/254%D0%BA/96-%D0%B2%D1%80#Text.

3   See, for example, Decree No. 398/2020 of the President of Ukraine, available at https://www.president.gov.ua/search?query=УКАЗ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА УКРАЇНИ №398/2020.

Figure 2. UKRAINE COUNTRY CONTEXT

CHALLENGES TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RIGHTS BY WOMEN

- *deeply-rooted patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes*
- *systemic policy implementation gaps*
- *weak rule of law*
- *emerging capacity of institutions*
- *high-political turnover*
- *low awareness of gender equality commitments*
- *poor engagement with civil society*
- *underinvestment in gender equality (GE) processes*

VULNERABLE GROUPS WITH LIMITED ACCESS TO DECENTRALIZED LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND SERVICES

- *women IDPs*
- *women with disabilities*
- *women living with HIV/AIDS*
- *single heads of households*
- *older women*
- *women facing intersectional discrimination*

GBV CONCERNS

- *Limited awareness of different forms of GBV*
- *Domestic violence not perceived as crime*
- *DV largely an under-reported and hidden problem*
- *Risks to be subjected to DV higher under COVID-19 restrictions*

WOMEN AFFECTED BY CONFLICT IN THE EAST

1.7 M | *IDPs in total (both men and women)*

2/3 | *women IDPs*

- *many women are sole HH heads*
- *women represent majority of unemployed IDPs*
- *women underrepresented in decision-making, recovery and peace processes*
- *having limited access to economic resources*
- *subject to discrimination*

UKRAINE'S PROGRESS TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

- *joined the Beijing Platform for Action*
- *ratified CEDAW and its Optional Protocol*
- *localized the Sustainable Development Goals*
- *signed the EU Association Agreement*
- *ratified the European Convention on HR*
- *ratified the European Social Charter*
- *signed the Istanbul Convention*

MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS (MIA) LAW ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

- *Patrol police and Call centers established in all administrative centers*
- *National police structure expanded*
- *Community Security concept drafted*
- *Action Plan on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 developed and updated*
- *However, reform design and implementation at local levels require significant technical support, especially in conflict-affected regions*

NATIONAL POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- *adopted NAP on CEDAW Concluding Observations*
- *adopted Second NAP Implementation of UNSCR 1325 for 2021–2025*
- *adopted a National Strategy on Human Rights (2016-2020)*
- *working on a State Programme on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for 2021*

GENDER RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- *women represent a majority among mid-level officials in the local government bodies*
- *In 2019, percentage of women elected to Parliament increased from **12** to **21%***
- *In 2017, women comprised **17%** of the elected chairs of village administrative units in Donetsk and Luhansk and **31%** in Zaporizhzhia oblasts*

LOW MEDIA LITERACY AND AWARENESS OF GE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- *Media often reproducing patriarchal gender stereotypes*
  - *reinforcing existing discrimination*
  - *contributing to blaming conflict and GBV survivors for what they have experienced*

IMPACT OF COVID-19

- *Pandemic widening existing gender inequalities due to:*
  - *existing structural discrimination*
  - *prevailing gender norms and stereotypes*
  - *limited representation of women in decision-making processes*
  - *overall absence of GE mechanisms in COVID-19 planning and response*

reconciliation. Moreover, although showing improvement, regional and local authorities still face challenges in developing gender-responsive, evidence-based policies that incorporate the different needs and priorities of women and men and address these through specific measures. In the context of the emerging gender equality machinery, the transition from gender-neutral to gender-responsive policymaking at the regional and local levels requires ongoing and substantive expert support. In particular, Ukraine's WPS commitments have not yet been integrated systematically into the decentralization reforms, decentralized local planning and budget processes, with the situation being worse in the conflict-affected regions of the east.

The current political system, prevalent patriarchal culture and gender stereotypes all act as a barrier to women's engagement in political leadership and the participation needed for effective gender-responsive reforms. While women are the majority among mid-level officials in local government bodies, their capacity to influence decisions is still limited.

The groups facing the most challenges with regard to their participation in and ability to access and benefit from decentralized local governance and services include women facing intersectional discrimination such as IDPs, women with disabilities, women living with HIV/AIDS, single heads of households, older women and poor women, among others.

In general, GBV represents a serious security concern for both the region and country and has been increasing due to the crisis and related stresses caused by displacement and post-traumatic stress disorder among returning soldiers. There is limited awareness

of the different forms of GBV. Domestic violence (DV) in particular is considered a private matter and not perceived as a crime, even by law enforcement personnel. As a result, DV remains largely an underreported and hidden problem. More recently, a rapid gender assessment (RGA) on the effects of COVID-19 on gender relations found that the risks subjecting women to DV are higher in the context of quarantine measures and restrictions. [4]

As part of the Government of Ukraine's (GoU) law enforcement reform, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) has established patrol police and call centres in all oblast-level administrative centres, as well as expanded the national police structure. The MIA adopted its Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 on 12 December 2017 and updated it on 10 March 2021.[5] However, reform design and implementation at the local level require significant technical support, especially in conflict-affected regions.

The media in Ukraine often reproduces patriarchal gender stereotypes and thus contributes to discriminatory attitudes. There is low media literacy and awareness of GE and human rights issues among the diverse media. This reinforces existing discrimination and contributes to a trend of blaming conflict and GBV survivors for what they have experienced.

In 2020 and 2021, Ukraine – as have many other countries around the globe – has faced an unprecedented challenge and hardship in ensuring proper prevention and response to coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This now risks becoming a long-lasting impediment to the Ukrainian people's health, social and economic recovery. The COVID-19 crisis has hit hardest the most vulnerable and is having a disproportionate effect on women. Based on UN Women's RGA[6] on the impact of COVID-19, the pandemic will further widen existing gender inequalities due to existing structural discrimination, prevailing gender norms and stereotypes, the limited representation of women in decision-making processes and the overall absence of GE mechanisms in COVID-19 planning and response. In the context of the conflict-affected regions in Ukraine, this can contribute to the further deterioration of human security, livelihood and well-being of women and girls.

---

4   UN Women, *Rapid gender assessment of the situation and needs of women in the context of COVID-19 in Ukraine* (2020).

5   Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, *Ministry of Internal Affair's Action Plan on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 "Women, Peace, Security" until 2020* (2017). Available at https://ips.ligazakon.net/document/MVS825; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, *Order of the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine No. 118 on the Adoption of the Action Plan on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 "Women, Peace, Security" until 2025* (2021). Available at https://www.dsns.gov.ua/files/2021/4/18/3/217_15.04.2021.pdf.

6   These figures are based on the following: members of SHGs, CSO members who have attended trainings, duty bearers who have attended trainings, media training participants, small grant beneficiaries, people engaged in community events (such as GBV prevention activities), and people supported through the COVID-19 response. Given that some of these groups take part in more than one of these activities, there may be some degree of double counting. However, UN Women considers that approximately 14,000 beneficiaries reached through the two projects is a realistic number.

1.3 Background on the UN Women Projects Evaluated

The projects were designed to contribute to the following three UN Women Ukraine SN outcomes:

• Outcome 1: Governance, Leadership and Participation

• Outcome 2: Eliminating Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG)

• Outcome 3: Women, Peace and Security

UN Women estimates that the two projects have benefited close to 14,000 people (see Table 1 below).

1.3.1 Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine – Norway

The project was initially planned for a 36-month implementation period (from 4 December 2017 to December 2020), with financial support from the Government of Norway. In June 2020, the project was extended at no cost for an additional four months and slated to end on

Women veterans at the photo exhibition «Women in uniform», Kyiv
(photo by: Ministry of Defense, Ukraine)

30 April 2021. The total budget for the project was NOK 28,211,084 (USD 3,427,419). [7]

The project was designed to support WPS commitment implementation at regional and local levels and gender-responsive reforms focused on the conflict-affected

TABLE 1
Total Number of Project Beneficiaries[6]

	Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society (2017–2021)		Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms (2018–2020)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Total male/female by project	7,990	2,117	2,750	1,071
Total by project	10,107		3,821	
Total, both projects	13,928			

6   These figures are based on the following: members of SHGs, CSO members who have attended trainings, duty bearers who have attended trainings, media training participants, small grant beneficiaries, people engaged in community events (such as GBV prevention activities), and people supported through the COVID-19 response. Given that some of these groups take part in more than one of these activities, there may be some degree of double counting. However, UN Women considers that approximately 14,000 beneficiaries reached through the two projects is a realistic number.

7   Project Document (ProDoc) – "*Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine*" *(Norway)* (December 2017).

zones and areas with a high number of IDPs. Its overarching goal was to ensure that women and girls, especially the most vulnerable to the effects of the conflict, will participate and equally benefit from the recovery, peace and community security planning in eastern Ukraine (project outcomes, outputs and links to UN Women's SN are summarized after Section 1.2).

The project sought to achieve its anticipated results using several different approaches. This included working to increase awareness among regional and local authorities in the Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts on GE, WPS and gender-based analysis of budgets and polices to consider women's and men's different needs and interests in the decentralization process. To do this, the project helped establish Self-Help Groups (SHGs) at the community level. These groups helped develop community and gender profiles and identified recommendations to assist women and other community members to present to local authorities. The project also set up both Local Gender Coordination Councils (LGCCs) and Community Security and Social Cohesion Working Groups (CSWGs). These community structures were meant to support increasing the voices of women from vulnerable groups in governance and decision-making processes. The project also employed the Community Mobilization for Empowerment (CME) methodology to strengthen women's groups to participate meaningfully in decision-making on recovery, peace, community security and decentralized development in their communities. Lastly, the project collaborated with youth, men and boys, to some extent, through social mobilization and innovative approaches to community work in order to broaden necessary efforts to address the underlying causes of gender discrimination (see Annex 12 for project ToCs).

Project beneficiaries included GoU institutions and law enforcement bodies, namely the LGCCs, law enforcement personnel, local police and districts,

juvenile prevention officers, women and men affected by conflict in targeted communities, and local media groups. The project was implemented in three conflict-affected oblasts in eastern Ukraine: Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia. [8]

1.3.2 Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms: Transformative Approaches to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ukraine – Denmark

The project is to be implemented over a five-year period, having launched in 2018. It has a budget of DKK 15 million (USD 2,406,932). [9] It is currently at its midpoint, and as such, this cluster evaluation is in lieu of an originally planned midterm review.

This project was designed to support the GoU with the integration of GE and women's rights into the decentralization and law enforcement reforms at the national level based on good practices and workable cases tested in decentralized local committees in eastern Ukraine. Its key aim is to ensure the sustainable impact of gender-responsive reforms and secure a positive change for women and men in Ukraine, particularly in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. [10]

Project beneficiaries include two main target groups: the GoU, notably the MIA and the Ministry of Communities and Territories Development (MCTD); and the women and men of Ukraine, particularly those affected by the conflict in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Community mobilizers at the CME workshop, 2019, Kharkiv (photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Anna Korbut)

---

8   Project Document (ProDoc) – "*Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine" (Norway)* (December 2017).

9   Agreement between UN Women and the Government of Denmark – Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms: Transformative Approaches to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ukraine Project (2018), p. 3

10   Ibid.

The project applies capacity-building and technical support for gender mainstreaming in policy development and implementation of the two ministries responsible for implementing the decentralization reforms (the MCTD) and for law enforcement (the MIA).

At the local level, project interventions have focused on integrating GE priorities, prevention and response to GBV in regional and local documents linked to the reform process, including strategies, target programmes and budgets. The project has also been working on the community mobilization for empowerment of women and men to participate in local decision-making; strengthening the capacity of regional and local authorities and law enforcement bodies for gender-responsive decentralized planning and budgeting; and facilitating effective partnerships between authorities, law enforcement bodies

and women's groups to prevent and respond to GBV, as an integral element of community security.

At the central level, project interventions have focused on the following: bringing the policy and legal frameworks for implementation of the decentralization and law enforcement reforms into compliance with international and national commitments on GE and women's human rights; improving the capacity of national, regional and local governments to respond to the needs of rights holders, specifically women affected by the conflict and survivors of GBV, by building more gender-responsive decentralized governance and services (see Annex 12 for project ToCs).

Figure 3 below summarizes the outcomes and outputs of the two projects and shows their link with UN Women's SN outcomes in Ukraine.

FIGURE 3
UN Women Projects Background
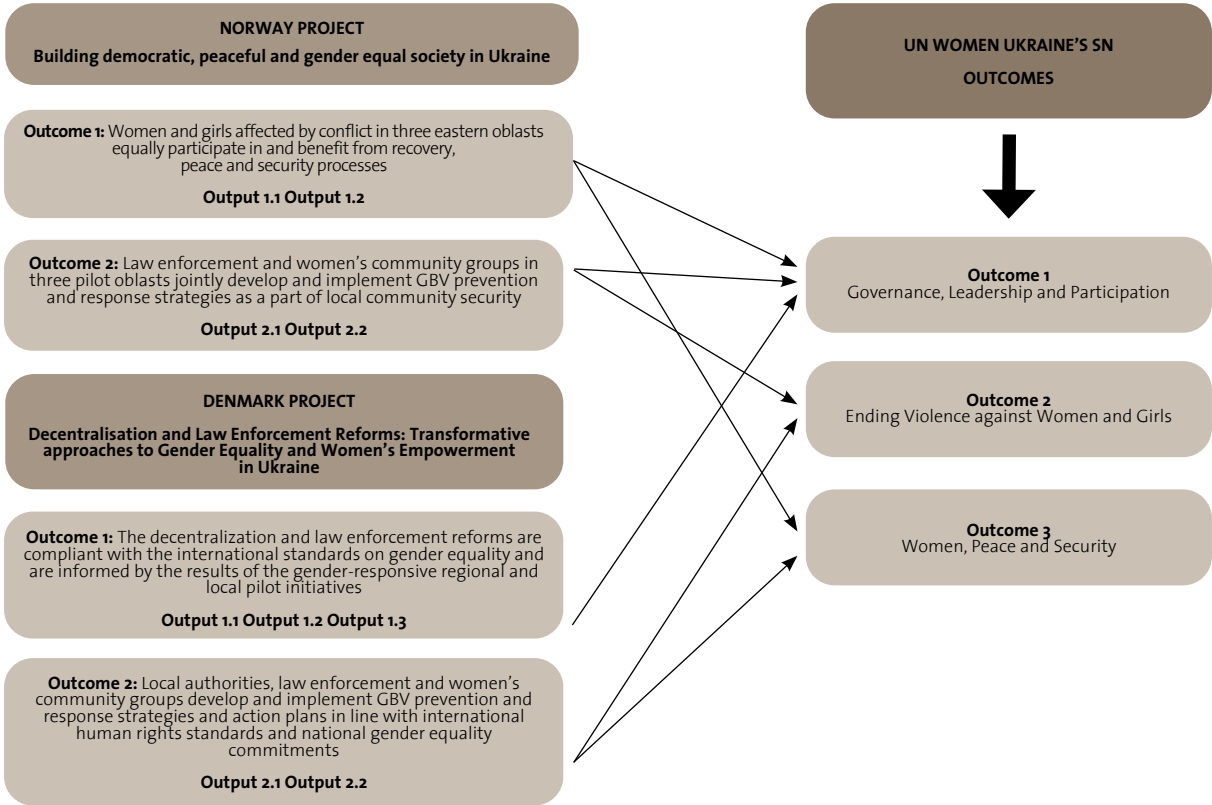
1.3.3 Overview of Project Partners

UN Women has been implementing the two projects in partnership with several CSOs. This includes three main Responsible Parties (RPs): the Ukrainian Women's Fund (UWF) and the Ukrainian Foundation for Public Health (UFPH) for both of the projects; and Unity for the Future (UFF) for the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project.

UWF is a long-standing UN Women key partner for implementing the CME methodology in the three regions, supporting/capacitating mobilizers and SHGs for leadership and conducting joint activities with local authorities on EVAW. It has helped channel funds for 39 small grants to SHGs that were able to use them for small projects on community-based interventions on EVAW and WPS in the three regions. **UFPH** is a CSO partner for implementing the outcome regarding GBV. UFPH has been supporting women's participation in CSWGs where GBV prevention is a priority, advising survivors of GBV through Facebook groups and linking them with law enforcement. UFPH has also been carrying out advocacy campaigns on prevention, targeting and involving the youth. **UFF** is a CSO partner assisting in the implementation of outputs related to WPS localization. UFF has been instrumental in enhancing the capacities of local and regional administrations as well as of women's groups on WPS localization through mentoring, training, knowledge products and on-the-job coaching. For other partners and contractors, see Annex 2, Table 8.

1.4 Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope

The **purpose of the cluster evaluation** focused on accountability in that it assessed the extent to which results were achieved as per the project agreement. It was also designed to document lessons learned and obtain data and analysis that will help inform its future decision-making.

The **rationale** for conducting a cluster evaluation instead of two distinct project-level evaluations is to engage in an analysis of the contribution of the two interventions to the ultimate expected results outlined both in the projects' logical frameworks and in

Community mobilizers at the CME Workshop, 2019, Dnipro
(photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Oleksandr Myshko)

UN Women's SN. Given this and the many common or related objectives, theories of change and similar approaches of the two projects, UN Women Ukraine commissioned a cluster evaluation of the aforementioned two projects.

The Government of Norway is also in the process of approving funding for a second phase of its funded project and is interested in getting feedback on project design, and the Government of Denmark is assessing any changes needed to the project that it is funding at the midpoint. The other actors involved are looking for lessons learned that they can apply to future programming.

The specific **objectives** of this cluster evaluation are to:

1. Analyse and review the ToCs and key assumptions made in light of the current context.

2. Analyse the relevance of UN Women's approach to the implementation of the initiatives at the national, regional and local levels against the outcomes of UN Women's SN.

3. Assess the effectiveness of the projects' interventions on target regions and communities.

4. Assess organizational efficiency and the coordination mechanisms related to the achievement of the projects' results.

5. Analyse and harvest/document any outcomes that have contributed or are contributing to transformative gender changes at the individual and institutional levels.

6. Assess the sustainability of the results and the interventions in advancing gender equality in the targeted regions and communities.

7. Identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, and challenges to inform the future work of UN Women Ukraine in the areas of Governance and Participation, EVAWG and WPS.

8. Identify strategies for replicating and upscaling the identified best practices of the interventions during the implementation of the remaining period of the Ukraine CO's SN.
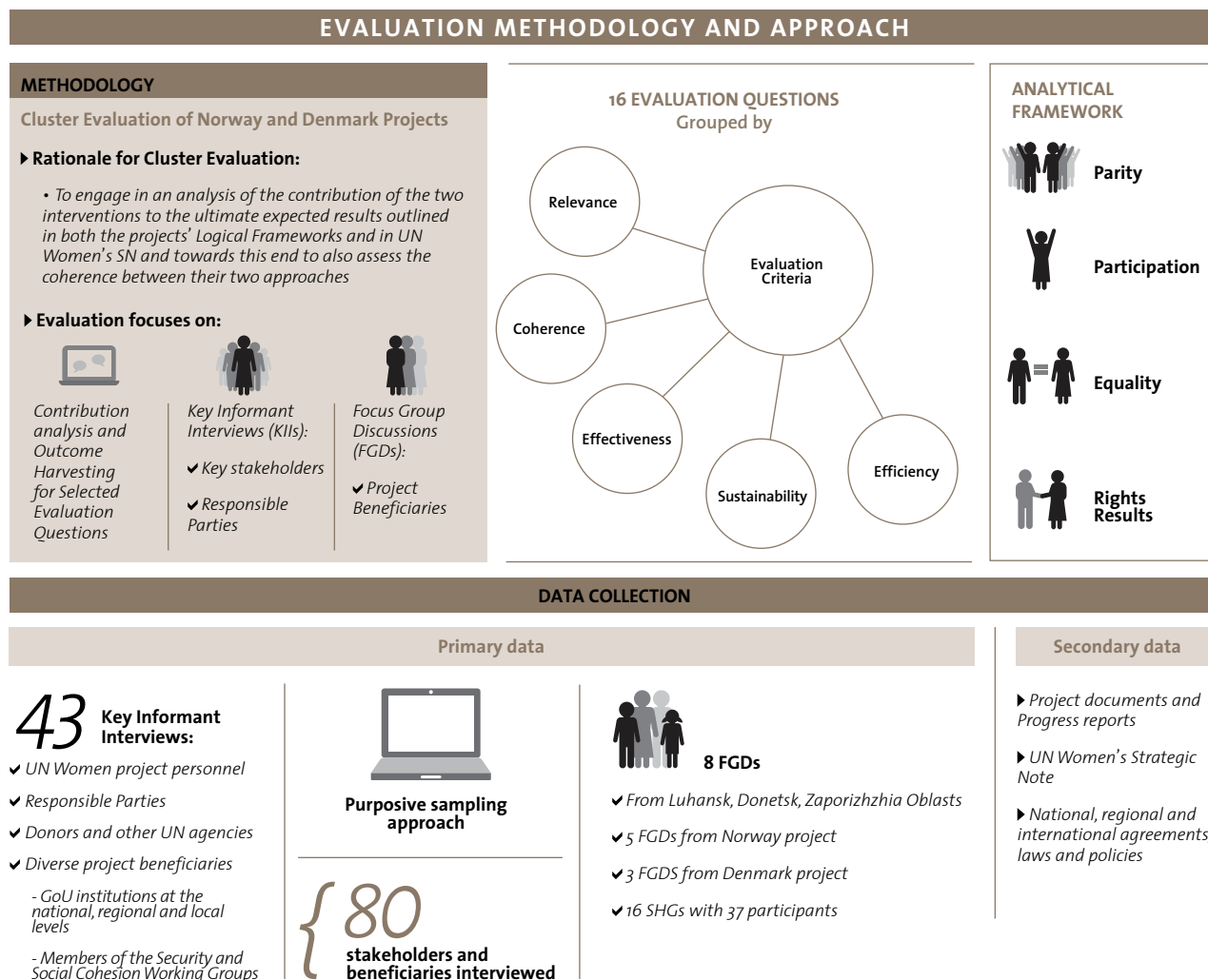
Scope

Although the two projects are of a different length, both were at a point in their implementation stages where they could benefit from a strategic evaluation. Specifically, the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project was at its midpoint, while the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project ended in April 2021 and, as such, was ready for a final evaluation. Therefore, the evaluation covers the implementation period for the two projects from their 2018 starting points until April 2021. In addition to evaluating outcomes, the evaluation focused on and evaluated the coherence between the two project approaches. It covered all project activities implemented in eastern Ukraine as well as at the national level for the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project.

Evaluation Users

The evaluation's recommendations highlight key priority areas to consider to inform future UN Women programming in Ukraine as well as the development of the CO's upcoming Strategic Note. Other targeted users of the evaluation include the Governments of Denmark and Norway, project partners, GoU counterparts at the local and national levels, CSOs, other UN agencies and other development partners in Ukraine.

1.5 Evaluation Methodology

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

METHODOLOGY

Cluster Evaluation of Norway and Denmark Projects

▶ **Rationale for Cluster Evaluation:**

• *To engage in an analysis of the contribution of the two interventions to the ultimate expected results outlined in both the projects' Logical Frameworks and in UN Women's SN and towards this end to also assess the coherence between their two approaches*

▶ **Evaluation focuses on:**

Contribution analysis and Outcome Harvesting for Selected Evaluation Questions

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):
✔ *Key stakeholders*
✔ *Responsible Parties*

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):
✔ *Project Beneficiaries*

16 EVALUATION QUESTIONS
Grouped by

Relevance
Coherence
Evaluation Criteria
Effectiveness
Sustainability
Efficiency

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Parity
Participation
Equality
Rights Results

DATA COLLECTION

Primary data

43 **Key Informant Interviews:**
✔ *UN Women project personnel*
✔ *Responsible Parties*
✔ *Donors and other UN agencies*
✔ *Diverse project beneficiaries*
  - *GoU institutions at the national, regional and local levels*
  - *Members of the Security and Social Cohesion Working Groups*

Purposive sampling approach

80 **stakeholders and beneficiaries interviewed**

8 FGDs
✔ *From Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia Oblasts*
✔ *5 FGDs from Norway project*
✔ *3 FGDS from Denmark project*
✔ *16 SHGs with 37 participants*

Secondary data

▶ *Project documents and Progress reports*
▶ *UN Women's Strategic Note*
▶ *National, regional and international agreements, laws and policies*

Given the similarity of purpose and overall approaches in the two projects evaluated, UN Women Ukraine negotiated the conducting of an evaluation of these two projects together in a cluster given their respective phases of implementation. Although these are two projects funded by separate donors, they are part of a programmatic approach that the CO is using in Ukraine to contribute to the outcomes listed above.

Thus, while the evaluation findings are based on the approaches, activities and results identified in the two projects, the overall evaluation findings and recommendations are focused on a programmatic and strategic level. Given this, despite the fact that one project is still at its midpoint and the other is just finalizing its work, the evaluation approach is more summative than formative. It explores the common strategic approaches used by both projects and assesses how effectively these have been in generating the anticipated results thus far, with a view to providing feedback on these approaches and the related ToC for UN Women's future programmatic approaches in Ukraine.

The evaluation used a mixed-methods, theory-based approach, with a focus on contribution analysis and Outcome Harvesting for selected evaluation questions (EQs) and the use of key informant interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders and RPs and focus group discussions (FGDs) with project beneficiaries (insofar as was possible within COVID-19 restrictions). Data collection also included an extensive document review, with data validation sessions with UN Women project and management personnel.

Modified Outcome Harvesting

As one means of assessing the projects' results and triangulating the data obtained from the key informant interviews, the ET used a modified Outcome Harvesting approach to determine the content of its FGD question guide. Outcome Harvesting provides a set of tools that can be used either alone or in combination with other evaluation systems to map out all project results, including those not anticipated in the project log frame. It also helps establish what is the causal relationship between the results achieved and

the different internal and external factors that have contributed to these results. It focuses on getting project beneficiaries and stakeholders to list all of the changes that they have observed or experienced and then asks them to share what they think has contributed to these changes.

Ideally, the ET would have facilitated this process over a two-to-three-hour focus group to allow for full discussion and grouping of results identified, followed by a group analysis of causal factors. However, given the limitations imposed by the remote mode of all FGDs with small numbers of participants due to COVID-19 safety restrictions, the ET used an abbreviated Outcome Harvesting process for its FGDs with project beneficiaries that took place over a period of 1 to 1.5 hours and focused on getting participants to identify any changes that they had experienced in their lives as a result of project interventions and to what they attributed these changes.

1.5.1 Evaluation Principles

UN WOMEN EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

• National ownership and leadership

• UN system coordination and coherence

• Innovation

• Fair power relations and empowerment

• Participation and inclusion

• Independence and impartiality

• Transparency

• Quality and credibility

• Intentionality and use of evaluation

• Ethics

The evaluation also applied the following UN Women evaluation principles to ensure that it was conducted in a way that was responsive to gender equality and women's rights and in alignment with the UNEG norms and standards, the UNEG ethical guidelines

and the handbook *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation: Towards UNEG Guidance* (see Annex 11 for more details).

1.5.2 Evaluation Questions

The ET revised the EQs outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR) (refer to Annex 7 for a copy of the TOR) to reduce the overall number of questions from 43 to 16 to focus the analysis process. They did this by (1) eliminating EQs that asked for highly similar data collection and analysis; (2) blending like questions together; and (3) converting many of the proposed EQs into evaluation indicators. The revised EQs are outlined in each evaluation category in the Findings section that follows. They are supplemented by 30 indicators in the evaluation matrix (refer to Annex 1 for a copy of the matrix with a ranked evaluation for each indicator).

1.5.3 Analytical Framework

Parity, Participation, Equality and Rights (PPER) Framework

The analytical framework that the ET applied to the evaluation assesses specific types of transformative results related to GE. Its underlying assumption is that if progress is made in any of these four results categories, it means that the specific approach used to facilitate these changes has either contributed or directly led to increased gender equality within that specific context. The core results categories include parity, participation, equality and rights. These four categories represent the foundation that the ET has used to assess whether transformative change has taken place from a gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) perspective (refer to Annex 8 for a more detailed presentation of this framework).

The evaluation matrix also applied this analytical framework to the core evaluation questions as well as defined evaluation criteria for each indicator and established a pre-coded four-point ranking scale for each indicator based on these evaluation criteria. The ET also used the evaluation matrix and analytical framework to inform the design of the evaluation instruments (refer to Annexes 3 and 4 for copies of these instruments).

1.5.4 Data Collection

Secondary Data

The ET reviewed diverse project documents including, but not limited to, project documents and progress reports, as well as strategic and planning documents such as UN Women's SN plus relevant national, regional and international agreements, laws and policies. The ET assessed these documents based on a document review that referenced all of the EQs and related indicators outlined in the evaluation matrix as one means of collecting the data required to assess the key evaluation questions (see Annex 6 for the list of reviewed documents).

Primary Data

The ET collected primary data using two processes via a purposive sampling approach. The first process was a series of KIIs with (1) UN Women project personnel; (2) RPs; (3) donors and other UN agencies; and (4) diverse project beneficiaries. Project beneficiary key informants were drawn from a sample of (1) GoU institutions at the national, regional and local levels including those responsible for implementing decentralization and law enforcement reforms, GE and WPS commitments; and (2) members of the CSWGs.

Based on the list of key informants identified in consultation with UN Women, the ET held 27 KIIs that involved 14 interlocutors from the Reference Group (RG) and an additional 13 from RPs and GoU counterparts. In addition, the ET arranged five interviews with donors or other international organizations working on similar projects. Six interviews and follow-up meetings were held with UN Women Ukraine's colleagues and another three with small grantees, bringing the total of KIIs to 43. See Annex 2 for the final list of key informants.

In the **second phase** of primary data collection, the ET used FGDs to collect data from project beneficiaries at the community level. These FGDs were drawn from the diverse SHGs from both projects whose members had participated in the local CSWGs and LGCCs. These included, among others, women IDPs and women from host communities; women from different vulnerable groups; and women and men in the communities affected by conflict. There are 18 SHGs in the two oblasts

covered by the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project (Donetsk and Luhansk) and 61 SHGs for the three oblasts covered by the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project (Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia). See Annex 4 for a copy of the FGD facilitation guide.

Based on the available translation budget and taking into account the perspective of having a good representative sample, the ET held eight FGDs in total from all oblasts (with five FGDs in Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project communities and three FGDs in the other project communities). The ET identified the amalgamated territorial hromadas (ATHs) and drew SHG members from them for the FGDs (see Table 2) in consultation with the UWF, the primary RP that dealt with the establishment of SHGs and their activities. Most of the FGDs involved representatives of more than one SHG from each selected ATH. The rationale for this mixed

representation was that it presented another platform for more participants to speak out and ease any potential "competition" tension with other unselected SHGs. In total, the FGDs involved members of 16 SHGs with 37 participants (5 men and 32 women).

Selection of ATHs and SHGs was predicated on the criteria that would best serve the evaluation's purpose. This included SHGs from both projects and all three oblasts; the team tried to choose a selection from (1) the most successful and active SHGs with documented good practices; and (2) SHGs that faced more challenges, to serve as a control group and as a means of providing feedback on what could be done differently in the future. However, another factor that greatly affected the selection process was the participants' availability due to COVID-19 conditions (many were sick or recovering), Internet connectivity and public transportation limitations (if the interview was planned in administrative centres).

TABLE 2
Breakdown of Key Informant Interviews by Type of Stakeholder or Project Beneficiary

Key Informants	Male	Female	Total
National government stakeholders	2	2	4
Local and regional government stakeholders	1	12	13
RPs, contractors, small grantees	3	8	11
Donors and other UN agencies	2	5	7
UN Women staff	1	7	8
TOTAL	**9**	**34**	**43**

TABLE 3
Breakdown of FGDs by Geographic Location and Type of Participant

No.	Amalgamated Territorial Hromada (ATH)	Details	Project*
	Beneficiaries: Self-Help Groups		
1	**Komyshuvakha ATH (Zaporizhzhia)**	4 representatives of 1 SHG including a community mobilizer (all women)	**Project 1**
2	**Soledar ATH (Donetsk)**	3 representatives of 1 SHG (all women) including a former community mobilizer (now community elder)	**Project 1**
3	**Rubizhne ATH (Luhansk)**	6 representatives of 4 SHGs (5 women, 1 man) including a community mobilizer	**Project 1**
4	**Volnovakha ATH (Donetsk)**	2 representatives of 2 SHGs (2 women) including a community mobilizer	**Project 1**
5	**Pryvillia ATH (Luhansk)**	6 representatives of 1 SHG (all women) including a community mobilizer	**Project 1**
6	**Siversk ATH (Donetsk)**	5 representatives of 2 SHGs (3 men, 2 women) including a community mobilizer	**Project 2**
7	**Lozno-Oleksandrivka ATH (Luhansk)**	5 representatives of 2 SHGs (all women) including a community mobilizer	**Project 2**
8	**Oleksandrivka ATH (Donetsk)**	6 representatives of 3 SHGs (5 women, 1 man) including a community mobilizer	**Project 2**
	In total	**37 representatives (5 men, 32 women)**	

*Note: Project 1 = Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine
Project 2 = Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms

The ET met with a total of **80 project** stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The team also presented the evaluation's preliminary findings to UN Women's management team for validation purposes and subsequently followed up with project team staff for further discussion of the key findings and data validation.

1.6 Evaluation Limitations

TABLE 4
Evaluation Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

Evaluation Limitations	Mitigation Strategies
Due to COVID-19 safety considerations, there was restricted mobility and access to key informants and project beneficiaries.	The ET worked with UN Women partners to identify small groups of project beneficiaries from a representative sample of community-level participants who could take part in a small focus group (3–4 persons) remotely. This reduced the number of project beneficiaries who could be consulted, so the focus of these discussion groups was qualitative in nature. However, the ET was still able to include 38 community-level beneficiaries in the FGDs. For GoU officials who may not be working regular hours due to having to work from home, the ET ensured that they had choices regarding the time of their interviews.
High staff turnover among government stakeholders meant a risk of gaps in institutional memory related to project implementation.	The ET worked with the RPs and UN Women Ukraine to identify government personnel who have some knowledge of and experience with the projects' implementation and results.
Recent elections at the community level also meant that the ET would not have access to some local government-sector specialists and some other local government authorities since once these persons have left their positions, they are not authorized to speak with the ET.	The ET worked with the RPs to identify local-level authorities who had been in their roles for at least a year of the projects' implementation or longer.
The ET is highly dependent upon RPs and UN Women project staff to identify which community members they should talk to. This potentially introduces a small degree of selection bias.	The ET outlined the preferred selection criteria for community member FGD participants to share with RPs and held more than one FGD for each type of community group to triangulate this data source.

SECTION B: EVALUATION FINDINGS

The ET has presented the cluster evaluation findings by evaluation category in the following order: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

2. Relevance

Relevance EQ

1. To what extent were the intervention's design and its results relevant to the needs and priorities of the individual and institutional beneficiaries?

2.1 Relevance of Interventions and Integration of Gender and Human Rights Principles and Strategies into Project Design and Implementation

Key Finding 1: While the focus of project approaches are closely aligned with UN Women's strategic priorities, they do not yet reflect the priority needs of women and vulnerable groups at local levels related to economic security, which they place ahead of physical security and the WPS agenda.

The CME methodology is well suited to allow groups to identify and advocate for community priorities with a

Community mobilizers at the WPS Writeshop, 2019, Sviatohirsk (photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Artem Hetman)

"I loved the trainings on women's leadership and I think that it would be of interest to other women in our village because after such trainings you have more confidence and you realize that you are worth something in this life and capable of achieving something." SHG member, Zaporizhzhia region

special emphasis on vulnerable groups. It also creates an avenue through which underrepresented groups can influence local development plans and budgets. Moreover, FGD data suggest that SHGs identified the most vulnerable groups as single women, women with multiple children, IDPs and women with disabilities (with some variation between communities). In this regard, at the community level, the two projects are empowering local community members, including the most vulnerable, to advocate for their unique needs. This is both an important and relevant process, especially as the decentralization strategy progresses.

However, the percentage of recommendations that the SHGs identified as a priority for action for local authorities that address women's priority needs and were accepted/adopted by local administrations remains low. [11] **This indicates that the majority of their priority needs are not being addressed and possibly that local and regional authorities do not have the capacity to address all of these needs from a budgetary and human resources perspective.** These types of capacity issues were also raised as a potential constraint for the implementation of the local 1325 action plans (addressed in more detail in the Effectiveness and Sustainability sections).

---

11   For example, 7.5 per cent of recommendations provided by SHGs to local administrations were adopted for the Norway project (calculated based on the total number of recommendations versus those adopted).

FGD participants also indicated that economic security is a more pressing need for them than issues related to participation and security. Women mentioned that economic insecurity is a major contributor to gender inequality, including women's low levels of power in decision-making. Relatedly, issues pertaining to physical security and participation in WPS localization were rarely mentioned in FGDs with community members [12].

The small grant mechanism attached to the CME approach allows community members to identify and advocate for support of their identified priorities. This indicates a level of direct responsiveness to beneficiary priorities. FGDs with community members found that the use of small grant money to establish or rehabilitate community centres was one of the most significant changes that occurred as a result of the project. Some of these renovated community centres were partially used to provide safe spaces for survivors of GBV to meet but mostly to provide general community services and activities.

However, many FGD participants indicated that local leaders and other male community members only started to respect their work after seeing the tangible results of these renovations. FGD data also indicated that other community members, including men, were interested in establishing SHGs once they saw the work of groups that had received grants. This appeared to be because this work was benefiting communities in general and not necessarily because the SHG work focused on increasing gender equality. **This again speaks to the issue of what is most relevant to those most affected by conflict in eastern Ukraine.**

Key Finding 2: The projects' implementation directly supported the GoU's MCTD and MIA in meeting capacity gaps regarding gender-sensitive policy development, planning and budgeting against the backdrop of a highly complicated decentralization process.

The projects' work with GoU stakeholders, particularly the MCTD and the MIA, was well aligned with

institutional capacity needs to support gender-sensitive reforms within the backdrop of a complicated decentralization process and to ensure alignment with national WPS commitments. At the decentralized levels, collaboration with the regional state administration for the targeted oblasts – specifically in developing gender-responsive strategies for socioeconomic development – also responded to relevant capacity needs such as gender-responsive planning and budgeting skills by providing related training to local authorities in these areas. These processes also sought to address government requirements to localize UNSCR 1325 by supporting the development of local action plans (LAPs).

2.2 Relevant Analyses Commissioned and/or Used to Inform Design

Key Finding 3: UN Women's capacity-building plans were informed consistently by needs assessments or other planned research. However, UN Women did not sufficiently use its formative research to inform adaptations specifically of community-level approaches.

Initial project design was informed by prior gender analyses. UN Women and RPs/contractors in both projects also regularly conducted training needs assessments prior to designing and delivering institutional trainings (see Annex 9 for details of these trainings).

There were more mixed results with regard to the use of the results of the GBV perception study conducted as baseline and endline research. The ET found that these research findings were not sufficiently distributed nor used to inform community-level prevention activities beyond sensitizations. RP KIIs also indicated that although the GBV study was an important component in terms of filling a data gap on GBV perceptions in the east, the study results were not used to inform an adaptation of approaches for GBV prevention at the community level, specifically in regard to community-led prevention initiatives. Project team staff did, however, report that they used the GBV perceptions survey to inform specific activities such trainings/local events with SHGs and stakeholders.

---

12   Only two FGDs mentioned physical security as a major issue in their communities and then only in relation specifically to street lighting and stray dogs.

UN Women also used the survey results to inform its advocacy/communications campaigns and help create pamphlets for survivors and perpetrators of DV, as well as create awareness-raising events during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and the online "Did she provoke?" campaign aimed at challenging the high tolerance of GBV. However, no community or GoU stakeholder mentioned the study or having received and used its results and findings. Of the project RPs, the study was only mentioned by the contractor responsible for conducting the study. **This leaves the overall impression that the study results were used mainly by UN Women but not by its partners or key stakeholders, indicating the lack of a systematic process for disseminating study results.**

2.3 Theory of Change

Key Finding 4: UN Women has developed an overall programme approach that it is operating in eastern Ukraine and other regions which uses highly similar methodology and is being implemented by the same RPs but with the individual projects being funded by different donors. The CO's ToC does not yet reflect this broader, long-term programme.

A comparison of the specific ToCs for the two projects outlined in their project document design (see Annex 12) shows a strong similarity in the causal links assumed to lead to change and describes the key assumptions about what actions will contribute to change. UN Women in Ukraine is also implementing another three projects based on similar approaches and ToCs in eastern Ukraine and other areas of Ukraine; these project have a strong focus on the localization of 1325 action plans and the use of CME to foster increased participation of community-level women plus the promotion of more gender-responsive planning and budget processes. The projects' ToCs are aligned closely with UN Women's SN outcomes and the GoU's WPS and decentralization reform objectives. As such, they are relevant at the institutional- and UN-entity level. However, they do not yet reflect the priority need of increased economic security identified by women and vulnerable groups in the project regions. This is an issue for serious consideration in the next round of Strategic Note reflections and development by the CO.

Overall, the projects' ToCs also make a big leap from their medium-term outcomes to the overall impact anticipated of "Ukrainian women and girls being able to exercise their rights equally with men and boys and equally contribute to and **benefit** from development" (emphasis added). The challenge this creates is that seeing the ways in which women and men benefit more equally from the key change inputs/activities outlined in the ToC will take longer than the time frame of the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project, for example. This limits the degree to which the project's monitoring framework can assess the effectiveness of the approaches being used. It could potentially be tracked in the remaining years of the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project, as that type of result should just be starting to become evident. However, to do so will also require some adjustment to both the log frame indicators – to reflect this intermediate level of change – and the project's ToC – to show different stages of change and the causal link between them.

The projects' ToCs also do not accurately reflect the fact that changes in social norms related to GBV prevention are a long-term process. Therefore, for the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project in particular, it was not realistic to expect significant changes in this regard at a wider societal level within just a three-year period. The results' logic in the ToC in general need to be more phased and based on more incremental change processes that take place in stages to better highlight the causal links as well as provide a clearer foundation from which to develop relevant indicators in project log frames.

Neither the projects' nor the Strategic Note's ToCs acknowledge the role of women's volunteer labour as a foundation of the CME methodology and women's participation. There is a widespread culture of voluntarism and SHGs deeply anchored in the east. These groups generally work very well, and humanitarian assistance personnel interviewed for another study have observed that they are utilized to provide solidarity work for free by diverse actors, including government officials (donor KII, May 2021). **There is a danger that UN Women could also fall into this particular trap by basing so much of its CME work on women's volunteer spirit.**

3. Coherence

Coherence EQs

Internal Coherence:

2. What are the synergies and interlinkages between the two interventions and with other UN Women interventions?

External Coherence:

3. To what extent do the interventions reflect Ukraine's national plans and priorities on GEWE as well as the country's international obligations and national commitments (including those related to WPS and EVAW)?

4. To what extent does UN Women possess a comparative advantage in the projects' areas of work vis-à-vis other UN entities and key partners in Ukraine?

3.1 Alignment of Project Approaches with Relevant Strategies and Policies

Key Finding 5: The projects were consistent in their application of international, regional and national strategies and GEWE commitments, including mainstreaming of the "leave no one behind" (LNOB) principle, nationalized SDGs and the United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPF) in Ukraine. This represents a high level of synergy among these different frameworks and commitments.

The project document review found a high level of integration of gender and human rights principles. For example, the planning and budgeting for the CME approach – which is based on human rights principles, including specifically the UN-mandated LNOB – is the key community-based approach for both projects. Approaches to support gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), gender-responsive governance, EVAW and the localization of UNSCR 1325 also embody gender equality principles. Project documents for both projects indicate alignment with relevant international, national and regional agreements (see Annex 9 for the full list).

Young women mobilizers in Lozno-Oleksandrivka, Luhansk region, 2020
(Photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Maksym Holoborodko)

UN Women also commissioned studies and used community profiling to identify vulnerable groups of women. Specifically, UN Women conducted a vulnerability analysis of "women and men in the context of decentralization reform and restoration of governance in the conflict-affected areas of Ukraine", as well as community profiling in the target communities of Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts. Through the application of the LNOB principle, UN Women identified vulnerable groups such as women with disabilities, IDPs, women-headed households, the elderly, single older women and women living with HIV, which aligned both with SHG members' classifications (FGD, April 2021) and the CEDAW Committee's recommendations.[13] The two projects worked actively to involve women from these different vulnerable groups in the SHGs, LGCCs and CSWGs to help bring their voices and inputs about their priority needs to the attention of local authorities.

Both projects align with the UNPF in Ukraine for the years 2018–2020, specifically Outcome 3 – "By 2022, women and men, girls and boys participate in decision-making and enjoy human rights, gender equality, [and] effective, transparent and non-discriminatory public services" – and Outcome 4 – "By 2022, communities, including vulnerable people and IDPs, are more resilient and equitably benefit from greater social cohesion, quality services and recovery support".[14] The projects also ensure the successful application of the

---

13   Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UN Women, and UNDP. 2017. *Concluding Observations on the Eighth Periodic Report of Ukraine.*

14   Ukraine, *Government of Ukraine – United Nations Partnership Framework for 2018–2022.* Available at https://ukraine.un.org/en/49416-government-ukraine-united-nations-partnership-framework-2018-2022.

LNOB principle and with a specific focus on implementation of the SDG targets 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5.[15] As such, both projects exhibit clear external coherence with UN principles, frameworks and agreements. The projects contribute to the UNDAF and the work of other UN agencies primarily through the application of the CME approach. This model was successful in targeting vulnerable groups, including IDPs and vulnerable women, to participate more equitably in decision-making structures. The CME approach also empowered and facilitated vulnerable group members to advocate for non-discriminatory public services processes.

3.2 Contributions of Project Approaches to UN Women's Strategic Note Outcomes

Key Finding 6: While there is a high degree of coherence in how the CO has approached programming at the local, regional and national levels with regard to the three SN outcomes, the ET was not convinced that all aspects of the approaches used will contribute effectively to SN outcomes, especially for SN Outcome 2 (EVAWG) and the aspect of SN Outcome 1 (Governance, Leadership and Participation) that focuses on equal benefits for women and men.

For example, the CME methodology is the main approach both projects used to contribute to UN Women SN Outcome 1, which states that "women, particularly those facing multiple forms of discrimination, increasingly participate in and benefit from gender-responsive reforms and justice" (emphasis added) with regard to women's increased participation in decision-making and leadership. The CO is also using this same approach in three other projects in Ukraine and has a coherent approach to its programming. There is, however, still limited current evidence that more equitable benefits result from this participation in terms of women's well-being, their access to fair justice or their having increased knowledge of gender equality. Therefore, it is not yet clear whether the use of the CME approach addresses both halves of SN Outcome 1.

The SN outcome for Governance, Leadership and Participation is that "women benefit from fair justice", with a key output being that "women and GE advocates have enhanced capacity to participate in decision-making and demand accountability for GEWE commitments and access justice for violations of these rights". The ET found that while women's participation at the community and local authority levels increased, there was no strong evidence that this participation has led to significant increases in fair justice processes yet. Some SHGs have reported better responsiveness by police to complaints, but this is not yet a consistent response across the hromadas. Women's understanding that they have a right to ask for local authority support of community priority needs has also clearly increased, but this understanding has not always been directed towards addressing women's GE needs. **The coherence in approach is evident, but it is not yet clear whether this approach is or can adequately contribute to both halves of SN Outcome 1.**

The ET also found that while there is coherence in the approaches used across the projects with regard to SN Outcome 2, which focuses on "transformative changes in social norms, attitudes and behaviors [that] are achieved at community and individual levels to prevent GBV", this was the area where the ET found the least amount of contribution to UN Women's SN outcomes. In particular, the key approaches budgeted and implemented to support EVAW do not specifically address changes in social norms, attitudes and behaviours at community or individual levels beyond large sensitization campaigns. The latter have proved insufficient for norm change in this context – in part because three years is too small a time frame to effect this type of widespread societal change, in part because sensitization campaigns are known to be insufficient to change norms unless quite intensive and wide-scale, and because the projects did not include gender-transformative GBV prevention approaches at the other levels of the socioecological model (i.e. individual, relational or community) (see Annex 9 and the Lessons Learned section for more details). **As such, there was a lower level of internal coherence with UN Women's SN Outcome 2.**

For SN Outcome 3 (strengthening the implementation of the WPS agenda), again the ET found a high

level of coherence among the projects and other similar UN Women projects in Ukraine. However, in this instance, there was also a fairly clear contribution of these projects to this outcome.

3.3 Sharing of Relevant Approaches and Lessons Learned between Projects

Key Finding 7: The two projects shared common key approaches and RPs on an annual basis, which, when combined with the other UN Women projects in Ukraine that also use these common approaches, constitute a programme and contribute to some operational efficiencies and joint lessons learned.

Both projects share key approaches and RPs with only small variations. Commonalities include the utilization of the CME approach and establishment of community-level structures (LGCCs and the CSWGs). The document review found that at the beginning of the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project, UN Women organized a regional forum on CME to take stock and exchange experiences between partners and community members; this was done again in 2019 and 2020 by all three eastern projects (the two covered by the cluster evaluation and another larger-scale project that is funded by the EU).[16] One challenge identified in these forums is that the cost-sharing arrangements between the multiple projects sometimes create logistical difficulties and misattribution of results (UN Women KIIs, April 2021). The projects, however, were able to share a communications officer and effect some economies of scale in this way.

The main RP for the two projects covered by the cluster evaluation considered the work it was doing as one programme and not as two separate projects, except for reporting purposes. It was able to apply its common approaches and lessons learned across these two projects but found the reporting requirements of the multiple donors combined with UN Women to be onerous.

Woman participating in 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, Kramatorsk, 2018 (Photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Volodymyr Shuvayev)

3.4 UN Women Ukraine's Comparative Advantage

Key Finding 8: UN Women is a leader in WPS and specifically in the localization of UNSCR 1325. The projects' key approaches related to the CME methodology in eastern Ukraine are also being implemented by several other international actors.

"There is one Working Group that works on the NAP on 1325 – they convene this group that is comprised of local authorities, NGOs. We are also members, they convene once a quarter." SHG member, Donetsk region

In eastern Ukraine, the ET found evidence that UN Women is the only international organization working on local 1325 action plan development. It does this through the work of a national women's CSO. This is a typical approach that UN Women uses to help build national and local capacity in gender equality and national, regional and local ownership of new approaches to GEWE. In some cases, however, it does mean that UN Women is working with CSOs that have a weaker capacity. GoU officials noted that WPS is a major strength of UN Women and that "UN Women Ukraine staff have focused on security sector reform, and their 1325 work is really strong" (GoU KIIs, April 2021). Other GoU stakeholders also attributed their increased knowledge and understanding of how to stream the WPS

---

16 UN Women, *Progress report to the Government of Norway – Project "Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine: 4 December 2017 – 31 May 2018"* (2018).

framework in Ukraine to the support of UN Women (GoU KIIs, April 2021).

However, the ET also found that numerous entities in eastern Ukraine are working in local inclusive governance using similar CME approaches. This has led to a low level of distinction between various UN entities. Diverse key informants cited UNDP and UNFPA as the key actors working on these approaches other than UN Women (GoU KIIs, community stakeholder KII, UN agency KIIs, April 2021). GoU stakeholders also mentioned collaborating with a USAID-funded project that also works on inclusive governance using similar approaches. One RP informant noted that as a result, "cases of confusion and overlapping among different projects and international organizations are not a rarity" (RP KII, April 2021). In general, although coordination between UN agencies is ongoing, community-level stakeholders are not distinguishing between the work of various UN agencies. As one community informant maintained, "[UN projects] are all blended together." **While all contributing to fairly similar objectives, the question this raises is what is the value added or comparative advantage that UN Women presents with regard to the CME methodology?** It does, however, provide an indication of complementarity of programme approaches and cooperation between UNDP and UN Women. There was also some evidence of cooperation with UNFPA on GBV campaigns.

Key Finding 9: UN Women is viewed as the leading technical agency with regard to national-level government advocacy, particularly in terms of engaging technical expert consultants to support the translation of global frameworks related to gender equality into national and regional plans and strategies. This has enhanced UN Women's reputation, credibility and effectiveness in working with GoU stakeholders.

Multiple stakeholders mentioned UN Women's technical support to the GoU in terms of advocacy and development of gender-responsive planning, including GRB. Others observe that the "clout" or name recognition of UN Women opens up doors for them to work with other donors. Lastly, three GoU stakeholders appreciated specifically the access that UN Women gave them in terms of working

directly with technical expert consultants or CSOs, for example in GRB or the localization of the WPS agenda. **Informants at the MIA attribute UN Women's work as one of the primary reasons gender is mainstreamed in the Ministry today.** Another GoU informant mentioned that the engagement of these trained experts is cost prohibitive for many of these government officers, particularly at the decentralized levels, and so UN Women support is crucial to ensuring quality gender mainstreaming. Lastly, oblast and hromada officials appreciated UN Women's accessibility and ongoing support, indicating that they are easily reached and willing to help.

4. Effectiveness

Effectiveness EQs

5. To what extent have the expected results of the interventions been achieved at both outcome and output levels?

6. What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of any intended results?

7. Have the projects introduced innovative good practices to achieve results?

8. How well did the interventions succeed in involving and building the capacities of rights holders and duty bearers, as well as the project partners?

9. How effectively did UN Women react to the changing country context and address the challenges?

4.1 Programme Approaches and Strategies Used

Both projects used the introduction of the CME approach as a key foundation for achieving the SN outcomes prioritized by the Ukraine CO.

The main premise behind the CME approach is that it will mobilize community members to increase their participation in local-level decision-making and that they will become involved in the development of community and gender profiles that identify their priority needs. The SHGs are established as voluntary groups with representation from diverse groups drawn from

the communities concerned, particularly those traditionally underrepresented. After identifying priority community needs, the SHG members develop recommendations to address these needs in order to then present them to local authorities for consideration in local development plans and budgets. The aim is to influence these plans and budgets to be more inclusive of these priority community needs. This approach is designed to address the **SN outcome related to Governance, Leadership and Participation.**

UN Women is working closely with UNDP to apply the CME approach in targeted regions. The idea is that UN Women would lead the CME process in some communities, while in the communities where UNDP is leading this process, UN Women would provide inputs to ensure that the community profiles developed included relevant gender-related questions and analyses or that communities would develop separate gender profiles based on the community profile process. It was anticipated that some community priority needs identified and related initiatives would address GBV, particularly for the most vulnerable groups of women.

To address the UN Women **SN outcome related to WPS,** both projects have worked with regional and local authorities to increase awareness about GE, WPS and gender-based analysis of budgets and policies. The objective is to get them to consider women's and men's different needs in the process of adopting more decentralized planning, budgeting and recovery processes. To this end, the projects provided GRB training to develop local decision makers' capacity to integrate GE and measures to eliminate GBV in planning and budgeting processes, accompanied by the formation of LGCCs. These were to include local authorities and SHG members whose role it would be to analyse mid-term and annual budgets and conduct public consultations regarding funding allocations with local women's groups and the broader community. UN Women has also been working with local authorities to develop local 1325 action plans and budgets, which are also intended to increase awareness of and support for GBV prevention as well as other WPS agenda issues at the local and regional levels.

Additional work on GBV has focused on working with UNDP to establish CSWGs that bring together local authorities, police, social services and members of

BOX 1

The CME Approach

The CME approach was applied to work in conflict-affected communities of eastern Ukraine to increase women's and men's participation in local decision-making with a focus on the most vulnerable groups and women facing multiple forms of discrimination. The projects worked with both the MIA and the MCTD at the regional and district levels. In the Danish-funded project, the CME approach was further supplemented by related work at the national level with the MCTD.

The CME process is broken down into 10 steps: (1) arriving in the community; (2) establishing SHGs; (3) conducting community profiles; (4) building the capacity of mobilized groups; (5) identifying priority needs and consolidating groups; (6) facilitating interactions between communities and the authorities, lobbying for incorporating their needs in local plans/programmes; (7) identifying community-based initiatives for support with small grants; (8) implementing such initiatives/projects; (9) using monitoring for learning; and (10) conducting an evaluation and determining follow-up steps.

the SHGs to discuss diverse security issues related to social cohesion, DV and GBV. There has also been work with the police to pilot training on DV and GBV that includes consideration of the underlying causes of both, as well as human rights and the development of more gender-sensitive response practices. Within the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project, this pilot training has fed into the development of a unified police curriculum at the national level.

At the social-norms level, the projects have been working with the media to try and change how gender equality and women are portrayed by diverse regional and local media as well as how they address DV and GBV.

4.2 Effectiveness of Approaches

Key Finding 10: The CME approach has contributed significantly to increasing women's participation in

community-level decision-making and leadership. To take the CME approach to the next level of transformative change in women's state and the understanding of GEWE, however, will require additional investments in capacity-building with SHGs to improve the quality of the community gender analyses to help them prioritize recommendations to local and regional governments. It will also require greater involvement from these governments in this gender analysis process, a stronger focus on gender analysis that is based on women's human rights and power relations, an adaptation of the curricula to focus on reflections on internal attitudes and behaviours in regard to gender norms and inequalities, and an increased focus on engaging men and boys in all of these processes.

"Now women are not treated only as housewives — but also as leaders." SHG member, Luhansk region

What Works Well

The ET found that the CME methodology is well suited to increase gender-responsive governance in terms of women's active participation and advocacy for community-level initiatives and reforms. The methodology itself was not designed to promote a GEWE agenda or outcomes specifically but rather is a good methodology to increase inclusive community participation generally – often with positive increases in women's participation. [17]

Taking a closer look at **SN Outcome 1 (Governance, Leadership and Participation),** this is the results area where quite arguably the projects have made a significant difference in a very short period of time. Specifically, the CME approach led to the establishment of 18 SHGs in the two oblasts covered by the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project and 61 SHGs for the three oblasts covered by the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project. Feedback from FGDs with eight SHGs indicated that:

- Women started to understand their own needs and rights; they also became more active in their communities.

---

17   UN Women Ukraine, *Community Mobilization for Empowerment in Ukraine: A Practitioner's Guide* (2021).

Meeting between self-help groups and local authorities, Zaporizhzhia region, 2018 (Photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Serhii Ryzhenko)

- They learned how to design a project/small grant proposal.

- The women themselves started to acknowledge that they should initiate changes themselves and that they should be proactive.

- SHG members now understand how to address authorities and present their needs to them.

- People learned that women's roles can be different from what they traditionally have thought.

- The attitudes of men in the SHGs started to shift in relation to women's contribution and participation.

- SHG members learned how to do community profiles and, in some cases, also how to analyse these from a more gender-oriented perspective.

Many women from the SHGs have become involved in developing and implementing local community initiatives, often with assistance from the projects' small grants programme. Women are now taking an active part as community leaders and participating in local decision-making, in a context in which this was not previously seen as something women did. Thirty-four SHGs have also gone on to form grass-roots CSOs designed to address diverse community needs.

This represents a huge leap forward with regard to regional and local-level planning becoming gender-inclusive and with regard to women's participation as community leaders. In such a short period of time (just 2.5 to 3 years), this is an astounding change, even more so since this change has taken place within the context of a strong tradition of patriarchy with regard

to women's and men's roles in decision-making and the fact that the projects have been operating in a conflict zone. [18] In addition, although there was initial resistance to the idea, local and regional authorities are now paying increased attention to women's recommendations regarding priority community needs.

Methodological Gaps

However, there is also a disconnect between the number of SHG recommendations generated and the number adopted by authorities. For example, for the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project, the SHGs offered 345 recommendations to regional and local authorities in 2020, only 26 (7.5 per cent) of which were adopted for implementation or inclusion in local-level policies. In 2020, in the communities targeted by the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project, SHGs generated 32 new recommendations, of which eight (25 per cent) were adopted by local authorities for implementation in 2021.

The relatively low percentage of recommendations being adopted by regional and local authorities can be seen as an indication of two challenges: (1) there are multiple priority needs for women and vulnerable groups not yet being met by local and regional governments; and (2) there remains a need for further capacity-building to help SHG members further prioritize and focus their recommendations before presenting them. There is a danger that over time, if local and regional authorities continue to be presented with long wish lists from the SHGs, this could lead to their paying less attention to them in the future or becoming overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the recommendations.

The other key challenge with the CME approach as currently being applied is that the community profile process focuses on identifying community needs in general and not necessarily on GE-specific needs. Although there is evidence of multiple regional and local administrations adopting SHG recommendations in both projects, this evidence points to the integration of recommendations that are more aligned with inclusion generally, versus with GE, WPS or GBV specifically. For example, a number of stated provisions focus on the inclusion of accessible infrastructure for people with disabilities or cultural services for the "quality of recreation for all family members" (see Annex 9 for details).

"We need to continue to update community profile to understand vulnerabilities — and then to support/implement projects ourselves. We would like more training and continue progressing." SHG member, Luhansk region

Additionally, the gender profiles add some questions related to gender to the community profile process. However, overall, the quality of these gender profiles has been quite uneven. In particular, the quality of gender profiles done by the SHGs varies greatly in terms of demonstrating a deep understanding of gender barriers, opportunities and needs. The level of analysis required is generally beyond the capacity of the SHGs (RP and UN Women KIIs, April 2021). In the Moldovan piloting of the CME model used as the basis for Ukraine's application of this approach, it was never intended that the community members conduct gender profiles. Instead, the CME process there focused more on community profiles with gender analysis being added in by local gender experts (UN Women KII, April 2021).

In Ukraine, the community profiles also applied some census-type questions that arguably should be the responsibility of government. However, in Ukraine, the CME approach recognizes that these data are not available and that collecting such data can be an effective way to mobilize and engage community members and promote positive change. Community members and local GoU informants view the gender profile as an innovative tool introduced by UN Women that allows for a

---

18 Although Ukrainian women have high education and labour-force participation levels, they face many barriers arising from stereotypes regarding women's and men's roles and value. These include a general view that family and household work are primarily the responsibility of women, that political life is the domain of men and that men's main role is also to be protective of women. According to traditional gender stereotypes, Ukrainian women are supposed to fulfil two roles: "to be beautiful and to be mothers". Brian Lucas, Brigitte Rohwerder and Kerina Tull, *Gender and Conflict in Ukraine* (London, DFiD, 2017), p. 7. K4D Helpdesk Report.

clearer picture of who is vulnerable and what their needs are. **However, no KII or FGD attributed the community profile as contributing specifically to GE or women's empowerment.** In fact, FGD and KII data found evidence that project beneficiaries classified GE as an issue related to the inclusion of diverse voices, as opposed to one related to power, economic and social imbalances between men, women and other non-conforming gender identities.

"We have a community profile and whenever we draft proposals, we use the community profile. It was difficult for us to put it together – we had very few statistical sources, etc. We conducted an in-depth analysis of the needs of our community – we have some IDPs, and we try to monitor and identify the needs of all these people." SHG member, Donetsk region

The CME curriculum does not include an explicit focus on reflecting about and seeking to transform harmful gender norms that perpetuate gender inequality such as GBV, power imbalances and women's low participation in decision-making. It is not surprising, therefore, that a review of the small grants and FGD feedback on these issues also found that some of the grants were not directed towards pursuing initiatives that would contribute to transformative changes in gender equality at the community level. The main exception to this is when grant money was used to create shelters/centres for survivors of GBV. However, many addressed more general community needs, such as the purchase of furniture for first grade students and sports equipment (much of it to support boys' sports). There also seemed to be a strong interest in grants to support diverse types of equipment to help people with disabilities. The latter fits into providing support for vulnerable groups but did not address a gender equality objective per se.

All of this indicates that there are still some capacity gaps related to understanding what gender-transformative change means beyond participation, as well as how to work towards that higher-level change at the community level, as aligned with the UN Women mandate and ToC's longer aim of more equal benefits for women and men.

Key Finding 11: The CME process has contributed to assisting selected regional and local governments to
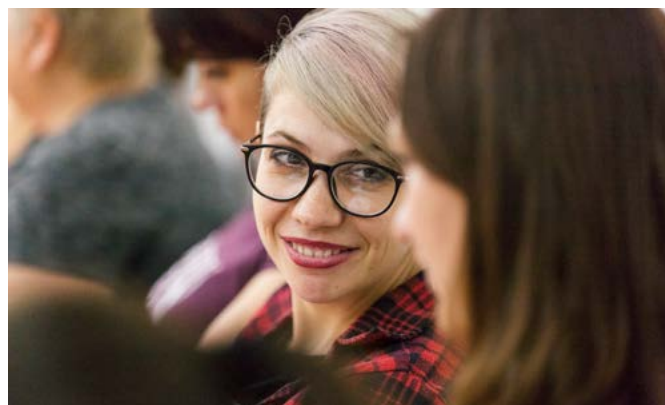
Community mobilizers at the CME workshop, 2019, Kharkiv
(photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Anna Korbut)

adopt more gender-responsive planning processes. To consolidate this success, there remain several significant challenges with regard to local authority capacity to engage in gender-responsive planning and GRB processes independently without external consultant support and achieve a greater level of institutionalization of these processes.

The projects have focused on capacity-building of rights holders and duty bearers as opposed to the institutionalization of gender-responsive planning and budget processes. The latter was not a specific project objective. The ET, however, found that there is a need to consider adoption of a complementary institutionalization approach to consolidate the results of the CME process and prevent the related recommendations made from remaining a more ad hoc process. KIIs with local authorities and RPs indicated that while quite important, the GRB process is not sufficiently well developed. Specifically, at the local level, there is still no formal process in place through which authorities can track specific expenditures on gender-responsive measures. In addition, RPs and local authorities noted that the GRB process is still fairly new and that local and regional officials still need the support of external consultants to review local plans and budgets from a GRB perspective effectively. The local and regional government officials do not yet have the capacity to do this independently.

There also remains a need in the future to monitor and assess the effectiveness of these gender-responsive local and regional development plans and budgets with regard to what kinds of changes they are having or will generate in terms of GEWE for community

members and vulnerable groups. Lastly, KIIs with GoU stakeholders indicated that there has been a level of conflation between GRB and traditional budgeting, particularly for vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities. **Again, this underscores a need to strengthen related capacity-building processes with local and regional authorities and actively work to institutionalize gender-responsive planning and budgeting processes to leave more sustainable changes in place.**

Key Finding 12: Project results related to EVAWG (SN Outcome 2) partially address GBV prevention but have tended to focus more on improved response services.

The key result that has emerged related to GBV for the projects has been the piloting of GBV training for police based on a human rights based approach (HRBA) at the local and regional levels through the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project. This pilot has fed into the creation of a unified curriculum at the national level that the National Police of Ukraine will use in the future. It is too soon, however, to determine what impact this new curriculum will have with regard to the delivery of improved police services related to DV and to GBV prevention. This is a result that the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project will need to assess as part of its end-of-programme evaluation.

The draft 2020 progress report for the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project, responsible for the pilot training, does refer to one qualitative change that emerged from the pilot training, namely that in collaboration with the project, representatives from the police in the target communities have engaged in raising the awareness of residents in selected communities on VAW by leading four workshops on the causes and forms of GBV, prevention measures, combating DV and the different forms of legal liability for perpetrators. [19] The Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project also did some GBV awareness and prevention work with schools.

However, only some of the grants that the projects supported through the CME process address GBV prevention, such as the installation of street lighting. The work of the CSWGs has also tended to focus more on GBV support and referral services with some but lesser attention to improving safety in public places. Both projects have, however, focused on increasing trust between police and community members to encourage reporting of violence and to increase adequate response to cases of GBV. There is also a focus on support to establish community centres, which can be partially used to provide safe spaces for victims of GBV. Although important, this is more of a GBV service than a prevention approach.

In the SHG FGDs, two FGDs noted increased interaction with police with regard to responding to DV. Two FGDs also mentioned that SHGs have been approached to help individual community members address DV problems. However, no FGD participants mentioned a reduced incidence of GBV or the existence of prevention-related activities. Data from the FGDs indicate that GBV remains a difficult subject to address publicly and one that remains viewed as a "family issue".

"We had a case in our village where a women called the police number to say that her husband beat her and wouldn't let her back to her house — our police usually don't respond to such cases and they told her no brigades were available — in this case she knew who to call and the police were able to come and receive her complaints. This woman probably wouldn't have called us before." SHG member, Zaporizhzhia region

---

These are all important components and results but are not ones that align well with the language of SN Outcome 2, which focuses on prevention and norms change. The approaches budgeted by UN Women are also not yet adequately addressing the large and persistent issue of domestic violence that does not occur in public spaces nor is best prevented by law enforcement. Moreover, the community security audit, although a good addition to a community profile, does not adequately allow communities to reflect on the causes of DV and intimate partner violence (IPV) in relation to social norms, attitudes and behaviours.

---

19 UN Women Ukraine CO, *Draft Progress Report – Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms: Transformative Approaches to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ukraine* (2020), p. 16.

Where initiatives related to GBV prevention have emerged is mainly in the local 1325 action plans. The majority of these have yet to be implemented, but there is a clear mention of GBV prevention measures in all of the LAPs reviewed.

Key Finding 13: For SN Outcome 3 (WPS), UN Women has been successful in introducing a process for local and regional administrations to develop local 1325 action plans. However, there are some constraints related to the financial and human resource capacity of local authorities to implement aspects of the LAPs.

There has been substantial uptake on local 1325 action plans. For example, for the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project, as of April 2021, the project team reported 31 newly adopted gender-integrated policies (three regional and eight local socioeconomic strategies; 10 LAPs on UNSCR 1325; and four local programmes on socioeconomic development, equal rights and opportunities, safety and security) related to WPS commitments.

The ET reviewed several existing local 1325 action plans and found that the majority included initiatives to prevent GBV. There was also a focus on additional support measures to vulnerable groups such as those with disabilities. Of concern, however, is that some local authorities indicated they anticipate a serious challenge in implementing planned LAP activities, as most require additional support from social services while local and regional governments do not have the human resources needed for their implementation. The costing plan for another LAP noted that 65 per cent of the budget for its implementation would come from local budgets, 10 per cent from the national budget and 25 per cent from unidentified sources (presumed to be external donor funding). However, one local GoU KII indicated that their community has been able to implement 90 per cent of its local 1325 action plan. This mixed feedback indicates a need for UN Women to monitor and address LAP budgeting and implementation issues closely.

Feedback from the SHG FGDs found that in one of the eight groups interviewed, a few members had joined

Training on gender-sensitive reporting for local media representatives, 2019, Sviatohirsk (photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Artem Hetman)

other groups such as the CSWGs and the 1325 WPS group. One FGD mentioned having been included in the training on WPS offered to local authorities and that their input in the local 1325 action plan process was valued by local authorities. Participants in the other six FGDs made no mention of WPS or being involved in any type of related planning processes or training. KIIs with a local authority and an RP indicated that not all of the local 1325 action plan processes included input from SHG members and that more of the plans were developed with the assistance of an external consultant. The review of the sample LAPs did find a fair amount of similarity among the different plans in terms of content. **This feedback implies that there may still be limited capacity among local authorities to develop LAPs independently**. There was also inconsistent involvement of SHG members in the LAP development process.

Key Finding 14: The work that UN Women has been doing with the media has led to some national-level results, but there is less evidence of significant changes at the regional and local levels.

The projects have been working on changing social norms related to gender and GBV by training regional and local media about the use of language, HRBA, gender-sensitive reporting and ethical reporting. By the end of April 2021, the two projects had supported the training of 141 regional and local media personnel. The monitoring system is not yet set up to track what kind of change this has led to in terms of reporting, and currently the system only reports on the number of journalists trained. The evaluations on training effectiveness in the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project also do not indicate changes in knowledge via a pre- and

post-test but rather a general evaluation of participant self-assessment of increased knowledge. UN Women staff themselves have also not yet observed much change related to gender-sensitive reporting at the regional and local levels. However, at the national level as a result of the training there, the National Public Broadcasting Company of Ukraine and one private media business have adopted ethical standards codes related to gender and human rights (UN Women KII, April 2021).

4.3 Results of Capacity-Building Initiatives

Key Finding 15: The projects have been most successful with regard to building rights holders' capacity to participate more actively in community-level decision-making. There are mixed results with regard to the training of duty bearers, with some areas of success and others where more capacity-building is needed to ensure sustainability.

Rights Holders

Overall, however, capacity-building efforts with SHG members have led to increased confidence in women's leadership on the part of the women themselves and better advocacy skills in dealing with local and regional authorities. They also have gained some limited skills related to conducting and analysing gender profiles, and there remains a need to revisit what the role of SHGs should be with regard to generating gender profiles.

Duty Bearers

Duty bearers at local and regional levels have increased knowledge and skills related to gender-inclusive planning and GRB as well as how to decentralize UNSCR 1325. However, KIIs with RPs and local authorities indicated that authorities still require external assistance to ensure that their plans and budgets are gender-responsive and to develop local 1325 action plans. One RP also reported that some of the local authorities still do not clearly understand how much money they have and what they can and cannot budget for. This again speaks to the issue of shifting the focus of capacity-building efforts with duty bearers to one that has a stronger institutionalization objective.

Work with local police appears to have generated an increased understanding of the underlying causes of DV and GBV and some follow-up actions on the part of the police to work more closely with communities. SHG FGDs found evidence that the police are now more responsive to DV complaints in selected communities. At the national level, the adoption of the unified police curriculum also indicates increased capacity and understanding of the complexity of GBV and DV and of the need for the police to take these issues more seriously.

Responsible Parties

KIIs with RPs found that they:

• Gained an understanding of why local authorities needed to be included in training and of decentralization processes at the local level (and specifically on WPS and UNSCR 1325)

• Increased understanding of how to blend quantitative and qualitative research methodologies (for two RPs)

• Learned about HRBA and how to apply the CME approach

• Gained increased capacity for remote work in response to COVID-19

None of the RPs mentioned having gained increased capacity related to M&E systems. The ET did observe, however, a clear need for the strengthening of RPs' monitoring and reporting skills.

4.4 Innovative and Good Practices

Key Finding 16: The Ukraine CO introduced three good practices that were considered innovative and were replicated or used by diverse stakeholders and donors/UN agencies. These included the use of the CME approach to help implement gender-responsive decentralization reforms, diverse communications responses to COVID-19 and to messaging regarding GBV, and the RGA of COVID-19.

CME Approach

The CME approach, first piloted in Moldova as a UNDP and UN Women collaboration, is innovative for Ukraine, particularly as the approach has been applied to the

gender-responsive decentralization reform process. As previously noted, this approach focuses more on community mobilization than on fostering gender-transformative change beyond increasing women's participation at the community level and in local decision-making. In the Ukrainian context, this still represents a significant change with regard to parity and women's participation. The CME approach will need some tweaking, however, if it is to contribute to gender-transformative change beyond participation.

Communications Innovations

The approach that the Ukraine CO has taken with regard to communications is cited by UN Women's regional office as well as several donors in Ukraine as an innovative good practice. The projects share a communications officer, and in the past year, the CO has focused on ensuring that it provides consistent key messages on core issues such as GBV across all of its programming, as opposed to doing so on a project-by-project basis. This more-unified approach to key messages is both cost efficient and ensures greater consistency in messaging, particularly with regard to GBV. The interactive nature of its online communications on GBV has also proved to be quite effective in engaging the public.

The Ukraine CO also adapted to the COVID-19 crisis by rapidly going digital and providing the SHGs and other project stakeholders with diverse online communications options. They held many online events instead of face-to-face training and found that they were able to reach larger numbers than would have been possible using an in-person workshop format. In this process, the CO also

A nurse in a local community hospital, 2020, Sieverodonetsk
(photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Vitaly Shevelev)

had to analyse its target audiences and customize its online events to highly specific groups.

However, regarding the subject of media monitoring and analysis, another contractor and a UN Women key informant identified key problematic points in that gender issues are not yet particularly well covered in the regional media and are not considered "serious" for journalists in general (contractor KII, March 2021; UN Women KII, April 2021). There has also been more limited participation in related training by male journalists. The contractor involved plans to introduce "gender-sensitive editors" during the second stage of the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project; this innovation has the potential to get this approach scaled up and replicated (see Annex 9 for evidence of additional innovations in communication).

"The level of awareness of the local population has increased — all of us understand (GBV) though we are in a rural area we can't come to every event, etc. we are getting involved in online events — which is useful because we can't always get there (from remote village). But also we didn't like online events that much. We thought that trainers would visit us in person. We have multiple problems because we don't have good Internet connection so the remote training is very difficult. We prefer face-to-face meetings and discussion." SHG members, Luhansk region

RGA of COVID-19 Impact

In this innovative good practice, although not directly funded through the two projects, UN Women was able to use the network of community mobilizers (CMs) that the projects established in order to obtain input on how COVID-19 restrictions were affecting women and vulnerable groups at the community level. UN Women was also able to call upon its national networks and relationships with RPs and CSOs to identify key gender issues that needed immediate attention. The RGA results were presented to local communities, and recommendations from the RGA report were then added to their websites for consideration during programme development. One donor and another UN agency also indicated that they found the RGA quite useful in their own development of a COVID-19 response.

4.5 Unexpected Results

Key Finding 17: The projects collectively contributed to a much higher-than-anticipated number of SHGs forming community-focused CSOs and to 25 women being elected to decision-making positions at the local-authority level in the 2020 elections. There were no reported negative results.

Based on the CME pilot experience in Moldova, while UN Women had anticipated that some SHG members would go on to form grass-roots-level CSOs, it was thought that there would only be around five. Instead, the SHG members formed 34 CSOs. UN Women and UWF are currently working with these nascent organizations to help them gain legal status and build their institutional capacity. The SHG FGDs also showed that the female members of the SHGs were a bit surprised to find out that they could contribute so actively to their communities and appeared to be highly motivated by this realization and empowered to take action at this level. Of note also is that the majority of the CSOs' SHG members wanted to address general community needs as opposed to those directly related to GEWE.

The other unexpected result arose from local elections held in 2020. From three of the projects using the CME methodology (including the one funded by the EU), multiple SHG members decided to present themselves as candidates. From the areas covered by the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project, for example, eight members of SHGs (seven women, one man) participated in local elections, of whom two (one woman, one man) were elected as deputies of local councils. In addition, three members of SHGs (one woman, two men) became village elders, and two female CMs were appointed to the position of a Deputy City Head. For the areas covered by the EU project, 70 SHG members (both female and male) ran for office. Twenty-five women were elected to diverse positions, including four as village elders. The 25 also included 10 CMs who now have elected positions as local authorities.

4.6 Adaptability of UN Women to the Changing Context

Key Finding 18: The two projects responded to the challenges created by COVID-19 fairly effectively and developed appropriate responses quite quickly.

To address the diverse challenges generated by COVID-19, the Ukraine CO first conducted an RGA of the impact of COVID-19 with the support of the Canadian Government-funded project. The assessment identified gaps in gender services and helped UN Women and donors develop a response to provide assistance to vulnerable groups of women.

The RGA found that the stress of the loss of income and mobility restrictions has led to an increase in both the incidence of GBV and has exacerbated the degree of violence experienced by women and girls and, in some cases, also men. UN Women equipped people with information regarding GBV and who to call for help, for both women as victims and men as perpetrators. The CO also made visible how COVID-19 was impacting women and girls negatively in a disproportionate way, particularly with regard to GBV. UN Women also provided personal protective equipment at the local level in some communities to make it possible for people such as SHG members and local authorities to continue to meet.

The CO also negotiated a four-month no-cost extension from Norway to accommodate delays caused by COVID-19. The Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project also revised its annual workplan for 2020 and identified potential funds not spent that could be reallocated to address the COVID-19 crisis. Some of these funds were diverted for more humanitarian assistance supplies, which the donor objected to as this had not been the original purpose for which the funds were intended.

As the innovative and good practices section demonstrated, the Ukraine CO proved to be quite agile in its communications response to COVID-19. However, one UN Women staff informant noted that many of the UN bureaucratic systems prevent the provision of immediate responses at times to certain types of changes. Another observed that the COVID-19 crisis highlighted the fact that there is a need for technical equipment to improve communications infrastructure at the local and regional levels but that provision of this type of support is outside of UN Women's mandate.

Key Finding 19: The projects faced challenges in relation to staff turnover resulting from the October 2020 local elections, which highlighted some of the challenges related to the institutionalization of gender-responsive planning and budgets.

UN Women and RP staff mentioned the challenge of adapting to local elections, specifically in relation to duty bearer capacity-building initiatives. For example, over the course of three years, the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project experienced both the 2019 national elections and the October 2020 local election. This created an extremely challenging environment, especially when seeking collaboration with high-level officials. For example, the Minister responsible for the implementation of the WPS NAP changed three times over the course of the projects.

At the local level, the elections meant that in a number of communities, the officials responsible for WPS were new and had to be re-engaged and retrained. For the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project, the local elections led to a delay in establishing planned LGCCs.

One RP observed that UN Women was able to adapt to the election of new officials at local and national levels by repeating capacity-building and rebuilding these relationships. They did, however, question whether this is the best way to address this type of stakeholder turnover. Alternative suggestions provided by key informants included working with lower-level officials as potentially being more stable and for UN Women to focus more on supporting institutional change and the strengthening of gender-responsive institutional processes that make clear linkages between the national, regional and local levels (UN Women staff KIIs, April 2021).

5. Efficiency

Efficiency EQs

10. Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been strategically allocated among the Responsible Parties to achieve the intended outcomes?

11. How efficiently and effectively has UN Women coordinated the work of its different partners and contractors (and with other projects)?

12. Does the project have effective monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards results?

5.1 Timely Delivery of Outputs

Key Finding 20: Despite implementation challenges created by COVID-19 restrictions and the advent of both national- and local-level elections in 2019 and 2020 respectively, both projects were able to deliver almost all planned outputs on time.

The ET summarized the projects' achievements based on their log frame indicators up until the end of 2020 (refer to Annex 5). What stands out in these summaries at first glance is that for the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project, the project has managed to meet or surpass all of its planned targets with just one or two exceptions, with any delays mostly attributable to COVID-19 restrictions. The Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project has also met targets for all of its defined indicators with the exception of the indicators related to GBV perceptions (indicator 2.2.1 and indicator 2.1.2) related to the "number of [standard operating procedures] on GBV prevention and response developed by the project and applied by the law enforcement bodies" (refer to Annex 9 for details).

For the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project, the main exceptions to this were with regard to the establishment of LGCCs in 2020, the number of local initiatives led by GE advocates on GE promotion, enhancing community security and safety in public spaces and the percentage of local law enforcement officers with improved knowledge and skills on the prevention of and response to GBV in public spaces, with these reaching targets below those projected, mainly due to COVID-19 restrictions. The LGCCs also faced a challenge in that there was an overlap in membership in these councils with the CSWGs and SHGs. Some participants from SHG FGDs

indicated that this called for a considerable time commitment on their parts. However, overall, for the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project, the UN Women annual progress reports noted that project implementation either surpassed or met the planned targets for all other output indicators. For the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society in Ukraine project, despite the immense challenges that COVID-19 posed to implementation, all planned targets were met (see Annex 5).

5.2 Strategic Allocation of Resources

Key Finding 21: Most project resources were allocated strategically to the diverse project components and RPs, with the key actors selected having the authority and credibility to affect the planned changes.

UN Women contracted RPs to implement most project activities. With one exception, all RPs indicated that they thought that adequate resources were allocated to implement their contracted activities (RP KII, April 2021). They were less aware of whether or not these resources were allocated strategically for the projects as a whole since, in most cases, they were not aware of how resources were divided among the different RPs. In general, government stakeholders also indicated that they thought that the resources allocated were adequate. They also were not as clear as to whether this had been done strategically as they were generally mainly only aware of the key activities in which they were involved and not necessarily of the projects' approaches as a whole (RP KII, April 2021). **This suggests a lack of systematic communication about the role of each stakeholder group in project implementation.**

The two projects were able to implement almost all of their outputs. In general, this implies that there were adequate resources allocated to the different project components to get the work foreseen done. There did appear to be some remaining capacity gaps with regard to gender-responsive planning and budgeting, but this was more of a design than a resources issue as the institutionalization of these processes was not intended to be a direct project outcome. With regard to GBV, however, the resources appeared to be directed more towards GBV services than prevention; therefore, this resource allocation could be said to be less strategic in nature. This again speaks to more of a design issue.

Key Finding 22: UN Women's CO expanded rapidly to address the crisis generated by Ukraine's conflict with the Russian Federation. There was a high level of demand for UN Women's support, which it did not have adequate resources to address. In particular, while there were strong project teams in place, the teams were small and had many responsibilities. This limited field presence contributed to UN Women having a relatively low profile in the region and has meant that UN Women has had to rely heavily on national CSOs to implement much of the work needed to achieve project and SN outcomes.

It was the view of two donors and UN agencies, as well as three UN Women staff and the ET, that there is a need for expanded field offices that would include additional specialist staff (such as GBV experts, gender experts and M&E officers). This would serve to establish stronger, direct technical assistance as opposed to a primarily project-management-oriented role on the part of the project teams. It would also help ensure a higher profile and visibility for UN Women in the region. Another donor and UN Women staff member indicated that there is also a strong need to build the capacity of gender expertise in both eastern Ukraine and at the national level. These two needs were not seen as being mutually exclusive, as an expanded field presence could contribute to building increased capacity for gender expertise at the local and regional levels. It was thought that **an expanded UN Women field presence could potentially also serve as one means of increasing UN Women's visibility and profile in the region as well as to reduce its dependency upon external consultants for technical assistance.**

5.3 Coordination of Actors and Activities

Key Finding 23: While UN Women has coordinated its work with other UN agencies and donors well, coordination between RPs/contractors is weaker – and with some coordination inconsistencies in local government and community structures. This has limited the efficiency of project implementation to some degree.

Despite some initial coordination challenges at the beginning of the projects' implementation, multiple key informants indicated that UN Women has been fairly effective at coordinating the work it is supporting with other international actors, particularly with regard to coordination with other UN agencies (see Annex 9 for details).

There was mixed feedback regarding UN Women's coordination of RP work at the regional and local levels, with not all RPs being aware of the work that each was doing at this level and their respective work not being as consistently or as well coordinated. Some local authorities also reported that there is poor coordination with several CSOs. Some RPs expressed frustration with the lack of inter-agency coordination that led to local CSOs being left to figure out how to coordinate with other UN agencies (RP KIIs, April 2021). Another RP informant observed that UN Women "failed to do a gap analysis to see what should be done by who". This is contrasted by the fact that several RPs reported having had a positive experience with regard to UN Women coordinating their work. Four RPs indicated that there was a real synergy between UNDP's and UN Women's work and that the two projects were well coordinated at the local level, with UN Women being very supportive in facilitating RP work there. **This mix indicates that while there was more positive than negative feedback, there were still inconsistencies in the local coordination process.**

There is specific evidence of coordination between UN Women and UNDP related to SHG members' participation in community structures, but there were also some inconsistencies in the creation of community structures, specifically the LGCCs and the CSWGs (FGD, GoU KII, April 2021). FGDs revealed that some communities have both, some have one or the other, and some participants were not aware of either structure. In many instances, the CM is a member of both groups and works actively to ensure participation of other relevant members of SHGs (community stakeholder KII, April 2021). At least two community informants mentioned challenges with the LGCCs' potential overlap and duplication, suggesting that they should be combined. Other project staff and RPs indicated the importance of keeping the separate structures. **This appears to demonstrate a level of misunderstanding about the specific mandates of the structures and their unique value added.**

At the national level, the ET also found that some national actors had limited awareness of what other project stakeholders were doing or what their respective roles were. One donor was also completely unaware of the fact that it is funding one of three projects with similar approaches all operating in eastern Ukraine. Conversely, another donor coordinates so closely with UN Women that it holds bilateral meetings with the entity at the global level as well as the bilateral level (donor KII, April 2021). **This indicates a possible inconsistent approach in how UN Women approaches its coordination processes with stakeholders and donors.**

5.4 M&E System Design

Key Finding 24: While there is a clear monitoring system in place, there are some weaknesses related to log frame design and the level of results being measured. Monitoring data were also not always used to adjust implementation and imposed a heavy reporting burden on RPs. Feedback on the implementation of the M&E system also found that how the diverse RPs applied the M&E system varied considerably and was not yet harmonized. Monitoring mechanisms at the project level also do not yet capture related changes at the outcome level beyond the inclusion of recommendations in policy documents.

UN Women bases its M&E system on a combination of UN system M&E requirements and gender-responsive M&E approaches. As noted by one donor, "since it is a UN project, we assume that it will be monitored technically and audited within UN system criteria". Both projects submit annual narrative and quantitative progress reports to the two donors funding the projects based on these criteria. There are clear indicators within the log frame format against which the project teams and RPs report, and defined resources are allocated to cover M&E processes in project budgets. From the inception of each project, there was a plan in place for an end-of-programme evaluation for the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society project and a midterm review for the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project. UN Women also provides all RPs with training on UN Women M&E expectations and reporting practices at the beginning of each project. **All of these are indicators that there is a systematic M&E system in place.**

One shortcoming in how the monitoring system was applied appears to be that monitoring data were not always used to influence project implementation. For example, a couple of RPs noted that the results of the perception study conducted were only used for baseline purposes and not to influence who the programming was targeting. The baseline study found that GBV was a particular problem for youth, and the RPs observed that this did not lead to any specific targeting of outreach and participation for youth affected by GBV.

The RPs all have different M&E processes. For example, UWF made the decision to analyse changes starting with a project baseline, to revisit this a year later at the mid-term and then at the end as part of the project evaluation (as opposed to after each activity). This organization also has a project M&E specialist on their team. The NGO Poruch reports on results after each activity. UFPH uses training pre- and post-tests as its main monitoring tool to track capacity-building results and uses Darma software to track training participation and results. Internews Ukraine also uses pre- and post-tests for its media trainings. UFF uses mappings, polling and FGDs to monitor the decentralization of UNSCR 1325 project component (four RP KIIs, April 2021). **It still appears that there is not a unified approach to M&E at the RP level, including ensuring consistency of when during project implementation the results are tracked and assessed.**

GoU stakeholders have set up their own monitoring processes for the work being done, including conducting surveys and questionnaires to monitor activities and results (two local authority KIIs, one national GoU KII, April 2021). One national official also noted that they adhere to Government Regulation No. 153 to determine whether a project is successful or not, as well as to track the indicators agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UN Women (GoU KII, April 2021). At the national level, the National Police of Ukraine also conducts pre- and post-tests to determine the immediate changes in knowledge awareness following training (two GoU KIIs, two RP KIIs, April 2021). All of these activities provide evidence of a fairly systematic approach to project monitoring at the national government stakeholder level, but there remain some weaknesses with regard to the types of results monitored, particularly for training activities.

At the local level, the ET found that while some local authorities have set up a monitoring plan for local 1325 action plans, there was more of a gap in this regard related to GRB processes. The KIIs indicated that some local authorities do not yet monitor for gender-specific expenditures as their budget systems are not yet set up to do so. **This could limit to what degree they, the RPs and UN Women, will be able to monitor the results of both the gender-responsive planning and budget processes and of the local 1325 action plans.**

In addition, currently, for some outputs and indicators, the log frame design for the two projects tends to make a leap from increased awareness and knowledge among some target beneficiaries to significantly higher-level results. This is also a challenge at the outcome level. For example, for the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society project, Outcome 1 is "women and girls affected by conflict in three eastern oblasts equally participate in and benefit from recovery, peace and security processes", but the indicator is the "number of changes introduced in the regional and local plans and programmes to enforce implementation of the WPS commitments". This does not capture outcome-level change related to women's participation/benefit from recovery but instead focuses on changes in processes (see Annex 9 for additional examples).

In addition, although project language is aligned with the UN Women strategic plan and outcomes in the SN, measurements of contributions to these are limited or lacking. For example, several indicators look at the number of recommendations related to WPS, GE and GBV included in local plans (e.g. the two projects' Outcome 1 indicators), but the results of this integration are not measured.[20] While the results of the inclusion of these principles might be outside of the length of the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society project, they are within the time frame of the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project. **Neither project demonstrates much indication that UN Women is tracking longer-term, strategic impact indicators that will help project teams understand achievement in terms of their impact on target communities and/or institutions.**

This is particularly important with regard to the measurement of changes in social norms. The associated **outcomes were overly ambitious for the time allocated for the projects' duration.**

This was especially the case for the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society project simply because its implementation period was only three years as opposed to the five years for the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project. This challenge is particularly acute for outcomes focused on social norms changes related to GE and GBV. Three years may be too short a time period to expect any significant or widespread changes in this regard. While results from the joint perception study conducted in the region did show that within a three-year period there was a slight shift in the overall tolerance for violence, it only decreased from 5 to 2 per cent (UN Women KII, April 2021). **While these changes are clearly going in the right direction, it will still take some time for significant shifts in perceptions to emerge.**

"Our village has a Roma family so the SHG asked a girl from that family to join them. She became very active which was a great indicator that the Roma are normal ordinary people with whom we can communicate and work together." SHG member, Donetsk region

---

It is also not clear whether it is realistic to expect the 10 per cent shift in attitudes related to VAWG that was set as a target by the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project within a five-year implementation period. This challenge underscores the need to revisit the projects' ToCs to reflect a longer-term approach for some types of results and change processes. The ET has outlined what this type of longer-term approach to the programmatic ToC could potentially be in Annex 10.

The ET also noted that the pre- and post-training method of assessing training results can only register a fairly immediate change in knowledge or awareness of specific issues. To fully capture the results that this type of capacity-building activity generates, there is also a need to monitor for changes in practices and/or behaviours based on this increased knowledge in the

short and medium term. Most of the RPs, however, do not measure this type of change.

Donors reported that it was hard to follow from the annual progress reports what the actual project outcomes were. Particularly in the 2018 and 2019 progress reports, there appeared to be more of an emphasis on activities completed. By 2020, this had started to shift as sufficient time had passed for the projects to begin to see more medium-term results related to capacity-building activities in particular. However, in general, donors observed that the volume of information in the annual progress reports has been a bit overwhelming in terms of the detail provided and that future reports could benefit from greater streamlining to focus more on results and less on activities. They would also like to receive the annual progress reports sooner after the completion of the projects' implementation each year as a means of contributing to a more effective reporting system.

Key Finding 25: Several RPs found the need to report to multiple donors on what they considered to be a single programme from their own operational perspectives as opposed to two separate projects, which imposed a heavy administrative burden.

While the projects are funded as two distinct projects by Denmark and Norway, they are part of an overall programme approach that UN Women is applying in eastern Ukraine and also at the national level in the case of the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project. UN Women has also been able to obtain funding to support this common programme approach from the EU. Several RPs contracted to implement key project activities perceive their work to be one programme even though there are actually three different donors and distinct projects for this work. This multiplicity of donors and projects supporting an overall programme approach in eastern Ukraine means that RPs are reporting to and meeting with multiple UN Women staff to cover the same

---

20 UN Women, Annex 1: Results and Resources Framework for Denmark project "Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms" (2018) (and updated version from the project team); UN Women, Results framework: Annex 2_ Democratic peaceful and GE society Norway (2017) (and updated version from the project team).

work (RP KIIs, April 2021). One RP noted that they have to meet with nine different UN Women staff on a regular basis for work that they consider to be just one programme operating in several different locations. **This is not an efficient practice for either UN Women or the RPs concerned.**

5.5 Adequacy of M&E Resources

Key Finding 26: Given the pilot nature of much of the work being done in eastern Ukraine and at the national level, there is an argument to be made that UN Women should have allocated a higher percentage of project resources to M&E to help document pilot results and assess project medium-term results.

UN Women's operational work in Ukraine expanded extremely fast, growing from a staff of three persons in 2015 to today's staff of 38. During this six-year period, UN Women experimented with several innovative approaches to governance, leadership, participation, EVAWG and WPS within the Ukrainian context. When there is this type of high growth and experimental programming approaches, there is an increased onus on the M&E system to track what works well and where there is a need for improvement or adjustment.

At the same time, when operating in this kind of high-pressure context where there is a need to respond quickly to address conflict-induced, urgent needs of women and vulnerable groups, it is difficult to stop and reflect on what is working well and make adjustments to programming as needed, especially when

Community mobilizers at the local administration service centre, 2020, Kramatorsk (photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Artem Hetman)

both the CO and project teams are working 24/7 to address as many of these needs as possible in a short period of time. In this operating environment, several key informants suggested and the ET concurred that **having access to dedicated M&E staff at the project field level could have been a more efficient model for UN Women to follow to address these challenges. This approach, however, would require a higher investment in M&E systems that is currently beyond the CO's resources.**

6. Sustainability

Sustainability EQs

13. To what extent have capacity-building efforts contributed to changes in institutional processes, practices and annual budget allocations that support more inclusive practices for local development and governance (i.e. among duty bearers)?

14. To what extent have the interventions succeeded in building individual capacities of rights holders?

15. To what extent has UN Women Ukraine been able to promote replication and/or up-scale the successful practices these projects developed?

16. How effectively have the interventions generated national, regional and local ownership of the results achieved to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits?

6.1 Changes in Institutional Processes and Practices

Key Finding 27: The projects' overall capacity-building efforts resulted in the reinforcement of the status of some duty bearers and, in particular, of the vertical power structure dealing with gender-related issues.

The heads of all three oblast administrations covered by the projects now have second deputies whose positions have been amended to include the term "Authorized Official for Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men". The Oblast Authorized Officials are in a line

relationship with a Deputy Head of each ATH who are also called Authorized Officials for Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men. Most of these officials were assigned this responsibility during the projects' implementation period (RP KII, April 2021). The budgeted position of Authorized Official at both oblast and hromada levels shows a concrete change in the institutional process of addressing gender-related problems.

The LAPs are another example of changes in institutional processes and practices. Feedback from local administration officials indicated that the involvement of hromadas in NAP implementation is a big change. Ukrainian legislation is intricate and does not oblige hromadas to execute governmental plans if they are not funded directly or if funding sources are not assigned. That is why in its plans, the Government indicates that the local self-administration can implement these plans "by consent". LAPs were, in a way, an alternative solution to that dilemma: local administrations received information and training sessions to be more comfortable in giving their "consent" and joined the NAP by establishing their own LAPs. While implementation of this policy remains optional, the information and training sessions have been an important strategy for facilitating policy implementation.

The LAPs adopted by local (village or town) councils and whose implementation is supervised by Hromada Authorized Officials for Gender Issues aim at considering all of the special needs of local populations.[21] The assessment of needs is also a result of the projects' capacity-building and one of the main tools for hromada development (community stakeholder KII, April 2021). For example, the need for community "resource centres" for women that serve as both information/recreation hubs and shelters for DV victims was identified and promoted by both the SHGs and CMs. Established through grants and donors' funds, these resource centres in a few hromadas grew into a sustainable undertaking because local self-administrations agreed to include them in their local budgets, in some cases for several years (community stakeholder KII, March 2021).

A number of FGDs also highlighted improved cooperation between SHGs and the police, especially following the establishment of the position of "hromada police officer". This represents a significant change considering the initial reluctance of the police to accept GBV and DV as problems needing their attention. For example,

the police did not previously recognize the need for shelters because, in their opinion, there was no DV in the areas they covered. FGDs also revealed that the activities of hromada police officers also improved the police's communication with governmental structures (FGD, March 2021).

These examples all demonstrate that there appear to be more sustainable results where the processes related to gender-responsive planning and budgets and LAPs where more systematic institutional processes were introduced, with clear lines of responsibility and accountability as well as defined local budget allocations.

At the same time at the institutional level, given the strong likelihood of changes in senior officials due to elections and political change, a focus on working to change the capacity of individual duty bearers, as opposed to investing concurrently in institutional change, could potentially limit the extent of sustainable change at the local level.

6.2 Changes in Individual Capacities of Rights Holders

Key Finding 28: Changes in the individual capacity of SHG members as well as CMs resulted in an increase in inclusive development and governance practices whose impact on women's state, welfare and rights has yet to be measured by the projects due to their respective stage of implementation.

Individual capacity has manifested itself in the establishment of SHGs and involvement of SHG members in multiple activities in their communities as well as in their providing inputs into local governance (e.g. adoption of recommendations by local and regional administrations). The SHGs send their representatives to the CSWG sessions, although their participation and input remain limited (FGDs, March 2021). Having acquired increased skills through training and information sessions, the SHGs have also started to establish CSOs in their villages/towns. As noted previously, the capacity gained through the projects' training and experience of working in the community has allowed a few CMs and SHG

---

21   The Norway-funded project reports that 10 LAPs on UNSCR 1325 have been developed and adopted during the reporting period. The LAPs include such priorities as prevention of GBV, targeted support to vulnerable groups of women, etc.

members to win elections for local self-administration offices. In general, the increased capacity of community-level rights holders has served as a foundation for many of the positive changes that the projects have achieved and is likely to continue generating community-level changes in the future, but there remain some gaps in this process in some communities.

"When we were developing the community profile - we approached the local authorities to receive some info and statistical data. The authorities weren't helpful. Either they didn't have the data or maybe they wanted to keep us in the dark. After our advocacy trainings, we were much better equipped to interact with local authorities." SHG member, Luhansk region

Women police officers from Donetsk region and representatives of Canadian Police Mission in Ukraine at the trainings on human rights and gender equality, Mariupol, Donetsk region, 2020 (photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Ekaterina Tryfonova)

different stakeholders, including the Ministry of Social Policy, remains limited as website materials remain primarily in English (RP KII, March 2021).

6.3 Ensuring Continuation and Replication of Work on WPS, EVAWG and Governance, Leadership and Participation

Key Finding 29: With its key partners, UN Women succeeded in promoting a few approaches and methodologies initiated to the level where they were picked up and replicated or scaled up by other UN agencies or donors. Many of these interventions were also successful in creating national and local/regional linkages, agreements or partnerships to ensure continuation of the work on WPS, EVAWG and Governance and Participation, including communications processes.

UN Women developed a solid network of RPs and contractors. One key RP trained multiple CSOs in the application of CME methodology; they also received funding to continue the CME work in diverse oblasts from other donors (RP KII, March 2021). They are also planning to share their lessons learned related to the CME approach with local CSOs working in targeted oblasts. One contractor has also developed expertise in how to apply the IMAGES methodology to the security sector, and another held a webinar on the safety audit process, which encouraged at least one community leader to request that the contractor carry out this process in his community as well (RP KII, March 2021). However, access to the safety audit materials by

Another contractor developed a methodology on the capacity assessment of state administrations and the gender policies in amalgamated communities, which they shared with government stakeholders. This methodology interested other institutions such as the Ministry of Energy as well as other oblasts. Another RP working on GBV succeeded in getting the inclusion of mobile GBV support teams in a new law on GBV and helped with the law's implementation. They also advocated for the inclusion of funds in GBV social programmes so that now regions can submit applications to the Ministry of Social Policy and receive funds for mobile teams or to support a shelter (contractor KII, March 2021).

Another RP built local authorities' capacity in developing local 1325 action plans. Given that these are costed mostly from local budgets and many have access to additional funding from other programmes, much of the plans should be implementable (RP KII, March 2021) providing there are no related human resource constraints. The latter was cited as an issue in some hromadas as it is the social services units that will have the main responsibility of implementing much of the LAPs, and the plans do not necessarily include funding to expand these services. This challenge could affect how future LAPs are designed and their implementation rate. At the national level, the National Police of Ukraine has also agreed to implement a unified revised police curriculum that includes materials on DV and GBV and its underlying causes and on human rights

generated in part with inputs from local-level pilots supported by the project.

As one donor agency put it, UN Women is good at knowledge-sharing; this has helped the entity scale up and expand several approaches and methodologies from the two projects to other projects and areas. This is particularly the case for the CME approach and local 1325 action plan processes. Currently the EU, Canada and Sweden are now also funding similar approaches in collaboration with UN Women, with one covering other regions in western and central Ukraine (donor KIIs, UN Women staff KIIs, April 2021). The interest in the CME approach was boosted largely by the visibility and success of SHGs. However, the ET has also found that replication of the CME approach will not likely contribute to gender-transformative outcomes beyond women's increased participation in governance and leadership. Some local communities have already started to adopt their new LAPs for the 2021–2025 period, which is an indication that the communities will continue this work after project completion, provided that the plans are supported by the resources needed by local authorities.[22] The GRB process, however, has yet to demonstrate consistency and capacity of the local self-administration officials in the pilot hromadas and is not yet replicable.

In addition, the Government of Denmark has indicated that it plans to apply the learnings from the cluster evaluation and related projects to its **neighbourhood programming.** Another donor organization has incorporated lessons learned on **communications in COVID-19** to its new project in eastern Ukraine (donor KII, April 2021). **Gender-sensitive conflict analysis** is another example of expanding the projects' approaches, as local NGOs started to apply it in other hromadas. In addition, UN Women has been approached by several Regional Development offices with the request to help them get the communities to develop gender-sensitive planning approaches (UN Women KII, April 2021).

Overall, there has been considerable interest in adopting and replicating the key approaches that UN Women has promoted through the two projects on the part of both different levels of the GoU and several other donors. Diverse communities have also demonstrated interest in being able to participate in

and take advantage of the small grants aspect of the projects. These are all indications that the approaches introduced are relevant for the context. This, in turn, will continue to contribute to their sustainability.

6.4 Influence of National Partners and Local CSOs

Key Finding 30: Key national partners, including women's organizations, were integral and influential participants during the projects' design and implementation phases. At the same time, through small grants for institutional capacity-building, a number of local CSOs were able to increase their capacity to plan and implement their strategic goals and competencies and influence actions and decisions being made at the community level.

UN Women has been working with several key RPs as active partners in developing the projects' main processes. One donor interviewed also highlighted the role that women's leaders and CSOs in the different regions play in the project design and implementation. One key CSO responsible partner has been instrumental in enhancing the capacities of local and regional administrations, as well as of women's groups on WPS localization, through mentoring, training, knowledge products and on-the-job coaching. Another has been instrumental in the application of the CME approach in three oblasts, supporting both CMs and SHGs in their leadership initiatives as well as joint actions with local authorities on EVAW. With the assistance and facilitation of this partner, the SHGs won 39 grants that they have used primarily for small projects to support community-based interventions across three oblasts (RP KII, March 2021).

Thanks to the small grants component, 10 CSOs working on a variety of issues – including women's leadership and participation, human rights, support to vulnerable categories of women and men, engagement of youth, education, research and advocacy – had the opportunity to upgrade their knowledge,

---

22 Bilenke Village Council, Zaporizhzhia oblast, 1325 WPS Local Action Plan till 2025 (19 April 2021); Starobilsk Town Council, Luhansk oblast, 1325 WPS Local Action Plan till 2025 (5 April 2021).

methods and tools to better position themselves and promote their activities. [23] Through these grants, the CSOs learned how to improve their design strategies to include a broader vision (KII, March 2021). **Their stronger capacity contributed to their being able to be more influential at the community level.**

In some instances, the grant projects also served to bring the grantees closer to other stakeholders in the communities they covered and helped them form informal stakeholder networks (e.g. between government, self-administration, beneficiaries and CSOs). They did emphasize, however, that the networking between the CSOs working in similar fields is poor and still needs to improve (KII, March 2021). The CSOs also noted that the very short implementation timeline of the small projects is not enough to show sustainable results: when a project finally gets "in shape" with all of the experience, confidence and acceptance obtained, it comes to its end with no planned transition to a next phase (KII, March 2021). Nonetheless, the CSOs that continue their work after the project and their grants end now have a stronger base and set of skills to serve as a platform to support further capacity-building of the women's movement in Ukraine at both the community and national levels.

6.5 National and Local Ownership of Project Results

Key Finding 31: At the local level, ownership of project results was most effectively reached through the SHG process and the adoption of local 1325 action

Young girls participate in community-based event on zero tolerance to GBV, Hirsivka village, Luhansk region, 2019 (Photo by: UN Women Ukraine)

plans; at the national level, the participation of main national counterparts such as the MIA, the MCTD and the Ministry for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories was key to generating ownership of the results achieved.

Several donors interviewed noted that Ukraine is gradually progressing on its GE policy commitments, with UN Women greatly contributing to this process. UN Women works actively to ensure that the interventions on which it works contribute to a sense of national ownership and leadership. Along with their partners, UN Women transfers expertise and nurtures gender champions who will further drive the gender agenda. One donor observed, for example, that more and more local trendsetters in the business and creative industries are becoming the new champions of gender. In addition, gender mainstreaming as a process and gender equality issues are considered more seriously by government now. This reflects a gradual change in social norms and increased ownership of the issue (donor KII, April 2021).

At the national level, the MCTD has demonstrated full ownership of the projects' results and has been fully engaged in all aspects of the projects' work on gender-responsive policymaking and legislation, staff training and changes in related institutional mechanisms.[24] Ambassador-level advocacy and policy dialogue work on the part of Canada, Norway and Sweden has also contributed to effective advocacy with the Government and Parliament and has helped foster a sense of national ownership (UN Women KII, April 2021). UN Women's approach of accompanying national stakeholders in change processes, as opposed to doing the work for them, is another key to the development of this sense of national ownership.

At the local level, FGDs indicate a high level of ownership of the SHG process and commitment to follow up on diverse activities in the community as well as to continue work with local authorities on recommendations development (FGDs, March 2021). Furthermore, communities have demonstrated willingness to continue work on the projects' interventions. Their acceptance and approval of the different community-level processes are also an indication of sustainability.

---

23 UN Women, Stakeholder analysis – Norway+Denmark projects (2021).

24 UN Women, *Progress report to the Government of Denmark*, p. 16.

Local self-administrations have already funded many activities[25] and have promised to continue their support, including for the LAPs, whose adoption is also considered a sign of ownership of the projects' results to date. Local and regional governments have also incorporated gender aspects into local by-laws and policies, including the GRB component (RP KII, March 2021). However, the local administrations do not yet have the capacity to continue work on GRB independently.

A key contributor to the sense of local- and regional-level ownership has been the SHG involvement in the planning process, demonstrating to local authorities that there is both a demand and need for change. This was complemented by related capacity-building of duty bearers to help them understand the rationale for supporting more gender-responsive planning and budgeting and learn the skills and processes needed to do so effectively.

---

25   UN Women, *Compendium of CME Success Stories* (2021).

SECTION C: LESSONS LEARNED, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Lessons Learned

CME Methodology

1. The CME approach focuses on general community development. It is not reasonable, therefore, to expect it to generate significant changes with regard to GEWE beyond increased parity and participation at the community level. To take it to the next level of gender-transformative change will require strengthening of the community profiles from a gender analysis, HRBA and feminist perspective plus a greater focus on capacity-building for SHGs and local authorities on what gender-transformative change at the community level could and should look like and achieve. To bring gender profiles to a higher and more consistent level of analysis would also require more external technical support into these processes. This would include greater customization of the CME community profile questions developed in Moldova to adapt them to better fit the Ukrainian context or for use elsewhere (see Findings 3, 7, 10, 11, 15).

2. Community profiling would likely be more effective if it was also done with local government officials in some capacity as the purpose of these profiles is to provide additional data related to community make-up and related priority needs. This responsibility typically falls under the aegis of local officials as the information generated represents census-style data. Although the SHGs provide considerable added value in the process, there are some ethical and conceptual challenges in promoting a methodology that expects women, including those from vulnerable groups, to fill in such a crucial data gap with strictly volunteer labour (see Findings 10, 15).

3. When working on capacity-building with local authorities, there is often more buy-in at this level if the rationale for gender-responsive planning and budgets is explained from the project's inception to reduce authorities' initial resistance to this change and ensure adequate buy-in. This would also potentially strengthen the institutionalization of the adoption of gender-responsive planning processes so that the adoption of such processes does not remain ad hoc in nature and not sustainable once project funding ends (see Findings 10, 19).

4. CME processes could benefit from focusing on the quality (as opposed to the quantity) of gender-responsive planning recommendations made to local and regional authorities to really hone in on the absolute priorities for gender-sensitive measures. This focus would also potentially help increase the number of recommendations adopted and implemented as they will more clearly represent urgent community priorities and not dilute the recommendation process with long wish lists that are beyond the financial and human resource capacity of local and regional authorities to implement (see Findings 10, 11).

BOX 2

Community Mobilization Approaches

Community mobilization interventions can help achieve community-level impact (norm change) related to GBV prevention, when they include explicit mechanisms for widely diffusing ideas and are well implemented. Evidence shows that the highest performing community mobilization activities include the following characteristics:

1. They engage all members of the community (men, women, boys and girls), including separately, with dedicated and tailored approaches for each group.

Community Mobilization Approaches

2. They focus on transforming social norms, attitudes and behaviours by generating conversations and reflections on gender roles.

3. They are organized regularly (the frequency depends on the context, but it is usually recommended to organize them at least eight times in a year), and participants are expected to remain engaged throughout the project.

4. They follow a human rights framework (following principles of non-discrimination and particularly aimed at responding to the needs of all women and girls, including those facing intersecting forms of discrimination).

See: Spotlight Initiative Pillar Guidance Note, available at https://endvawnow.org/uploads/browser/files/spotlight_initiative_pillar_guidance_note.pdf.

5. When men and boys are engaged in the GBV prevention process more systematically, it leads to a greater degree of social norms change and support for women and girls in combating and preventing GBV. See Box 2 above for one example as to how this could be done (see Findings 8, 12). ("Talking to women who survived the violence changed my own view of the problem of violence against girls and women," - Oleksandr Doroshenko, the leader of the self-help group, Rubizhne city, Luhansk region)

"We have found men who would come to trainings — and they told us that it was useful for them, not just for their jobs but for their families — they were reflecting on their own attitudes as to their own wife." SHG member, Luhansk region

6. When introducing new community structures that interface with local government, it is critical to take a highly coordinated approach to them so that the formal community-government interfaces do not call upon the same volunteer members of SHGs to serve on multiple committees (see Findings 20, 23).

7. The experience of the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project demonstrated that when key project components are coordinated from the local to national levels and vice versa, the project contributes to more sustainable and integrated results. This is particularly critical within a decentralized reform process as complementary actions are needed at all levels of government to ensure institutionalization of the changes being introduced (see Findings 2, 23, 27, 29, 31).

Gender-Sensitive Media Training and Communications

COVID-19 revealed that multi-pronged approaches to digital and in-person communications were needed in rural and remote communities to pivot to a new mode of communication during this type of crisis. UN Women was successful in making this pivot in part as it was able to draw upon the network of CMs and SHGs that the projects developed, in part by using highly interactive digital storytelling approaches and by working closely with partner stakeholders such as the police to help determine what kinds of communications support they needed (see Findings 16, 18).

Local 1325 Action Plans

When developing local 1325 action plans, there is a need to ensure what are the funding sources to implement LAPs. These plans also need to take into account what is achievable with existing social services resources at the local and regional levels (see Findings 11, 13, 27, 31).

Gender-Responsive Budgets

To increase the impact of ad hoc gender-responsive planning and budgeting processes, there is a need to work with national-level finance officials to help

Representatives of local NGOs and community mobilizers brainstorm on the advocacy with local authorities, Zaporizhzhia, 2020 (Photo by: UN Women Ukraine)

develop a means of reporting on expenditures for gender-responsive measures. GRB capacity-building efforts with local and regional authorities also require more than two or three years to bring officials' skills to a level at which they can develop quality GRB independently without requiring external technical assistance or reviews. Both of these processes are critical factors to consolidate gains made with regard to CME-generated gender-responsive planning and budgeting and lead to the institutionalization of these processes, as opposed to focusing mainly on related capacity-building of community members and local authorities (see Finding 11).

GBV Prevention and Social Norms Change

1. Findings of this type of study and of the materials and reports of some RPs and contractors need to be disseminated more systematically to Ukrainian stakeholders and the studies made available in Ukrainian. They are inaccessible to different stakeholders when they remain mainly in English (see Finding 3).

2. Significant social norms changes related to GBV and women's roles and the institution of more gender-responsive government processes are not going to take place within the scope of a three-year project. Therefore, there is a need to reduce project expectations in this regard as well as the corresponding ToC and/or to request financing for longer-term programming, opting for a minimum of five years or longer (see Findings 6, 8, 12).

Monitoring and Evaluation System

1. To measure different categories of gender-transformative change at multiple levels, project log frames need to include intermediate indicators that measure change in rights holder and duty bearer capacity that do make a large jump between the outputs and outcome levels and show the change progression arising from training activities in particular (see Findings 23, 26).

2. In a rapid growth and crisis context in which UN Women is introducing innovative programme approaches, there is a strong argument to be made for increasing standard M&E budgets to 5 per cent as opposed to 3 per cent to allow for better documentation of successes and, where there is a need, for adjustments in programme approaches and implementation (see Finding 26).

Sustainability

What builds a sense of ownership of the interventions' results is that UN Women does not do the work for stakeholders but encourages and helps them develop it themselves. While initially this often calls for substantial inputs of external expertise to support this process, over time, the responsibility and skills pass on to the key stakeholders. This has been a particularly effective approach (see Findings 28, 29, 30, 31).

8. Conclusions

8.1 Relevance Conclusions

1. Alignment to Priority Needs: There is some misalignment between the UN Women SN outcomes prioritized for action and the identified needs and priorities of individual, community-level beneficiaries, specifically with regard to their need for economic security. Priority setting thus appears to have been dictated too much by previously employed key approaches (such as CME), UN Women's SN and/or donor agendas (see Finding 1).

2. Value Added: UN Women provides unique value added in its support for the localization of UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda. However, while a priority for the national government, it is unclear to what extent the WPS agenda is a priority for current target communities in conflict zones. There is thus a need to work on two parallel but complementary processes that focus on supporting both increased economic and physical security at the local level (see Finding 13).

3. Theory of Change: UN Women in Ukraine has been working on a wide range of initiatives and could benefit from a narrower focus; it also needs to develop log frames that measure different categories of gender-transformational change in incremental stages. To help support this strategic discussion, the ET has developed a series of three separate ToCs based on the three SN outcomes on which the projects have focused. Once UN Women has decided on which outcomes it should be

focusing in its future work in the country, the CO can discuss how to apply these more focused and nuanced ToCs to each SN outcome area as well as develop and integrate a ToC related to women's economic empowerment (WEE). The three revised ToCs are outlined in Annex 10 (see Finding 4).

4. CME Community Focus: The use of the CME approach is a case in point; as an approach in and of itself, it focuses on community-identified needs and priorities, especially of vulnerable groups. However, it lacks a strong GEWE focus. As such, SHG agendas often become aligned with general principles of inclusion and protection, making achievement of specific outcomes related to GE and EVAW difficult beyond increasing women's participation in community leadership and support for selected small grant projects (see Finding 1).

8.2 Coherence Conclusions

5. Alignment: UN Women develops strong project proposals that are well aligned with international, regional, national and local strategies, polices and plans and that incorporate crucial principles related to human rights. The projects also have a good deal of internal coherence with UN Women's SN outcomes with regard to their design but have not always been effective in contributing to aspects of some of these outcomes (see Finding 5).

6. GBV Prevention: For example, the CME methodology is not contributing sufficiently to GBV prevention (SN Outcome 2 on EVAWG) and is not designed to do so. Other programmatic contributions to GBV prevention lack horizontal linkages and influence at all levels of the socioecological model needed to see impact in this area (see Findings 7, 8).

7. Value Added: UN Women is not the only entity implementing the CME approach, but could take the opportunity to strengthen the GEWE focus of this model to ensure a more balanced focus between general community needs and a more comprehensive gender-transformative approach that goes beyond increased participation. If UN Women continues its focus on CME in the future, this change would be needed to make CME more of a unique UN Women approach that could meet a wider range of women's priority needs. In particular,

there is a clear need to strengthen the gender profile process and capacity-building approaches related to how male and female community members can support improvements in women's lives at the equality, rights and welfare levels within the CME model. This is currently missing. An expanded approach would build on the foundation of increased women's participation to also achieve significant changes in their state, status and welfare. This is the value added that UN Women needs to be bringing to the CME process (see Finding 10).

UN Women also has a clear value-added and high profile at the government/ministry level, especially with regard to accessing key GoU ministries and regional authorities. However, at the local level for duty bearers and rights holders, this profile is less clear, especially since UN Women's work is led by national CSOs through the funding that UN Women has been able to obtain for them. To continue this CSO implementation approach while maintaining its presence and value added, UN Women should consider both expanding its field presence and working to strengthen the capacity of these national CSOs. There is also a need to review the performance of the RPs and determine whether UN Women will continue working with all of them in the future (see Finding 8).

8.3 Effectiveness Conclusions

8. Programme Focus: From 2015, UN Women in Ukraine was put under tremendous pressure to quickly provide a large volume of different programming within a serious conflict context and substantive democratic reform process. The newly established CO responded by providing as much service as possible while adhering to global UN Women SN priorities. What the CO was able to achieve between 2015 and 2021 is quite admirable, but this growth and approach has stretched CO resources thinly, and the rapid growth of the CO has generated a few capacity issues, particularly with regard to M&E and coordination at the field level. It also has meant that, in some ways, the CO has been trying to be all things to all people and institutions. Given that the CO will be drafting a new country-level strategic plan in the near future, there is a need to build upon the foundations laid by the CME and local 1325 action plan processes while also narrowing its work focus to concentrate on a shift to gender-transformative change at the equality and rights levels, which will also contribute to improvements

in women's state and living conditions. UN Women is uniquely poised to provide a more gender-transformative approach to WEE compared to other UN agencies working in eastern Ukraine. Therefore, if the CO decides to respond to this need in a significant way, it will need to either increase its staff capacity in WEE or narrow its focus in its other programme streams to free up the necessary resources to do this effectively (see Findings 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16).

9. Gender-Transformative Results: Closely linked to this is the fact that it will take more time for the effects of the CME and decentralization approach to be felt, as well as for these to go beyond transformative change at the parity and participation levels to achieve more transformative change at the equality and rights levels. However, the general community mobilization focus of the CME approach needs adjusting to provide an increased focus on women's human rights and gender equality to generate significant and transformative changes with regard to longer-term changes in women's living conditions and state (see Findings 10, 11).

10. GBV Prevention: In this area of SN outcomes, the CO needs to find ways to strengthen its approaches and to work more on GBV prevention than on the provision of GBV services. One possibility to do this includes adapting the CME approach to encompass some elements of the SASA! model, [26] which places a stronger emphasis on involving men and boys in the prevention process (see Box 3). This latter approach has yielded good results with regard to changes in related social norms in relatively short periods of time. Another potential approach is to work with the Ministry of Finance and donors to ensure that there is a sufficient allocation of funds and human resources available to implement the GBV prevention measures outlined in the local 1325 action plans (see Finding 12).

11. National Linkages: Another approach UN Women needs to consider in terms of effective approaches is the linking of local-level initiatives with national processes used in the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project. This integrated approach worked well and should be applied to all future iterations of the programme. This was especially evident with regard to the development of the unified police curriculum (see Findings 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16).

BOX 3

Case Study – Engaging a Critical Mass to Change Social Norms with SASA!

SASA! is a community mobilization intervention created by Raising Voices in Uganda that seeks to change community attitudes, norms and behaviours that result in gender inequality, GBV and HIV risk for women. SASA! works with a broad range of stakeholders to promote a critical analysis and discussion of power inequalities between genders. SASA! is implemented through a step-by-step Activist Kit that goes beyond awareness-raising to meaningful community action. Findings from a randomized controlled trial showed a lower rate of intimate partner violence (IPV) experienced by women in the preceding year among intervention communities compared to control communities. The intervention was also associated with less social acceptance of IPV, greater understanding of a woman's ability to refuse sex, more community support for survivors and less sexual concurrency among men.

12. RP Selection: A factor that could limit the effectiveness of future UN Women programming in Ukraine is that not all of UN Women's RPs (partners) share the same feminist vision as UN Women, nor do they have a solid HRBA approach or expertise. UN Women needs to examine how this affects programme implementation and its RP selection process and how, as an organization, it can strengthen its approach to the capacity-building of RPs from a feminist perspective. There was also one RP about which the ET received multiple complaints from diverse types of stakeholders; there may be a need for UN Women to reconsider extending this particular partnership relationship in the future (see Finding 15).

---

26 Raising Voices, "SASA!". Available at https://raisingvoices.org/sasa/; Tanya Abramsky and others, "Findings from the SASA! Study: A Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial to Assess the Impact of a Community Mobilization Intervention to Prevent Violence against Women and Reduce HIV Risk in Kampala, Uganda", *BMC Medicine,* vol. 12, No. 1 (2014). Available at https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-014-0122-5.

8.4 Efficiency Conclusions

13. Overall Efficiency: Closely tied to programme effectiveness is that UN Women was also fairly efficient with regard to project implementation despite multiple external challenges such as national and local elections and COVID-19 mobility restrictions. Several RPs, however, encountered some challenges related to frequent changes in UN Women personnel that they felt detracted from this overall efficiency to some degree (see Findings 18, 20).

14. Coordination: The CO has developed a good reputation for coordinating both its own and donor activities related to the promotion of GEWE. However, there remains a need to develop a more consistent coordination approach of the work of the multiple RPs working at the local level (see Finding 22).

15. Reputation: UN Women has also developed a strong and quite positive reputation among donors and stakeholders in Ukraine, in part because of its overall efficiency and in part due to being part of the UN system. This reputation has had a spillover effect for the RPs with which it works, as several have found that working so closely with UN Women enhances their own reputations and credibility with other donors. This, in turn, contributes to the sustainability and capacity of these RPs (see Findings 9, 22).

16. M&E System: One area in which the ET found less effiiency is the M&E system. The strong focus on the output level in UN Women's project M&E frameworks currently limits the CO's ability to understand the longer-term impact and strategic direction of its project/programme work. There also remains a need to ensure that monitoring data are used more systematically to make adjustments to programme implementation as needed. UN Women's M&E system for both the RPs and UN Women staff could also be strengthened by a greater focus on reporting on the results generated by activities (such as training) and adding in an intermediate results level to its project log frames, as well as a longer-term set of expectations related to the achievement of changes in social norms, the institutionalization of gender-responsive planning processes and budgets and local 1325 action plans and how they

Member of the local SHG in Chepyhivka village, Luhansk region, 2020
(Photo by: UN Women Ukraine, Maksym Holoborodko)

will contribute to changes in women's state, status, welfare and rights (see Findings 23, 24, 25).

8.5 Sustainability Conclusions

17. Capacity of Rights Holders: At the individual capacity level, women rights holders at the community level have made significant strides towards becoming active participants in community structures and expanding their capacity to advocate for consideration of their priority needs by local and regional authorities. However, while these improvements are improving general access to public services, they have not yet necessarily resulted in increased outcomes related to other gender-specific levels of transformative changes (see Finding 27).

18. Capacity of Duty Bearers: The training provided to local authorities on gender-responsive planning and budgets has contributed to a greater responsiveness of local government to priority community needs, including for vulnerable groups of women. However, while quite a positive step in the right direction, these processes have not yet been fully institutionalized at the hromada level. This was not an explicit objective of the CME process but is one that could consolidate project results if further support and technical assistance is provided with this aim in mind to complement the increased community participation generated by the CME process. The sustainability of institutional changes is also affected by the fact that national and local/regional elections can lead to changes in senior officials. Therefore, any capacity-building initiatives for local and regional authorities need to take this risk into account and find ways to focus capacity-building initiatives for

duty bearers on both institutional change and institutional capacity to avoid having to start over completely when there is a regime change (see Findings 19, 27).

19. Sustainability of Outcomes: The main SN-related GEWE-specific outcome achieved has been that of increased participation of women in community leadership, as well as the capacity of rights holders and duty bearers with regard to gender-responsive planning and budgets. However, GBV prevention is not yet at a level in which project results would be sustained without a UN Women or RP presence (see Findings 27, 28).

20. Implementation of 1325 Action Plans: There have been significant gains with regard to the development of local 1325 action plans, with implementation having already started on these in some communities and several having clear budget support. For some others, however, at the local/regional levels, duty bearers face some significant human resource and financial constraints related to the implementation of these plans. This could potentially limit the sustainability of these plans and the related changes in GE related to WPS that their implementation would bring (see Findings 13, 29).

21. Ownership: UN Women has also experienced success with regard to its approach of working alongside national, regional and local stakeholders and project beneficiaries and working through national CSOs. These approaches have both contributed to the development of a sense of ownership of the different processes that UN Women has introduced. The strongest sense of ownership is found at the community level, where SHG members have become actively involved in their communities, have established their own CSOs and are working to make life in their communities a better place for all community members. The results generated by the CME process-related sustained results are also strongly based on women's volunteer labour, and there remain some questions as to the sustainability of a volunteer model (see Findings 30, 31).

22. Replication and Scaling Up: Finally, the fact that UN Women has found funding from five different major donors to support the same type of programme approaches working in eastern Ukraine and other regions in Ukraine in just six years is already evidence that UN Women has been able replicate the CME,

gender-responsive plans and budgets and local 1325 action plan models in different oblasts. There has also been uptake on the CME model by national CSOs. The CO's approach to digital communications is also being used as a model by other UN Women COs in the region. The applicability of these approaches elsewhere in Ukraine and outside the country (predicated on the adaption of the CME approach previously suggested) provides evidence that these different approaches have the potential to have a much more widespread impact but specifically for programmes related to inclusive governance versus GEWE (see Finding 29).

9. Recommendations

The ET based the recommendations on the key evaluation findings, the preliminary results of the follow-up interview with key programming staff, and the Evaluation Management Team feedback on the first draft of the evaluation report. The report and evaluation recommendations were also presented to the Evaluation Reference Group and UN Women staff and project teams and further revised based on their feedback. The recommendations section also includes potential key actions for consideration by the CO, based on feasibility within its current programme of work and the fact that the Ukraine CO will be developing its new SN in the near future. The recommendations presented in this section are to be addressed by UN Women in partnership with relevant national stakeholders in Ukraine.

Recommendation 1: Programme Focus

To accommodate women's and vulnerable groups' identified priority needs for economic security, the CO should incorporate WEE as a new outcome area into its next SN. At the same time, the evaluation found a strong need and justification for the CO to continue working in the three existing outcome areas (Governance, GBV and WPS). That being said, it will be important to not spread resources too thin, across four SN outcome areas. This means that the CO will need to find additional financial resources to be able to take on all thematic areas effectively.

Alternatively, if the CO moves forward to address economic security, it will need to make decisions about which components of the other three outcome

areas to deprioritize. Such a decision should be made in consultation with a variety of stakeholders and duty bearers and in consideration of the findings and recommendations of this report. For example, UN Women could consider concentrating on GBV prevention and consolidation of local 1325 action plan implementation, as opposed to expanding its work on CME (see Findings 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16).

Priority: High	Time frame: Immediate to medium
Impact: High	Difficulty: Medium

Actions for consideration:

• Consider adding WEE as a fourth outcome area to the next SN, in order to respond to the needs prioritized by women and vulnerable groups.

• Adjust the scope of the SN outcome areas to realistically correspond to the financial resources available to achieve these components.

• In addition to WEE, prioritize work on GBV prevention, localization of UNSCR 1325 and gender-responsive planning and budgeting (if continuing the CME approach).

Recommendation 2: Theory of Change

It is recommended that UN Women use the three ToC options outlined in the annexes of this report as the basis of discussion to revise its ToC related to SN Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 in order to (1) take a longer-term approach to social norms change; (2) acknowledge that community mobilization approaches are heavily based upon women and men's volunteer labour; and (3) unpack and track the related change processes using a more incremental, phased approach (see Finding 4).

Priority: High	Time frame: Immediate
Impact: High	Difficulty: Medium

Actions for consideration:

• Review SN priorities in the next planning period to ensure that they align with the priorities of both the GoU and community stakeholders and beneficiaries, and select the programme streams in the ToCs which best fit these priorities.

• Add a related ToC stream focused on WEE to the overall programme approach model developed for eastern Ukraine and other regions as part of the development of the CO's next SN.

• Develop ToC indicators based on the programme approach that the CO has been developing that track different stages and types of gender-transformative change over a 10-year period.

• Ensure that UN Women present the overall approaches used in the projects currently being funded by the Governments of Canada, Norway and Sweden and the EU as an overall programme with its own overarching ToC, and be transparent about asking different donors to fund different components of this programme.

Recommendation 3: Coordination Processes

It is recommended that UN Women develop more systematic mechanisms to coordinate RP activities at the oblast and community levels (see Finding 23).

Priority: High	Time frame: Immediate
Impact: Medium	Difficulty: Low

Actions for consideration:

● Convene regular quarterly meetings with all RPs working in the same regions to coordinate interrelated project/programme activities, and include UNDP personnel working on similar approaches in these regions in these quarterly meetings.

Recommendation 4: CME Approach

It is recommended that UN Women revisit the CME approaches to (1) make additional investments in capacity-building with SHGs to improve the quality of community gender analyses and help them prioritize recommendations to local authorities; (2) facilitate greater involvement of these governments in the community gender analysis process; (3) place a stronger focus on gender analysis based on women's human rights and power relations; (4) adapt curricula to focus on reflections on internal attitudes and behaviours with regard to gender norms and inequalities; (5) put an increased focus on engaging men and boys in all of these processes; and (6) ensure that a higher percentage of community grant projects are allocated to activities that directly contribute to increased GE and GBV prevention (see Findings 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16).

Priority: High	Time frame: Immediate
Impact: High	Difficulty: Medium

Actions for consideration:

● Revise the CME methodology to find effective ways to build on women's increased participation and community-level leadership to advocate for gender-transformative change at the welfare, rights and equality levels.

● Ensure that community needs assessments/profiles are also focused specifically on barriers and opportunities to GEWE and take a more qualitative analytical approach to supplement the simple identification of what are priority needs of vulnerable groups and the general community.

● Should the CO decide or need to deprioritize its work in some of its focus areas, consider working with other UN agencies to ensure that the key elements of these focus areas are still covered in the work being done.

Recommendation 5: Research Dissemination Plans

UN Women Ukraine should require the development of dissemination and adaptation plans for relevant research conducted in collaboration with key partners. These plans would outline steps for dissemination to key internal partners and external stakeholders, including strategies, time and resources, to adapt key approaches based on findings from any formative research (see Finding 3).

Priority: High	Time frame: Immediate
Impact: Medium	Difficulty: Low

Actions for consideration:

● Review existing projects using the same programme approach to determine which knowledge products need to be included in a dissemination and programme/project implementation adaptation plan.

● Include resources and plans in these dissemination plans to ensure that all major knowledge products are translated into Ukrainian and/or Russian so they can be shared with Ukrainian stakeholders and project/programme beneficiaries.

Recommendation 6: Approach to M&E

It is recommended that the CO (1) continue working actively to strengthen UN Women and RP staff capacity in M&E; and (2) revamp current and future log frames to include indicators that track intermediate results that are contributing to long-term results; and (3) ensure that monitoring results and research findings are used to inform programme and project implementation. The overall focus should be on designing M&E systems that capture the different phases and types of gender-transformative change (see Findings 4, 23, 24, 25).

Priority: High	Time frame: Immediate and medium term
Impact: High	Difficulty: High

Immediate actions for consideration:

● Review the log frame and underlying assumptions of the ToC for the Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms project to determine where related adjustments could be made, particularly at the outcome level. This would involve adding new indicators at the outcome level that can be used to track different types of gender-transformative change, as opposed to replacing existing indicators. This would apply particularly to intermediate-level results related to capacity-building activities, such as those stemming from the future teaching of the unified police curriculum.

● Review the underlying assumptions of the ToC related to how long specific types of gender-transformative change are required to be enacted for the next phase of the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society project to ensure that project results both build on the foundation of the previous phase and are realistic with regard to what the project can achieve.

● Review the proposed log frame for the next phase of the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society project to ensure it includes intermediate-level indicators that reflect different types and levels of transformative change as well as the medium-term results generated by capacity-building activities.

Priority: High	Time frame: Immediate and medium term
Impact: High	Difficulty: High

IMedium-term actions for consideration:

• Develop a more unified and streamlined approach to monitoring, evaluation and reporting based on a programme approach, particularly where RPs are implementing the same approaches in the same regions for more than one donor under the umbrella of UN Women projects.

Recommendation 7: Expansion of UN Women Field Offices

It is recommended that UN Women Ukraine expand its field presence and project teams to include an M&E officer, as well as GBV prevention and GRB expertise to both reduce its dependence upon external consultants and to increase its visibility and value added at the regional and local levels (see Finding 22).

Priority: High	Time frame: Immediate
Impact: Medium	Difficulty: Low

Actions for consideration:

• Discuss strategic and human resource considerations with project teams and CO staff regarding the optimum role for UN Women to play at the field level and the most effective ways to do so (i.e. determine what level of technical advice the project teams and UN Women staff should be providing to stakeholders and project beneficiaries).

• Conduct a capacity assessment of CO staff to determine key gaps in expertise, and develop a human resource plan to address these gaps.

Recommendation 8: Gap Analysis

It is recommended that UN Women, in coordination with other key partners, commission a gap analysis and mapping of actors in any future target communities in eastern Ukraine working specifically in thematic areas in UN Women's SN (see Finding 23).

Priority: High	Time frame: Medium
Impact: High	Difficulty: Medium

Actions for consideration:

• Use the analysis to identify who is doing what currently and what are the major gaps in relation to UN Women's mandate, specifically focusing on EVAWG and WEE.

• Present the results of the analysis to hromada officials to inform the selection of target communities as well as the development of UN Women Ukraine's next SN.

Recommendation 9: Institutionalization of Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting Processes

As a means of strengthening sustainability and the depth/breath of gender-transformative results, it is recommended that UN Women review how to further elevate its approach to capacity-building with duty bearers related to gender-responsive planning and budgeting to a higher-level focus on the institutionalization of these processes and related changes, working with all three levels of government (see Findings 11, 31).

Priority: High	Time frame: Medium
Impact: High	Difficulty: Medium

Actions for consideration:

● Review proposed project objectives for the next phase of the Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender-Equal Society project to potentially include more systematic institutionalization of gender-responsive planning and budget processes.

● Continue work with the Ministry of Finance and the MCTD to support the development of budgeting processes and accountability systems at the regional and local levels that will facilitate the tracking of expenditures on gender-responsive measures by local authorities.

10. List of Annexes

UN WOMEN