



EVALUATION BRIEF



# FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

## Women for Equality, Peace and Development in Georgia (WEPD II)

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### Context

The aim of the project *Women for Equality, Peace and Development in Georgia*, implemented between 2013 and 2015, was to strengthen the capacity of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and conflict-affected and ethnic minority women's groups to address their social, economic and political needs, through joint action and advocacy. In addition, the project sought to provide technical assistance to the government in advancing gender equality, inclusive peace-building and human rights in Georgia. The project was generously funded by the Government of Norway. The evaluation was commissioned by UN Women (September – November 2015) and conducted by Marina Gurbo, an independent international evaluator.

### What has the project achieved?

The main achievements of the project regarding increased access to justice, social and economic services, and increased opportunities for participation in confidence-building in Georgia, were identified by the evaluation as the following:

- **Institutional changes for increased access to justice and social protection for IDPs, conflict-affected and ethnic minority communities:** To ensure that the needs of women are integrated into local budgets, gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) working groups, consisting of representatives of the local government and community members, were formally established in five municipalities. 65% of issues brought

up on behalf of local communities were included in the budgets for 2016, compared to 12% in 2012. The targeted municipal budgets for 2015 allocated between 17% and 32.6% of the total amounts to combating domestic violence and social protection for vulnerable groups of people. With the support of UN Women, lawyers in four regional branches of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees, provided free of charge legal aid to IDPs and ethnic minority populations, resulting in the provision of almost 11,000 individual consultations during the project period; an 86.3% increase from 2012. The “One window” principle, with regards to meetings, was established in three municipalities to ensure citizen’s access to social services is increased; and this has been institutionalized for continuation beyond the project.

- **Grassroots level changes for the increased empowerment of women in communities and participation of beneficiaries, especially women, in local development:** A strategy to engage with citizens at the grassroots level – social mobilization - resulted in the establishment of 54 new self-help groups uniting almost 800 members (87% women) as well as 9 youth groups, to initiate local development projects and advocate for changes with local government. This proved to be an

effective method to increase women’s empowerment within communities and their participation in local development. Members representing ethnic minorities from the Kvemo Qartli region unanimously agreed on the significance of this mobilization in breaking the long-term isolation of the region and in creating opportunities for participation and influence in political and social processes. An unintended result of the project was an increased level of trust in governmental structures among the representatives of ethnic minorities; something confirmed by their confidence that mutual cooperation to resolve community problems is possible and may bring visible results.

- **Policy level changes for women’s participation in post-conflict reconstruction and for accountability to women’s priorities in formal peace processes:** UN Women provided technical support to the development of a new National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women peace and security (2016-2017), where the government of Georgia confirmed its commitment to involve women in decision making processes related to peace and security issues. With UN Women’s support, formats have been established through which women’s groups are regularly briefed on the outcomes of official peace talks and can advocate for the integration of their experiences, needs and priorities.

## Lessons learned

The evaluation provides valuable lessons to improve and strengthen future programming. Lessons learned from the evaluation include:

- A change in the capacities of Self-help Groups (SHGs) and cooperation with a municipality requires time and sustainable resources. Co-funding initiatives proved to be a cost-efficient and effective tool to promote further cooperation between the local administration and SHGs, to raise the status of the SHGs and to increase trust in governmental bodies. The involvement of young people in SHGs proved to be effective in promoting volunteerism and fostering a responsible attitude towards the community.
- Participatory and inclusive approaches have strong potential to increase interaction between different ethnic communities and between ethnic minorities and local governments, thus promoting confidence-building and the integration of ethnic minorities.
- When working in conflict-affected settings with conflict-divided communities, it is important to apply a context-sensitive, security-aware approach and to maintain a low profile.

## Recommendations

The evaluation provided recommendations for different key stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the project, including UN Women, Taso Foundation, WIC and IWPR:

- **UN Women** was encouraged to: advocate for stronger ownership and accountability of the 1325 NAP by Government agencies and to promote relevant capacity development; to advocate for women's access to microfinance and the development of innovative models promoting women's entrepreneurship and reducing feminized poverty; and to seek partnerships and synergies with organizations across the administrative boundary lines with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, to upscale confidence-building projects.
  - **Taso Foundation** was encouraged to further promote social mobilization in ethnic minority regions and monitor initiatives of the Government and local administrations to increase the target groups' access to justice, legal and economic services.
  - **Women's Information Centre (WIC) and Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR)** were encouraged to further involve the media, which will help demand accountability from duty-bearers for the implementation of the gender equality agenda.
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**UN Women** is the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

**Website:** <http://www.unwomen.org>; <http://georgia.unwomen.org>;

The full report of the final evaluation can be accessed at:

<https://gate.unwomen.org/EvaluationDocument/Download?evaluationDocumentID=4881>

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