



EVALUATION BRIEF



FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Innovative Action for Gender Equality in Georgia (IAGE)

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Context

Ethnic minority women, imprisoned women, women residing in isolated, mountainous settings women with disabilities and single, elderly women, have been largely invisible in policy making processes in Georgia. The project entitled *Innovative Action for Gender Equality in Georgia (IAGE, 2013-15)* attempted to make sure that the voices of these marginalized groups of women are heard. The project was implemented by UN Women in Georgia and was generously supported by the European Union, represented by the European Commission. The final evaluation of the project was conducted in September-October 2015 by an independent international consultant, Zehra Kacapor-Dzihic.

What has the project achieved?

The evaluation acknowledges the following key achievements through the implementation of the project:

- **Creation of a knowledge base on the needs and priorities of marginalized groups of women and increased capacity of government officials to mainstream gender:** Four baseline studies were conducted that significantly contributed to the evidence base regarding the situation and challenges faced by marginalized groups of women. 75% of the recommendations regarding the needs of imprisoned women were addressed by the Ministry of Corrections (MoC) and around 70% of the recom-

recommendations on the needs of ethnic minority women have been reflected in *The State Strategy and Action Plan for Civil Equality and Integration* (2015-2020). A training manual on gender mainstreaming in policymaking was developed in Georgian and respective trainings were organized for government officials from both the local and national levels and included 27 representatives from 19 ministries, 42 gender focal points from 39 municipalities and 8 representatives from local councils and regional governors' offices.

- **Strengthened advocacy skills of civil society organisations (CSOs) and growing partnerships between civil society and national and local government:** A manual for CSOs on Evidence Based Advocacy was developed and 70 CSO representatives were trained in evidence based advocacy and gender mainstreaming. The trainings were coupled with small grants that allowed the CSOs to put the lessons into practice. A comparison of the initial and final capacity assessment of CSOs shows that this approach was effective in improving the capacity of CSOs to effectively advocate for the needs of marginalized women, leading the evaluation to describe these trainings an example of best practice. In 2013, 29% of the CSOs surveyed reported having experience of conducting at least one advocacy project, compared with 56% reporting similar experience in 2015. One successful advocacy project led to the provision of professional

development trainings for ethnic minority teachers in their native languages (Armenian and Azerbaijani) and the enforcement of a new regulation of the National Assessment and Examination Centre (NAEC) allowing ethnic minority teachers to undergo the examination process in their mother tongue. The project was also successful in bringing together local and national level policymakers and civil society actors which resulted in transforming civil society recommendations into policy measures, including gender budgeting in a number of municipalities.

- **Improved conditions for imprisoned women:** In addition to the above-mentioned recommendations addressed by the MoC, a UN Women initiative for monitoring women's prisons resulted in an official monitoring visit of the Public Defender's Office (PDO) to the Georgian women's prison and prompted the Minister of Corrections to improve conditions. More importantly, the PDO developed a women's prison monitoring tool according to the UN Bangkok rules¹ and began the process of routine monitoring of women's prisons. Trainings on the Bangkok Rules were adopted for use in the Penitentiary and Probation Training Centre (PPTC). The initiative of the Women's Club Peoni, supported by

¹ The United Nations rules for the treatment of women prisoners and non-custodial measures for women offenders also known as the "Bangkok Rules", establish standards for the treatment of female offenders and prisoners. UN Bangkok Rules. Penal Reform International. <http://www.penalreform.org/priorities/women-in-the-criminal-justice-system/bangkok-rules-2/>

UN Women, helped to prepare women inmates for release in addition to printing and distributing 700 manuals and 3000 leaflets among prisoner and former prisoner women and relevant staff of the penitentiary system, informing them of their rights.

- **Improved contact between communities divided by conflict:** Initiatives such as a book project (a get-together between Abkhaz, Georgian and South Ossetian writers and community leaders in a safe and enabling environment) and summer school education on women's rights, gender equality and women's role in confidence and peace-building, all contributed to confidence building efforts and helped reduce tensions between the different ethnic groups.

Lessons learned

The evaluation provides valued lessons learned to improve and strengthen future programming. Lessons learned drawn in the evaluation include:

- Data gathered from interviews with stakeholders and the desk review of secondary sources indicate that the work on gender equality has just begun and therefore, further efforts are needed to enhance the rights of women, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups.
- Research shows that Georgian civil society does not have sufficient power and capacities to carry out reforms without

support from UN and international actors.

- Support for confidence building efforts has been possible primarily thanks to the UN flag of the UN Women and neutrality, offering safe and enabling space for dialogue and interactions. A politically sensitive and flexible approach is required for UN Women to sustain efforts towards confidence building and empowerment of women across the ceasefire lines.
- Continued, longer term engagement with national partners facilitates results achievement. A good example of such is the cooperation between the MOC, the GEC and the PDO as well as CSOs. Such investments into long-term partnerships are valuable as they bring ownership over processes, and provide support to the introduction of new concepts. These partnerships need to be further strengthened and government and CSO capacity increased for more in-depth work on the issue of gender equality.

Recommendations of the evaluation to move forward

Recommendations presented in the evaluation report are based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation and have been elaborated following a consultative process with all the key stakeholders. The main recommendations for future UN Women and key stakeholders' initiatives to support the advancement of GEWE in Georgia include:

- UN Women and partners should continue to support the realization of the rights of IDP, imprisoned, ethnic minority and rural women, through a set of separate actions, as well as supporting the implementation of legislation and policies to address the specific healthcare, social and economic needs of excluded groups of women in Georgia.
- UN Women should continue supporting ongoing evidence-based advocacy and awareness raising at national and local levels, by producing research studies, reports and analyses on the status of different groups of women.
- UN Women and its partners should further utilise their neutral role in order to further facilitate networking among like-minded actors and stakeholders within cultural or local activist spheres at local level and across the administrative boundary lines, as well as in (sub)regions and internationally.

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=4856>

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