



GENDER EQUALITY: A KEY SDG ACCELERATOR

A CASE STUDY FROM THE
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

UNITED NATIONS ISSUE-BASED
COALITION ON GENDER EQUALITY
EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



Executive Summary

An analysis of the data from the 2017 UN Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support (MAPS) mission in the Republic of Moldova demonstrates the influence gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) has to accelerate development progress towards not only gender-specific targets and goals, but towards targets and goals beyond Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, Gender Equality and Empowerment of All Women and Girls.¹ Though evidence for GEWE as an accelerator of development abounds², this document provides a country case study for Gender Theme Groups (GTGs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) as they craft strategies in collaboration with national and local partners working towards the 2030 agenda. While some of the connections in this report are specific to the Moldovan context, a majority of the influence of GEWE advancement on other SDGs and on development generally is observable in any context. Data from the Moldova MAPS mission suggests that GEWE concerns should be fully recognized in future MAPS missions in order to effectively identify national SDG accelerators. Additionally, development actors seeking to maximize efficiency and effectiveness in their approach to the achievement of the 2030 agenda should consider the multiplier effect of GEWE initiatives.

¹ MAPS Mission Report, Moldova, UN, 2017

² see High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, July 2017; The World Bank, 2014; McKinsey Global Institute, 2015; Holt, Buckley, and Whelan 2008

Introduction

This document is a joint collaboration between the United Nations Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Issue-Based Coalition on Gender Equality (IBC-Gender),³ the SDG team of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Hub in Istanbul (IRH), and the Gender Theme Group (GTG) in the Republic of Moldova, under the framework of Regional United Nations Development Group (R-UNDG) in Europe and Central Asia. The purpose of this document is to foster learning and knowledge sharing between countries in the ECA region in order to support future MAPS missions and national progress towards the 2030 agenda. The main intended audience for this document is Gender Theme Groups (GTGs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) as well as national governments involved in future MAPS missions. IBC-Gender conducted an analysis of the data provided by the SDG Team of UNDP IRH from the 2017 MAPS mission in Moldova in order to ascertain and highlight the role of gender equality as an accelerator for SDGs. This is not an exhaustive report of GEWE work and impact on SDGs in Moldova. As a country case study, there will be GEWE targets and development areas not captured in this document that remain significant influencers of SDGs. This analysis should be taken as an example of one of the many ways in which GEWE initiatives can act as an accelerator for progress on SDGs.

Gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) has been proven to be an SDG accelerator.³

Achieving the SDGs as part of the 2030 Agenda is a high priority for countries around the world. Thus, leveraging SDG accelerators is essential for governments and other actors crafting policies and strategies to maximize development progress with limited resources. Gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) has been proven to be such an accelerator.⁴ **An analysis of the data from the July 2017 MAPS Mission in Moldova is a case study that confirms the significant influence gender equality-related development work would have on SDG progress in the country and indicates that GEWE work has a significant impact on development work in any country or context.**

³ The Issue-Based Coalition on Gender Equality in Europe and Central Asia is one of the six Issue-Based Coalitions under the framework of Regional UNDG and Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM). IBC-Gender is comprised of representatives from 13 UN agencies and entities coordinating work to advance gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in the region: FAO, ILO, OHCHR, UNDP, UNECE, UN Environment, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNISDR, UN Women, WFP and WHO. IBC-Gender is currently co-chaired by UNFPA and UN Women. The other five IBCs are: Adolescent and Youth; Social Protection Floors; Health and Well-Being for all at all ages; Large Movement of People, Displacement and Resilience; and SDG monitoring.

³ see High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, July 2017; The World Bank, 2014; McKinsey Global Institute, 2015; Holt, Buckley, and Whelan 2008

⁴ *ibid.*

The Case Study:

MAPS Mission in the Republic of Moldova

Since 2015, MAPS missions have aimed to monitor, assess and accelerate national progress on SDGs. A team of experts from UN agencies and entities as well as other national and international partners typically deploys to a country for several days to meet with stakeholders and assess the country's current progress on achieving SDGs. The capacity of the MAPS mission team to provide in-depth analysis of national progress and effective guidance on how governments can accelerate SDG achievement has improved steadily since 2015. As part of that improvement trend, **the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub introduced a new method of assessment on the MAPS mission to the Moldova in 2017. The method not only measured Moldova's current progress on each SDG target using nationalized indicators, but also determined the amount of influence each SDG target has on other targets.**⁵ Using international literature and national data and expertise, each target received an "influence strength" indicating the strength and scope of its connection to other SDGs.⁶ **With targets ranked by the strength of their connection to and influence on other targets, the data can be mined to reveal which SDG targets have the most influence on other targets. This reveals which SDG areas governments and other actors should strategically focus on to achieve the most accelerated progress on SDGs, and development generally.**

New methodology reveals which SDG targets have a high influence on other SDGs, allowing development actors to tailor strategies to target highly influential SDG targets for maximum impact.

Using the target influence data from the Moldova MAPS mission, IBC-Gender, set out to determine the strength GEWE work has to accelerate progress on SDGs. In order to ascertain the influence of GEWE work, IBC-Gender had to first determine which SDG targets represent GEWE in Moldova.

⁵ The method was based on international literature including UN DESA, 2015; Nature, June 2016; International Council for Science, 2017

⁶ Strength of individual connection between two targets is ranked on a scale from +3 to -3 in line with Nature (2016) (see link below). The influence of a target is a sum of the total strength of first order connections and the total strength of second order connections (i.e. connections originated from targets influenced by the target of interest). Second order connections are scored with a 0.5 coefficient to reflect diminishing influence. See Nature (2016), <https://www.nature.com/news/policy-map-the-interactions-between-sustainable-development-goals-1.20075>

An intuitive choice were the targets under SDG 5, Gender Equality and Empowerment of All Women and Girls. However, **recognizing that gender equality issues reach far beyond the remit of SDG 5, in consultation with the MAPS mission team at UNDP, IBC-Gender chose 5 targets that are strongly related to gender equality in the Moldovan context and beyond, and capture GEWE issues more holistically than the targets within SDG 5.** The resulting holistic, GEWE related targets chosen by IBC-Gender for this case study are:

Target 5.6 Sexual and Reproductive Health



Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

Target 5.4 The Value of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work



Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

Target 10.4 Fiscal, Wage and Social Protection



Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

Target 16.7 Inclusive Decision-Making



Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

Target 4.4 Skills for Employment



By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

Target Rationale

- **Targets 5.6, Sexual and Reproductive Health**, and
- **5.4, The Value of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work**, are clear choices to advance GEWE within SDG 5, Gender Equality and Empowerment of All Women and Girls.
- **Target 10.4, Fiscal, Wage and Social Protection**, has significant potential to leverage progress towards GEWE since discriminatory social protection policies and lower wages disproportionately affect women.
- **Target 16.7, Inclusive Decision-Making**, also has significant potential to advance GEWE given the significant gap in political participation between men and women and recognition that a higher proportion of women political representatives has powerful effects on gender equality and women's rights.⁷

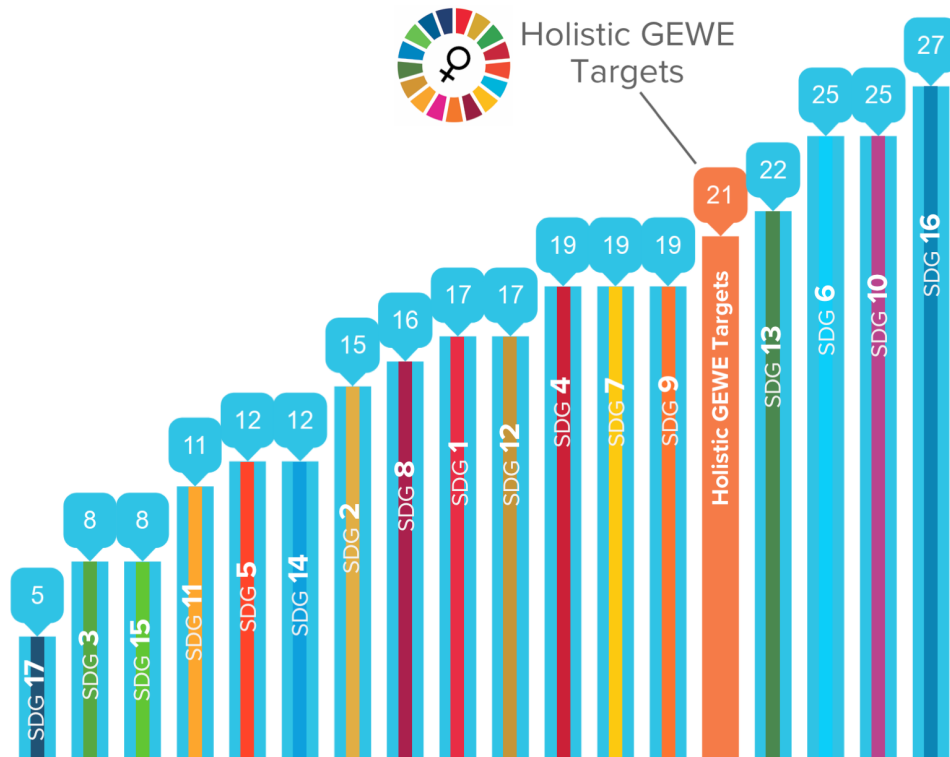
Lastly,

- **Target 4.4, Skills for Employment**, has significant potential to advance GEWE and leverage progress towards GEWE targets in the Moldovan context specifically. Many Soviet-era laws in Moldova are discriminatory, barring women from employment deemed unfit for them, such as heavy labor or public transportation jobs. As a result, women tend to obtain job training for soft skills such as accounting. However, in Moldova there is more demand for bus drivers and less demand for accountants. Discriminatory labour policies and pervasive cultural stereotypes result in labour market gender-based occupational segregation, as well as women struggling to find employment with skills not matched to market demands. Moreover, this trend reinforces the gender pay gap which has a tremendous impact on women's economic empowerment and independence throughout their lives.⁸

For these reasons, IBC-Gender chose these 5 targets to represent “GEWE” in our analysis of the data from the Moldova MAPS mission in order to ascertain the influence GEWE has on other SDGs. For the purposes of this document, this group of 5 targets will be referred to as “Holistic GEWE Targets”.

⁷ Jones 2005; Schwindt-Bayer 2006; World Bank 2014

⁸ MAPS Mission Report, Moldova, UN, 2017



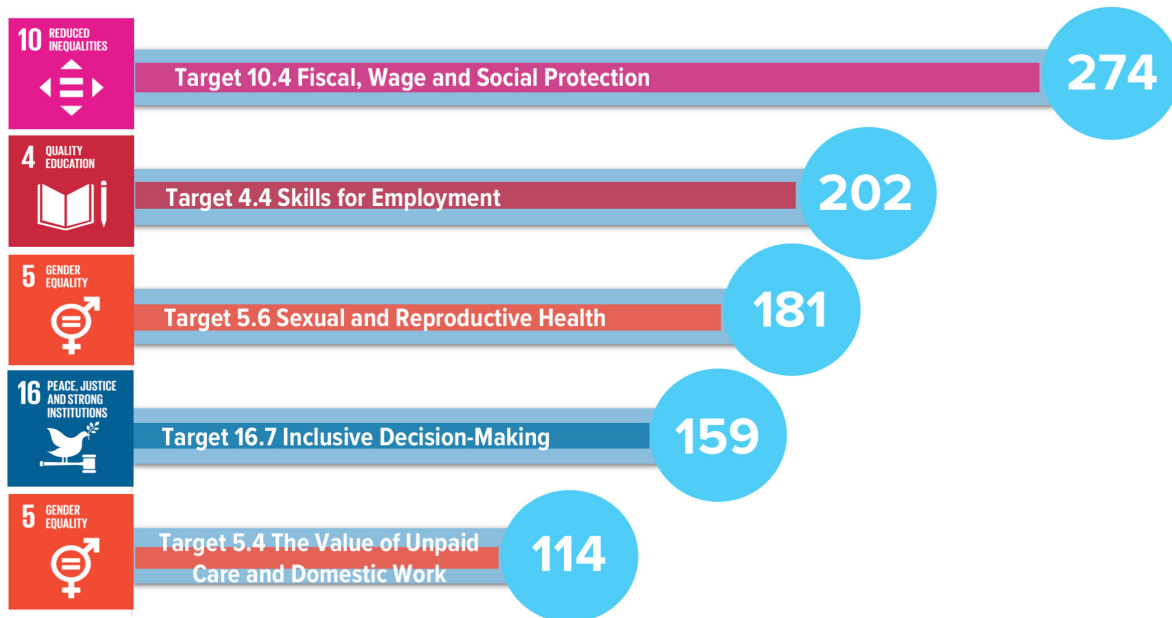
Influence Strength of all 17 SDGs and the Holistic GEWE Targets *over other SDGs*

Key Findings

Depicted here are the SDGs graphed in order of the average influence of their targets on other SDG targets in Moldova. Because the number of targets varies widely between SDGs, from 5 targets within SDG 7 to 19 targets within SDG 17, average target influence strength of an SDG provides a more accurate comparison than total influence strength of all the targets within an SDG. With an average target influence strength of 21, the 5 Holistic GEWE Targets' influence strength is significantly higher than most of the remaining SDGs. **Out of all 17 SDGs, the Holistic GEWE Target average was the 5th most influential accelerator of SDGs in Moldova.** Recognizing the high connectivity and influence of the Holistic GEWE targets to other SDG targets,

development policies in Moldova that prioritize GEWE work are more likely to achieve accelerated progress on other SDGs.

Additionally, the data suggests that the power of GEWE as a key accelerator of other SDGs may be observable in any context. To visualize the relationship between the Holistic GEWE targets and other SDGs, let's examine the SDG influence strength of each of the 5 Holistic GEWE targets individually.



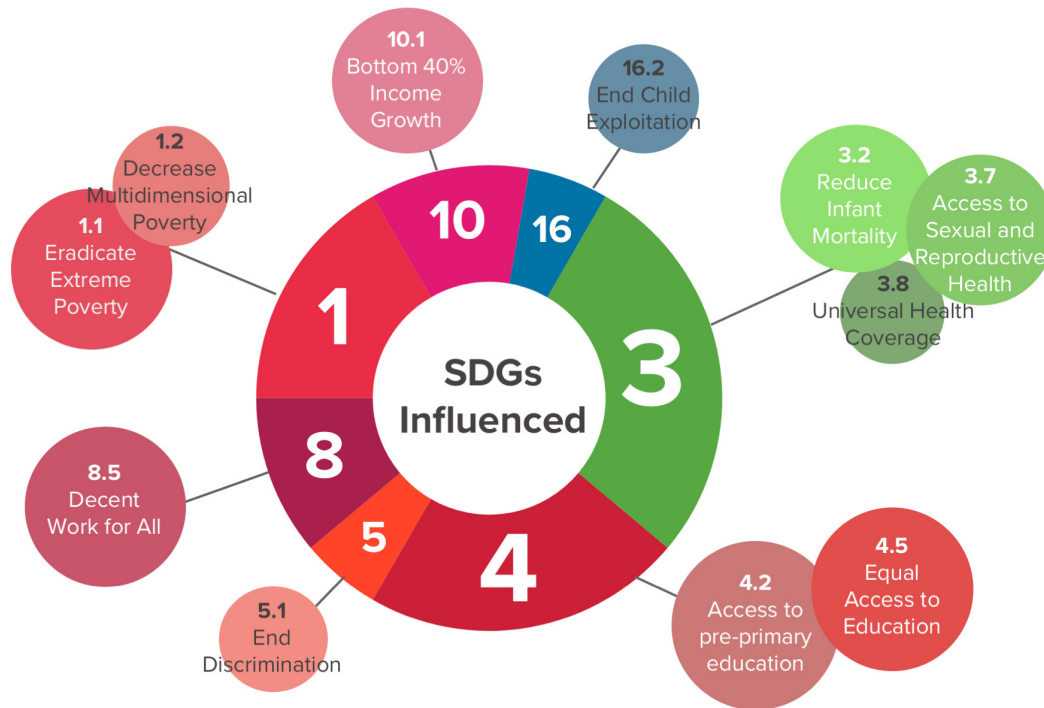
Influence Strength of the 5 Holistic GEWE Targets *over other SDGs*

Influence Strength of the Holistic GEWE Targets

The graphic above depicts the influence of the 5 Holistic GEWE Targets on other SDGs. The influence strength number indicates the number of connections to other SDG targets and the strength of those connections. Targets with higher influence strengths are strongly connected with more SDG targets and have more potential to leverage development in other SDG areas, while targets with lower influence strengths are less strongly connected with other SDG targets and may not accelerate SDG development in other areas as significantly.

The high influence scores of all 5 Holistic GEWE Targets (between 114 and 274) demonstrate the significant influence GEWE work has over other SDGs.

In contrast, the data from the Moldova MAPS mission suggests that some targets have little influence over other areas of development. Target 15.3, Combat Desertification and Restore Degraded Land and Soil, for example, has an influence strength of 13, and target 10.7, Orderly, Safe and Responsible Migration, has an influence strength of 3. These low influence strength scores indicate that these targets may not be very strong accelerators of other SDGs. On the other hand, the most influential target was 16.6, Developed Institutions, with an influence strength of 620. Such a high influence strength score indicates that work to develop institutions may have the largest multiplier effect for broader development work and achievement of other SDGs. Though the Holistic GEWE Targets were not the highest scoring influential targets, they proved to be highly influential accelerators of SDG progress.



Influence Strength
of SDG 5.4 Recognize and Value Unpaid Care and Domestic Work
over other SDGs and their targets

Influence Strength of Target 5.4: Recognize and Value Unpaid Care and Domestic Work

To get a clearer idea of the types of relationships the Holistic GEWE Targets have with other SDGs, let's take a closer look at the connections between just 1 of the Holistic GEWE Targets and other SDGs as an example. Target 5.4, Recognize and Value Unpaid Care and Domestic Work, one of the 5 Holistic GEWE Targets, has a strong influence over 11 targets within 7 other SDGs. This suggests that

policies that seek to value unpaid care work would have a multiplier effect on SDG 3, Good Health and Wellbeing, SDG 4, Quality Education, and SDG 10, Reduced Inequalities, among others.

Similar to this example, each of the 5 Holistic GEWE Targets show similarly strong influence over a diverse range of other SDGs. Though it is clear that GEWE Targets are highly influential over other SDGs, further analysis is called for to continue to present an ever clearer and more comprehensive picture of how SDGs and GEWE initiatives are connected.

Lessons Learned for Future MAPS Missions

On future MAPS missions,

- **having a dedicated mission member examining GEWE as a key accelerator** who can ensure integration of gender equality concerns throughout the mission process, from consideration of targets and development areas in the preparatory stage to leading meetings and information sessions with the Gender Theme Group (GTG), UN agencies, and other national/local government and CSO partners, including organizations representing the rights of marginalized women, during the mission would be helpful.
- If a gender expert is not a member of the core MAPS mission team, it is crucial that **GTG members and gender experts at the country level are available as core task force members to work with the MAPS mission team**. This would ensure that GEWE national priorities and related issues in the country are addressed more comprehensively in the mission and well-reflected in the mission data and final reports.
- Additionally, the **mission agenda and TOR should be adjusted according to the SDG nationalization status** and
- the MAPS Mission **agenda should have significant input from national and local stakeholders**.

Continuing to refine and improve MAPS mission methodology,

- **more international and local sources should be consulted in order to establish as many proven connections between SDG targets as possible** both prior to and during the mission.
- **Consideration of creating an international register of proven SDG target connections in any context may be strategic**. If such a resource existed, MAPS mission teams would only have to consult with local and national stakeholders before each mission to establish SDG target connections based on local expertise. This would significantly decrease the MAPS mission team's work, and would deliver more comprehensive and accurate data at the end of the mission. Additionally, it would increase standardization and thus comparability among MAPS mission analyses from different countries.



Conclusion

Gender equality and women's empowerment is a proven key accelerator of development and progress on SDGs.⁹ Data from the 2017 Moldova MAPS Mission provides a case study from the ECA region confirming the power of GEWE as an SDG accelerator. An analysis of the data suggests that concerted efforts by governments and other stakeholders to advance GEWE may have significant ripple effects on development, multiplying progress on SDGs such as 1, No Poverty, 3, Good Health and Well-Being, and 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth.¹⁰ To clarify and confirm these findings, similar analyses should be done in other countries and contexts. However, the data from the 2017 MAPS mission in Moldova confirms the conclusions of international literature: governments and other development actors seeking to maximize efficiency and effectiveness in advancing SDG progress should mainstream a GEWE perspective into their policies and incorporate targeted GEWE initiatives into their programmes.

⁹ see High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, July 2017; The World Bank, 2014; McKinsey Global Institute, 2015; Holt, Buckley, and Whelan 2008, etc.

¹⁰ MAPS Mission Report, Moldova, UN, 2017



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