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CLOSING THE GAP: AN OVERVIEW OF UNDP RESULTS IN GENDER EQUALITY IN EUROPE AND THE CIS

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FOREWORD

Gender equality, women's empowerment and the realization of women's rights are critical to sustainable human development. UNDP recognizes the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment across the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. UNDP's integrated approach tackles the connected issues of multidimensional poverty, inequality and exclusion of both women and men, while enhancing knowledge to reduce vulnerability and sustain development gains.

In the Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNDP continues its efforts to eradicate the root causes of gender inequality. In 2014, a quarter of UNDP programmes had gender equality and women's empowerment either as a primary or secondary object.

Last year, countries in the region were hit by several crises that had gendered impacts. The conflict in Ukraine led to the loss of lives and displacement of more than one million people, 70 percent of whom were women and children. The ongoing conflict in Syria, with an influx of refugees into Turkey, is affecting host communities, with women and children facing various forms of insecurity. Catastrophic floods in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina led to the loss of thousands of homes and livestock. The steep fall in remittances resulting from the economic downturn in the Russian Federation, combined with a reduced demand for labour from Central Asia and the Caucasus, slowing growth in Turkey, and continued economic stagnation in the

Western Balkans, have all affected family well-being. More women are in informal and insecure jobs. Austerity measures have cut back in public care services, particularly in health and education. Violence continued to be a key violation of women's rights. Gender stereotypes abound – at home, in the workplace, in schools and in the media. While women's presence in parliaments has risen overall, 15 countries remain below the global average of 21.1 percent.

This report, *Closing the Gap: An Overview of UNDP Results in Gender Equality in Europe and the CIS*, presents some of the key results achieved by UNDP Country Offices over the last year in response to some of these challenges. It highlights successful initiatives that have had measurable impact in a range of areas: economic empowerment, access to resources and essential services, combating discriminatory social norms, promoting participation in decision-making, and building resilience.

We acknowledge the dedication and efforts of colleagues in all Country Offices and express our appreciation to them for making this report a genuinely collaborative effort. Achieving sustainable development and gender equality takes commitment, accountability and collaboration. Although much progress has been made in the Europe and CIS region, more work needs to be done. Join us in our efforts.

Rastislav Urbensky



Manager, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are strategic goals embraced by the United Nations. For UNDP gender equality is a matter of human rights.¹ It is also a driver of sustainable human development. To achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, UNDP "prioritizes gender mainstreaming as the main strategy to achieve gender equality." It supports gender-targeted interventions and embeds gender concerns in the planning, implementation and evaluation of its programmes and projects, both at national and regional levels.

The 2014 Gender Development Index rankings of Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS) countries ranged from a high of eight in Armenia to 118 in Turkey.² UNDP aims to tackle the unequal social and institutional structures that are among the underlying causes of gender inequality.³

To this end, UNDP seeks to incorporate gender equality principles in its three priority areas: sustainable development, democratic governance and peacebuilding, and crisis response and building resilience.

Closing the Gap outlines the key results achieved by UNDP Country Offices in promoting gender equality in 2014 and the first quarter of 2015. It focuses on approaches adopted, maps results achieved and highlights selected successes.

The results are categorized along seven thematic priorities of the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017.⁴ These are: economic empowerment, access to and control over economic and environmental resources, the eradication of discriminatory social practices and gender-based stereotypes, participation in decision-making, access to basic services, the eradication of sexual and gender-based violence, and women's engagement in crisis prevention and recovery. Each of the seven sections consists of three elements: a brief background, a summarized selection of key results achieved by the Country Offices, and a closer look at a particular success, describing UNDP's role and approach.

UNDP has achieved tangible results in all thematic areas. It has increased the participation of women in the economy by skills-building and mentoring initiatives, ensuring gender parity in job creation programmes and adopting innovative approaches to stimulate growth. UNDP has promoted women's access to and control over economic and environmental resources and helped to increase the presence of women in green businesses and energy enterprises. UNDP has championed structural changes to eliminate discriminatory laws and practices in society, such as early marriage. Thanks in part to UNDP interventions women have a stronger representation in decision-making from local councils to national parliaments. This was achieved by enhancing women's leadership skills and supporting quotas for women in electoral cycles at all levels of government.

UNDP has also improved the access of women and girls to basic services by working with government institutions and women's groups and ensuring the adoption of gender-responsive laws and policies. UNDP has fostered local partnerships that led to the adoption of legislation explicitly addressing sexual and gender-based violence. Finally, UNDP is strengthening its efforts to improve women's engagement in crisis prevention and building resilience.

This report draws on information from UNDP Country Offices in the region and extensive analysis of reports and documents.⁵ All information has been validated by the Country Offices. The selection of good practices was based on the following criteria: measurable, transformative change achieved as a result of UNDP interventions, with potential for replicating and scaling up.

The report has been produced by the Regional Gender Team in the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub. It was drafted by Magdalena Randall-Schab, under the guidance of Bharati Sadasivam, Regional Gender Team Leader and Barbora Galvankova, Regional Gender Programme Specialist. Katariina Hyvärinen, intern, provided technical support. The Regional Gender Team gratefully acknowledges the collaboration and contributions of colleagues in the Country Offices, in particular their gender focal points.

As the first such overview in recent years of UNDP initiatives in the region, the report underlines the need for accelerated efforts to overcome the many challenges to gender equality in Europe and CIS through strengthened partnerships with governments, development partners and diverse civil society and women's organizations.

ADOPTED TERMINOLOGY

Gender mainstreaming

"It is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."⁶

Gender

"Refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, age, ethnic group and degree of poverty."⁷

Women's empowerment

"Women's empowerment has five components: Women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both inside and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally. The core of empowerment lies in the ability of a woman to control her own destiny."⁸

Gender equality

"Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a 'women's issue' but should concern and fully engage men as well. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development."⁹

Critical mass – 30 percent

"The figure of 30 percent forms the so-called "critical mass", believed to be necessary for women to make a visible impact on the style and content of political decision-making."¹⁰ "Once women reached a critical mass in an organization, people would stop seeing them as women and start evaluating their work as managers. This theory was originally developed more than 40 years ago by Harvard academic Rosabeth Moss Kanter in her book *Men and Women of the Corporation*."¹¹

THE WORLD UNDP WANTS¹²

Economic empowerment

Women and girls not to face discrimination and enjoy full participation in economic life. They have equal access to secure jobs and the ability to earn income and participate equitably in labour markets. The economic disparities are eradicated with the reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work between women and men.

Eradication of discriminatory social practices

The norms and culturally discriminatory practices that maintain inequality and social exclusion are transformed towards gender equality. There are no divisions between male and female responsibilities and duties based on gender in any society.

Access to basic services

Women, as a minimum, have access to the most basic health, education, and justice services. This is ensured through gender responsive policies and budget allocations.

Crisis prevention and recovery

Women and men together equally participate in designing and implementing prevention and recovery plans and strategies. Specific needs and priorities of women and men are identified, planned for and met.

Equal access to and control over economic and environmental resources

Women and girls have access to credit, natural resources such as land, water, fuel and forestry and technological innovations. Women and men equally participate in the management of natural resources and ecosystems, including climate finance.

Inclusion and participation in decision-making

Women enjoy full participation in decision-making. They are politically empowered, through “strong civil society networks to support advocacy and change by channelling their collective voices and through their equal participation in politics and in decision-making structures at all levels.”

Eradication of sexual and gender-based violence

Women and girls are free from the fear of sexual and gender-based violence. Survivors of violence are provided with multi-sector support while perpetrators are brought to justice.



Zafer Kizilkaya Photo: A fresh catch, Turkey.

OVERVIEW OF MAIN UNDP INITIATIVES FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN EUROPE AND CIS

ALBANIA	€ ♀ ⚖️ 🗑️ 🦶	ARMENIA	€ ♀ ⚖️ 🛡️	AZERBAIJAN	€ 🦶
BELARUS	€ 🦶	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	⚖️ € 🗑️ 🦶 🛡️	CROATIA	🦶
GEORGIA	€ ♀ ⚖️ 🗑️ 🛡️	KAZAKHSTAN	♀️ 🦶	KOSOVO*	€ 🦶 🛡️
KYRGYZSTAN	♀️ ⚖️ 🗑️ 🦶 🛡️	MOLDOVA	€ ♀ ⚖️ 🗑️ 🛡️	MONTENEGRO	€ ⚖️ 🦶 🛡️
SERBIA	⚖️ 🦶 🛡️	TAJIKISTAN	♀️ 🛡️	THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA	⚖️ € 🗑️ 🦶 🛡️
TURKEY	€ ♀ ⚖️ 🗑️	TURKMENISTAN	🗑️	UKRAINE	⚖️ 🗑️ 🛡️
UZBEKISTAN	€ 🗑️				

€ - Economic empowerment

♀️ - Equal access to and control over economic and environmental resources

♀️ 👤 - Eradication of discriminatory social practices and stereotypes

⚖️ - Inclusion and participation in decision-making

🗑️ - Access to basic services (healthcare, education, justice)

🦶 - Eradication of sexual and gender-based violence

🛡️ - Crisis prevention and recovery

* All references to Kosovo in this publication shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Situation in the region

Most countries in the Europe and CIS region are middle-income countries. Although the work of women and men has equally contributed to that success, women's participation in the economic sphere still remains low in comparison to men. In 2014, in Turkey and Montenegro, women's participation in the paid labour market was just 29.3 percent and 37 percent respectively, which was lower than the world average of 50.6 percent.¹³ The gender wage gap has also persisted. Azerbaijan and Tajikistan have the highest pay gaps, at 53 percent and 51 percent respectively, while Kazakhstan had the lowest at seven percent.¹⁴ In all countries in the region, women continued to work in informal and insecure jobs, and performed the bulk of unpaid and time-consuming care work.

As women's economic empowerment is a sustainable way to achieve gender equality and poverty eradication, UNDP has been investing in enhancing women's participation in the labour force in the region. UNDP has:

- Promoted policies and initiatives that increase women's employability and their involvement in the economy.
- Set quotas for a minimum 30 percent of women's participation in its vocational and entrepreneurial programmes.
- Undertaken targeted interventions to enhance women's participation in the formal labour market.
- Adopted innovative approaches to increase women's entrepreneurship and the number of women-led companies.

Countries and territories

Albania
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Georgia
Kosovo
Moldova
Montenegro
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Turkey
Uzbekistan

HIGHLIGHTS IN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

UNDP ensured that both women and men increased their vocational and entrepreneurial skills and participation in the labour market.

Country	Achievements
Albania	Of 58 potential female entrepreneurs supported by UNDP initiatives, 29 received training in medicine and forest fruit processing. A centre for processing fruits products was established as a result.
Armenia	18 women started their own agricultural enterprises as a result of UNDP initiatives.
Azerbaijan	Women comprised 154 out of 242 unemployed people who were trained at Job Orientation Centres in Baku and Sumgayit, with 120 women finding jobs as a direct result. Seed funding from the Women's Resource Centre in Sabirabad allowed seven women to set up their own businesses.
Belarus	Over 50% of UNDP-supported agro- and eco-estates are now women-owned.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	40% of the total number of jobs created by UNDP initiatives benefited women and improved their economic and social status. The majority of the women live in rural areas.
Georgia	3 cooperatives were set up by UNDP in Tsaghveri to enable rural women to obtain sustainable incomes from agriculture. In addition, 289 women and 10 men have participated in the vocational courses, which increased the self-employment rate in agriculture.
Kosovo	951 people in UNDP job skills courses (including vocational, administrative, business, service delivery, literacy and numeracy training) learned new or improved existing skills, out of whom 332 were women.
Moldova	100 women who underwent entrepreneurial training (including 50 from the breakaway Transnistrian region) established their own businesses. The network of UNDP career advisory centres supported the direct employment of 178 women, which was 69% of employment opportunities secured in 2013-2014.
Montenegro	60 out of 138 women who underwent a tailored educational programme developed plans for business start-ups. In addition, the programme introduced a credit line for women's entrepreneurship by the state development fund.
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Women headed nearly 300 out of 1,000 new private-sector small businesses created in 2014 under active labour market measures supported by UNDP.

HIGHLIGHTS IN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Turkey

96 women enhanced their technical skills and awareness of gender issues by participating in UNDP agricultural training programmes. In addition, in southeast Anatolia, UNDP supported the adoption of innovative approaches in business development, such as on-line sales and using outlet channels. In Eskişehir, 13 women who established a cooperative started using an on-line sales platform, which led to a rise in both retail and on-line sales.

Uzbekistan

In the rural communities of Karakalpakstan, women made up 45% of the beneficiaries of UNDP initiatives who got new jobs in 24 business projects.



UNDP Photo: Participants in the UNDP "Aid for Trade" project. The project supports countries in the ECIS region to improve human development through trade and private sector development. The project works both regionally and individually with 11 countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.



UNDP Photo: Khabibakhon Normirzaeva, member of the Craft Centre in Namangan, Uzbekistan, holds her "labour" book, which records her employment and enables her to enjoy social benefits.

Close-up: 24 Uzbekistan women set up a Craft Centre and producing T-shirts and embroidery

Risliq Djuraeva, from Namangan province in Uzbekistan, has a dream. She wanted to set up her own company. A place where she and other women from her village could use their skills to generate sustainable income, enjoy the benefits of the national social protection system and contribute to the pension schemes. Djuraeva was full of ideas and had an excellent network of contacts. However, she needed seed funding and a mentor to help her expand her small business and become the large-scale entrepreneur she longed to be.

In Central Asia, women make up 44 percent of the labour market¹⁵, and are mainly in family-run businesses and agricultural activities. Their earning power and full productive capacities are under-used and they do not benefit equally from economic growth.¹⁶ Women face difficulties in getting access to loans and financial resources to develop their businesses. In fact, in 2014 social and economic exclusion were two main underlying causes for the decrease in economic growth in the entire region.¹⁷

For the last six years, UNDP has been implementing the [“Aid for Trade” project](#) in 11 countries in the ECIS region. The project, funded by the Government of Finland, focuses on improving employment opportunities in the private sector and supports small and medium-sized enterprises. One of its key objectives is to enhance the economic empowerment of women.

In 2012-2014 UNDP actively sought out women from across the region with promising business ideas who needed support to implement them. This is when the plan to develop a small business into the Namangan Craft Centre was born. Djuraeva had been waiting for that moment for 20 years.

The centre opened in Uychi village in September 2012, in an old school provided by the local authority. UNDP supported Djuraeva and three other women who decided to take the development of the centre into their hands. Throughout the process, UNDP not only provided the centre with sewing equipment, but also reviewed the business plan and strategy to ensure that the new business was sustainable.

Within its first year, 88 women had joined the cooperative. This was mainly due to the excellent networking skills of its founding members, who encouraged other women from the province to join the centre. While UNDP mentoring ensured that production, quality and standards were high and respected by all centre members. Today, two years later, 24 women are directly employed by the cooperative and work on the production line of the cooperative whilst the rest can use the facilities when needed. The 24 women are “officially”

employed in the centre, which allows them to contribute to the national pension system and be recognized as paid labour.

The centre grew by building on a local initiative and existing social networks and harnessing the knowledge and skills in the local community. With minimal investment, an idea from a single woman turned into a well-run business. The success of the cooperative has made it a role model for other communities.

To further support women’s participation in the economy, UNDP is now developing quantitative research that will allow it to map the challenges faced by women in the countries in the region.¹⁸

Highlights and results

- Since the Namangan Crafts Centre was established, it has sold 5,500 units of textile garments.
- 24 women, including two women with disabilities, gained official employment in the centre.
- The average income of 88 members of the cooperative doubled.
- Sixty women were trained and acquired knowledge on how to improve businesses.
- As part of its “Aid for Trade” project UNDP helped to establish a local cooperative for jam production in Kyrgyzstan, and supported a women-led cooperative in Tajikistan that breeds, rears and sells chickens.

Watch their story [here](#).



UNDP Photo: [Asiye Kürklü](#), 47, had spent much of her adult life as a wife and mother, raising her two children. Her dream was to be self-sufficient. She, along with 45 other women from her village, applied for and received a financial grant to develop their business ideas. Today, they run a “Silk House” and a “Cocoon House” in Misi village in Turkey.

Close-up: 45 women got together, obtained a financial grant and now run their own business in Misi village in Turkey

“We give you a couple of months (...) this place cannot be managed by women.” This was the initial reaction of the inhabitants of Nilüfer Misi village, in Gümüştepe region, to a collective effort of 45 women who applied for a grant to revive the craft of silkworm-breeding and create an exemplary tourism model business. The current prosperity of their enterprise has proven the women right and the doubting villagers wrong.

In Turkey, women’s formal employment rates are half those of men.¹⁹ This is a characteristic of middle-income countries, which enjoy relatively steady growth but suffer from regional and gender disparities. In Misi village, income from agriculture was not an option as the vast majority of families do not own land any longer. That coupled with a lack

of formal job experience and secondary education means that women face considerable difficulties in securing paid jobs.

Since 2010, women in Misi village have been collectively managing a local restaurant. They had ideas on how to develop their business but lacked financial and institutional support. With help from local municipalities in 2013, 45 women organized under the Women’s Cultural and Beneficiary Association (WCBA) submitted a successful application for a “Future is in Tourism” grant. The scheme run by UNDP, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Anadolu Efes since 2013, has been supporting the implementation of local initiatives to stimulate sustainable tourism through partnerships with public and private institutions.

For the WCBA members, who for most of their lives were housewives financially dependent on their husbands, tourism seemed to be a source of a sustainable employment. The rapid expansion of the tourism sector in Turkey offers considerable opportunities for decent jobs. Misi village, with 1,200 residents and an ancient history, had great potential for attracting tourists from nearby Bursa, the fourth largest city in Turkey.

“100% Misia” project, along with two others (“Seferihisar’s Traditional Cuisine” and “Creating Women-led Sustainable Tourism Initiatives in Mardin”), were selected from 440 grant applications for financial support. The project had the potential for natural, historical and cultural sustainability. It planned to restore women’s employment by reviving the craft of silkworm-breeding that for centuries has been a traditional source of income in the region.

Asiye Kürklü, a WCBA member, admits: “We wanted to see that we can achieve something. None of us worked before. We got married, had children and raised them. Now, our children are grown up and we found ourselves in a state of limbo.” After successfully running the small local restaurant, they wanted to take it to the next level, she explains.

To expand their business, the women began to take English lessons. They also took courses on entrepreneurship and on cocoon flowers. With continuous hands-on and mentoring support from UNDP in communications, financial and project management, and with support from the grant, the women restored two traditional Nilüfer Misi houses. The first was a “Silk House,” where women breed silkworms, weave silk threads and make

niche silk products. The second, called “Cocoon House,” was a restaurant, serving traditional Turkish food.

“Nobody believed in us when we first established the association. Even the villagers told us ‘You cannot make it’. They gave us a couple of months. This is our fourth year,” says Asiye.

She explains that the project boosted women’s self-esteem and made them confident that they can do big things. “I have been enjoying producing, earning, having my own money. There was no such thing before. It is good for me.”²⁰

Customers visiting the restaurant and the two houses prove how great women’s idea was and how successful they have become. The project is sustained by income generated from the restaurant and the shop selling their high quality hand-produced silk products. Provided that the tourism sector keeps expanding so should their enterprise.

Highlights and results

- Women involved in “100% Misia” project improved their skills and competencies with several training courses provided by the Fund.
- The “Silk House” and the “Cocoon House” were restored and opened in September 2014.
- 46 women are working in the two restored houses.
- The women’s association is working closely with local municipalities and local NGOs. To date, “Future is in Tourism” grants have supported six projects.²¹

EQUAL ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Situation in the region

In the ECIS region 40 percent of the total population live in rural areas so agriculture remains an important source of income in many countries. The share of agriculture in gross domestic product in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan is 28 percent and 27 percent respectively, compared to 6.8 percent and five percent in Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation respectively.²² Women's ownership of land and its associated resources is often restricted by gender-biased statutory, customary, and religious laws.²³ In Georgia and Azerbaijan, 30 percent of the total agricultural holdings are owned by women, while in Kyrgyzstan this is only 13 percent.²⁴

In addition, while there are no explicit legal restrictions limiting women's access to formal credit, in countries such as Albania it is rare that the women can develop businesses through accessing credit.²⁵ In Moldova, women's poverty prevents them from taking loans as they have insufficient collateral to secure any credit against.²⁶ Access to financial services and resources can help women to expand their businesses, and eventually, improve their social-economic well-being.

UNDP has:

- Increased women's access to affordable and clean energy and ensured their presence in green businesses and energy enterprises.
- Integrated the gender dimension in new projects and initiatives.
- Introduced gender-sensitive indicators to ensure that the needs of women and men are met while planning resource and service allocations.

Countries and territories

Armenia
Kazakhstan
Moldova
Tajikistan
Turkey

HIGHLIGHTS IN ENHANCING EQUAL ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Country	Achievements
Armenia	UNDP championed the adoption of Gender Review Sheets for the Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme. This ensures that the principle of gender equality is considered for all potential proposals seeking approval from the National Steering Committee. This improved women's empowerment and greater realization of gender-based benefits throughout the project lifecycle.
Kazakhstan	The "Eco-Damu 2014-2024" microcredit programme currently supports women's access to resources, especially for those living in communities within designated biodiversity protection areas. The support for 38 women-led enterprises is now being discussed.
Moldova	12 women-led businesses accessed finances through a UNDP-supported leasing mechanism to invest in biomass facilities for heating.
Tajikistan	UNDP piloted "Do It Yourself" workshops on how to build solar water heating systems. 18 women (and 12 men) gained practical skills in building and maintaining the system. This greatly reduced their expenditure on energy and improved the well-being of their families.
Turkey	A joint programme on women-friendly cities, run by UNDP and UNFPA, introduced utilized local facilitators to improve women's access to natural resources and employment opportunities, and increased their visibility and social status in the community.



UNDP Photo: Participants of the DIY solar water heaters workshop in Jilikul practice how to bend a cuprum pipe, March 2015.

Close-up: 18 Tajik women build DIY solar water heaters in four days

Savri Badalova, who lives in Jilikul district in Tajikistan, 50 km from the Afghan border, used to be a housewife raising her children and relying on remittances from her husband in Russia. Today, she is considered one of the most successful women in her district. She is the only person in her village who can construct solar water heaters. She uses her skills to fix stoves and repair household appliances.

Every year almost 70 percent of Tajik society suffers from extensive shortages of electricity during the winter. Households in rural areas have access to electricity for just one to three hours a day.²⁷ They pay twice as much as urban households for an alternative fuel to cook and heat their houses during winter.²⁸ Moreover, dependency on biomass energy (such as brushwood, coal or firewood) affects the health, well-being and livelihoods of families and increases air pollution. This problem affects Tajik women in particular. Every year, approximately one million

men migrate abroad for work. Women often carry the burden of living in poverty by themselves. The number of female-headed households in Tajikistan accounts for approximately 19.4 percent.²⁹

With financial support from the Government of Japan, in 2014-2015 UNDP organized two pilot workshops to increase access to clean and affordable energy in rural communities across Tajik-Afghan cross-border areas.³⁰ [With an average of 300 sunny days](#) per year in Tajikistan, solar panels were the most efficient and affordable solution of the range of options considered. The 30 participants in the workshops learned how to build solar heating systems and secure permanent access to warm water. During winter, when the temperature drops below freezing, the ability to heat water in a few hours significantly improves living conditions.



UNDP Photo: Savri Badalova prepares a water tank for the solar water heater system during the workshop.

“There is no need for me to constantly stay at home taking care of my children, especially to warm up water for them, since we now have the solar water heater system at home that I made myself,” says Savri.

“The solar system helped me to reduce expenditure on the electricity bill and firewood needed to heat water. Moreover, my family’s hygiene and sanitation conditions have also improved,” she explains.

Savri not only learned how to build the heating solar water system but also gained practical skills to make a living. With her new skills and free time, she started investing her efforts in earning money to increase the family budget. “I am able to concentrate on helping my community and supporting those who want to install solar water heater systems,” she says. She found that her social status had risen after the training, and that she was respected by the entire local community.

INSPIRED? [Here](#) you can download a manual on how to build your own heating solar water system.

To build on these achievements, UNDP conducted a survey to identify areas that would benefit from further interventions and contribute to the growth of green opportunities. The survey identified new initiatives such as energy-efficiency schemes at local schools, supporting local agriculture by building greenhouses, establishing workshops for producing firewood pellets, and the dissemination of energy-efficient cooking stoves in Jilikul – all of which are now actively being considered.³¹

Highlights and results

- During two four-day training courses, 30 people (18 were women) gained practical skills on how to assemble the “Do It Yourself” solar water heating system (with a capacity of 40 litres) from resources and tools available locally.
- All 15 systems built during the training programmes are already in use in the households of project participants.
- Workshops on making solar water heaters were held by the local Women Support Committee that will provide further capacity to make heaters for the local community. The workshop was fully equipped by UNDP.

ERADICATION OF DISCRIMINATORY SOCIAL PRACTICES AND STEREOTYPES

Situation in the region

Complex social and cultural dynamics perpetuate gender inequality all over the world.³² In Europe and Central Asia child marriage, high birth rates among young women go hand in hand with lower educational attainments of girls. In Georgia and Tajikistan, 15-19-year-olds have significantly higher birth rates, at 46.8 and 42.8 births per 1000 women, compared to the average across the ECIS region of 28.7.³³ The educational impacts of discriminatory practices are evident in Serbia and Moldova, where 73.6 percent and 70 percent of males respectively attain secondary educational levels, compared to 58.4 percent and 44.8 percent of women.

In 2014, UNDP coordinated a number of initiatives at local and national levels to transform unequal power relations between men and women to gender equality.

Countries and territories

Albania
Georgia
Kyrgyzstan



UNDP Photo: First Global Forum on Youth Policies in Baku, Azerbaijan, October 2014.

HIGHLIGHTS IN COMBATING DISCRIMINATORY SOCIAL PRACTICES AND STEREOTYPES

Country	Achievements
Albania	UNDP engaged with a wide array of public authorities, civil society organizations, the media and members of the public to tackle gender bias and generate greater public demand for gender equality. Awareness-raising activities with men and women, youth and marginalized groups increased debate on the need to eradicate gender stereotyping and harmful social practices. In addition, UNDP undertook two studies analyzing gender bias and stereotyping evident in legal cases. The findings helped UNDP to support the Office of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, which serves as one of the human rights oversight mechanisms in Albania. In 2014, the Commissioner issued decisions to correct discriminatory practices in 32 cases, 12 ex-officio cases and 18 court cases.
Georgia	In 2013, UNDP conducted a nation-wide survey to understand public perceptions on gender in politics and business. This was followed by an evidence-based UNDP public campaign in 2014 to raise awareness and challenge gender stereotypes. The campaign increased public interest and debate on gender equality issues and culminated in the President announcing 2015 as “Women’s Year”.
Kyrgyzstan	In the 2013-2014 academic year, UNDP ran life skills courses aimed at curtailing early marriage. A pilot initiative in one high school led to an increase of over 200% (from 22 to 52) of girls finishing their formal education and gaining practical skills in Information, Communication and Technology and sewing to increase their employment opportunities. Other schools in the region are now looking at replicating this model.



UNDP Photo: Adina Urinbaeva presents a hand-made oven glove during a sewing course organized in 2013-2014, in Shark in Kyrgyzstan. She works in a small enterprise in her village.

Close-up: combating early marriage with education in Kyrgyzstan

Child [marriage](#) is one of five most under-reported crimes of gender-based violence, along with traumatic fistula in Africa, femicide of women in Central America, “bride kidnapping” in Central Asia and breast ironing in Africa.³⁴ The harmful social practice of child marriage is based on the assumption that the role of girls and women in society is primarily to rear children and serve as domestic labour.³⁵ It stems from a low value placed on girls’ education and is a form of gender-based violence and abuse of human rights that perpetuates the cycle of women marginalization and social exclusion.³⁶

Since poverty is often the main driver for early marriage, UNDP in partnership with the local community undertook a pilot project in 2013-2014 EU-funded project and in cooperation with the local

In the ECIS region early marriage affects an average of 5.8 percent of girls.³⁸ However, this figure masks wide regional variation. In countries such as Kyrgyzstan this problem affects one in five girls (20 percent).³⁹ Officially registered marriages involving girls aged 15-19 years old are highest in Albania (27.2 percent), Turkey (23 percent), and Kyrgyzstan (19.1 percent), and lowest in Kazakhstan (0.9 percent), Ukraine (2.2 percent), and Serbia (5.9 percent). In Serbia 44 percent of Roma girls aged 15-19 years were married or in union, of whom 14 percent had married before the age of 15.⁴⁰

in a high school in Barpiev, in the village of Shark in Southern Kyrgyzstan to help girls to finish their formal education before marrying.⁴¹ As a part of the

community, UNDP designed needs-driven skills and confidence-building training courses. The lessons, organized in addition to the regular curriculum, provided the students with practical skills such as sewing and computer literacy. They were meant to discourage families from marrying their daughters before their graduation. During the courses, which were open to both girls and boys, students also explored the negative consequences of early marriage such as domestic violence and its harmful effects on both physical and mental health.

Adina Urinbaeva was one of the lucky girls who obtained permission from her parents to attend the courses organized by UNDP. She relished the course: “I have a lot of free time after school and I like coming here to learn how to sew.”

When asked whether she would like to get married soon she replied “No,” laughing along with the whole class.

Parents also welcomed the courses as they provided students with good practical and economic skills. Over a period of two years, 74 girls completed their education. The number of course participants increased from 22 in 2013 to 52 a year later.

Adina and other girls not only gained practical skills to realize their future ambitions, but also fulfilled their dreams of completing their education. Now, with diplomas in hand and equipped with technical skills, they are much better prepared to secure a job and become self-sufficient.

To build on that success the local government decided to incorporate the course modules developed by UNDP in the school curriculum in other local schools. The local authorities would also provide funding for the new courses.³⁷



UNDP Photo: Adina Lutfidin Kyzy, in 2013-2014 attended sewing courses organized by UNDP. Today, she is a professional dressmaker in her village.

Highlights and results

- Prior to UNDP’s intervention there were two 11-grade classes with 50 students. Following the introduction of the course the next year the school opened with three 11-grade classes with girls in the majority – 53 out of 84 students.
- The courses increased the number of female students graduating from high school by over 200 percent (from 22 in 2013 to 52 female students a year later).
- The courses increased the self-confidence of the girls, giving them more opportunities for the future.
- Students learned how to deal with consequences of early marriage. Other topics covered included sexual and domestic violence and the kidnapping of young women for marriage, which is a socially accepted practice across Kyrgyzstan.

INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Situation in the region

Women's participation in decision-making at all levels is slowly but steadily improving in the countries of the ECIS region. The proportion of seats held by women in lower and upper houses of parliament account for 19.6 percent, which is lower than the world average 21.1 percent.⁴² In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Serbia, women's parliamentary representation is the highest in the region, at 34.1 percent and 33.2 percent respectively, while in Ukraine and Armenia it is at 9.4 percent and 10.7 percent. The low rates reinforce the barriers faced by women in participating in governance processes, thereby reducing their ability to shape local and national issues, including gender equality.⁴³

UNDP has been supporting women's participation in decision-making in a number of ways. It has:

- Successfully advocated for the adoption of quotas for women's participation across all levels of government.
- Invested in strengthening women's self-confidence and willingness to participate actively in political life, both as voters and candidates in electoral cycles.
- Strengthened women's networks to bring gender equality into policy-making and legal reforms, through support provided for women parliamentarians, gender caucuses and political parties.
- Introduced systems of e-registers of voters which allow for the collection of sex-disaggregated voter statistics.
- Designed and conducted pilot surveys on addressing gender equality related corruption risk and vulnerabilities in civil service.
- Invested in applied policy research to examine obstacles and best practice for increasing women in politics.

Countries and territories

Albania
Armenia
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Georgia
Kyrgyzstan
Moldova
Montenegro
Serbia
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Turkey
Ukraine

HIGHLIGHTS IN INCREASING INCLUSION AND ENHANCING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

UNDP helped to raise women's participation in decision-making and governance processes by encouraging national partners to adopt a minimum quota of 30 percent in all levels of government.

Country	Achievements
Albania	UNDP supported the introduction of a 50% gender quota in the electoral code for municipal councils in 2015.
Armenia	87 out of 133 women candidates, beneficiaries of UNDP empowerment projects, were elected as heads of their communities or as local council members.
Georgia	Of 95 local women councillors who received training 32 were re-elected. UNDP supported the introduction of e-registration systems for voters. Due to UNDP advocacy, the Central Election Commission started to collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data.
Moldova	UNDP supported the increase of women candidates in party lists, which helped to increase the overall share of women elected to parliament to 21%. UNDP supported the introduction of e-registration systems for voters, which allows for the collection of sex-disaggregated voter statistics, which will identify disenfranchised groups of women to support through empowerment initiatives.
Montenegro	UNDP advocated for the introduction of gender quotas for candidates in the two main political parties and worked with other parties to increase the number of women candidates.

UNDP helped women to gain the self-confidence and willingness to participate in political life by supporting women's networks and enhancing their knowledge and skills

Country	Achievements
Armenia	Of 1,180 women who received training and developed their skills in politics and governance, 518 have been elected or became active community members. In addition, more than 900 women in local government, activists and journalists gained skills in participatory governance, gender equality and leadership after undergoing a UNDP development course.
Georgia	Through UNDP initiatives, 179 women living in rural communities gained knowledge and skills in participatory governance and gender equality.
Moldova	UNDP supported 20 projects to strengthen women's engagement with their local communities. As a result, 11 newly established community organizations are led by women.

HIGHLIGHTS IN INCREASING INCLUSION AND ENHANCING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Montenegro UNDP trained 18 women in how to increase women's participation in parliamentary parties. These trainers conducted grass-roots training courses for 324 female political candidates throughout Montenegro, increasing their knowledge on democratic governance and inclusive government.

Serbia UNDP supported positions of Roma coordinators in more than 50 municipalities across the country, which enabled direct communication between local authorities and Roma communities. This has improved data collection at the local level by capturing over 1,500 narratives in Roma settlements, informing policy-making for social inclusion.⁴⁴

Regional initiatives

Countries	Achievements
Albania, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Ukraine	UNDP designed a survey methodology addressing gender equality related corruption risk and vulnerabilities in the civil service to identify underlying gender inequality and participation trends. This helped to identify transparency gaps that affect women's careers; targeted interventions are now being developed to address them.
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	UNDP increased inclusivity in armed forces and strengthened regional cooperation on gender equality in the defense and security sector through its South Eastern Europe Small Arms Control (SEESAC) programme. UNDP supported the design and roll out of two <u>NATO-accredited regional gender training</u> programmes. A total of 33 military representatives, from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were trained to become NATO-certified gender specialists. They now ensure the better integration, retention and professional development of women in the armed forces.



UNDP Photo: Narine Geghamyan (left) was the only woman elected to the local council (*avagan*) in her constituency in the Kamaris community of Armenia in 2013.

Close-up: 84 women elected to local government across Armenia

Complex webs of social, political and economic factors affect women's ability to participate in politics and public life. Even in countries that have ratified a number of legal agreements and passed electoral laws stipulating quotas for the participation of women in elections, women's representation in decision-making and governance can be significantly low. In Armenia, for example, only 534 of 6164 local council (*avagan*) representatives are women, accounting for no more than 8.6 percent of all representatives.

To address this issue UNDP looked at available solutions which could help to increase the percentage of women actively involved in the

decision-making in Armenia. Based on the assumption that participation in decision-making is not merely a technical issue, and adopting political quotas is not sufficient, UNDP in partnership with the local authorities has been implementing a joint EU-UNDP project aimed at increasing women's participation in local democracy. The initiative provided comprehensive training to women who had ambitions to stand in local government elections and support throughout their term in exercising their public duties.

Narine Geghamyan, a world champion of Karate-do and a teacher, wanted to engage more meaningfully in the life of her community. Encouraged by her

local community, Narine, and 112 other women, attended a pre-election training organized by UNDP during which they learned about mechanisms of local governance. In 2013, Narine was elected to her local council in the Kamaris community. Although excited by her new role, Narine initially felt anxious about the level of responsibility that her new status brought. She doubted whether she could fulfil her new public duties and responsibilities. “Immediately after being elected I felt unprepared and lacking relevant knowledge,” she says.

“When you are the sole woman representative in a community, and you need your voice to be heard and considered, you had better be knowledgeable and very prepared.”

Participation in the UNDP Leadership School and in thematic training on democratic leadership, mechanisms of democracy, gender-sensitive planning and gender budgeting helped her to gain knowledge and build the competencies she required.

This support allowed her to make her presence felt in policy-making processes. Narine brought a number of concerns to the local government body, including issues of street lighting, garbage disposal and road maintenance. Thanks to her efforts, many of these issues received attention and solutions. Even though she was successful, Narine faced serious tensions in the political party to which she belonged, making her consider resigning her post as council member.

Support of her community and the mentoring provided by UNDP, including an opportunity to meet UNDP Administrator Helen Clark, encouraged Narine to pursue her dream.

Today, Narine has confidence in her skills and is positive about the future: “In five years, I see myself as a knowledgeable and competent local politician, and, why not, the head of our community.” She enjoys her active participation in democracy, and acts as a much needed role model for other aspiring women.⁴⁵ Cooperation with representatives of the central government, parliament and regional authorities has become part of her everyday reality. The experience of Narine proves that in addition to political quotas, it is important to invest in capability and mentoring to help women to assume public duties.

Highlights and results

- Of 133 women candidates who participated in training organized by UNDP, 87 were (re)elected to local government bodies.
- Since 2012, the project increased the capacities of 1,180 women: civil servants in local government and civic activists, through training in participatory processes, leadership, local governance and gender equality.
- As a part of the project, UNDP launched a public debate on the role of women and men, which has been discussed on talk shows, in [documentaries](#) and extensively by [social media communities](#).



UNDP Photo: Trainers during an outdoor exercise as part of the Gender Training of Trainers Course, February 2015, Belgrade, Serbia.

Close-up: raising awareness as a first step to increase inclusivity in armed forces

Low participation of women in the decision-making processes, policy creation and implementation in the military, as well as low awareness of gender issues in general, diminishes the chances of women's priorities and needs being addressed in the armed forces. Although the security sector has adopted several agreements endorsing gender equality, such as the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, women in the Western Balkans make up just 5.5 and nine percent of the armed forces and are rarely represented in the top ranks, particularly in command and management positions. "Gender equality is only notionally accepted in Balkan societies, especially in professions such as the Armed Forces," says Honour Guard Commander of the Montenegro Armed Forces and Regional Gender Trainer Capt. Predrag Lucic.

Inspired by the results of the project, Women in Police, implemented in 2010-2012 by UNDP, the ministries of defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia approached UNDP SEESAC

for assistance in improving the recruitment and retention of women in their armed forces. Legal and institutional frameworks are essential for increasing the participation of women in defence and security policy-making and implementation. Yet, to effect real change, organizational culture needs to be transformed in parallel to strengthening these frameworks.

In 2014 and 2015 in partnership with the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM), SEESAC organized two regional "training the trainer courses" on what steps should be undertaken to increase the recruitment and retention of women in the army. In addition, a Regional Network of Gender Trainers comprising of 33 trainers was established.

"We should use the full potential of our own national capacities and choose the best suitable persons to be soldiers and officers. We should be recruiting from 100 percent of the population instead of only looking among the male portion,"

said Commander Jan Dunmurray after the course organized by UNDP SEESAC and NCGM. “We now see the gender perspective as an operational tool that will improve our operations,” he adds.

The newly trained trainers discussed the different needs and priorities of women and men and how addressing them would help attract and retain women within the armed forces. “As gender trainers we are working on a difficult and responsible task – to improve gender awareness, and teach others how to integrate a gender perspective in our Armed Forces,” explains Lucija Gaspar, Second Lieutenant in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the first two years of its operation, the network delivered briefings and seminars on gender equality to 3,200 officers and soldiers in the four Armed Forces. Gender trainers from Montenegro organized seven basic gender-awareness workshops for 315 soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers. Their colleagues in Serbia initiated the development of a Gender Training Manual and delivered basic and advanced gender-awareness courses to 100 cadets and 17 members of the teaching staff. In one of the military barracks in Bosnia and Herzegovina where women were previously not appointed to guard duties, a trainer advocated for the equal participation of women. The Ministry of Defence and Army of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia organized a series of briefings for units throughout the country, which included more than 1,100 officers and soldiers, and more are planned during 2015.

Lt. Col. Straso Stojcevski from the Ministry of Defence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, who is leading the efforts of gender trainers in his country, said that his involvement in

the project gave him a much better understanding of the importance of integrating the gender perspective into the military and knowledge of how to do it. “We made good progress in particular in strengthening gender mechanisms, improving working conditions and infrastructure for women, strengthening women’s professional skills, and engaging women in all military tasks. The most important thing is that gender awareness has been raised to a higher level among the members of the ministry and the Army, in particular among the leadership,” he concludes.

The UNDP initiatives have led to greater appreciation of the role of women in the security sector. Support for the Regional Network of Gender Trainers comes as part of a wider Gender Equality in the Military initiative from UNDP SEESAC running in the Western Balkans. This facilitates regional cooperation on gender equality in defense, and provides support for the institutionalization of gender equality mechanisms and the reform of human resources policies and practices, as well as raising overall gender awareness.⁴⁶

Highlights and results

- 33 representatives from the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans were trained as trainers.
- 3,200 officers and soldiers in the four Armed Forces gained knowledge how to embrace gender equality principle in the armed forces.
- Seven Regional Meetings of Gender Equality Mechanisms in Ministries of Defense and Armed Forces in the Western Balkans were organized.
- The project contributed to the institutionalization of gender equality mechanisms; the first four Gender Focal Points were appointed in the Armed Forces in Montenegro.

ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES: HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION AND JUSTICE

Situation in the region

Access to basic services, such as health, education and justice, is crucial for survival and exit from poverty.⁴⁷ Although many countries in the ECIS region have achieved the Millennium Development Goals,⁴⁸ women still face a number of difficulties in accessing basic health services.

In Kyrgyzstan and Armenia, the maternal mortality rate is 71 and 60 women per 1000 births respectively, compared to the Europe and Central Asia average of 28.7 per 1000. Women's access to justice is limited, which in part stems from their lack of legal recognition as well as the cultural and social perception of women's legal rights. UNDP has:

- Supported the integration of the gender dimension in the provision of public services.
- Improved services delivered to women with disabilities.
- Enhanced the expansion of women's access to health services.
- Increased access to justice for women.

Countries and territories

Albania
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Georgia
Kyrgyzstan
Moldova
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Turkey
Turkmenistan
Ukraine
Uzbekistan



Sarah P. Murphy/UNDP: Mirsade Salihu (right) is a member of a local Roma/Ashkali/Egyptian group "Community Changemakers", which provides educational support to members of a local community in Kosovo.

HIGHLIGHTS IN INCREASING ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

UNDP has been monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and has supported the revision of existing legislation.

Country	Achievements
Georgia	UNDP helped to draft and adopt the Gender Equality National Action Plan for 2014-2016.
Turkey	As a result of gender-based budgetary training in Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality 15 objectives, 32 goals, 56 strategies and 68 indicators for gender equality were introduced into the municipalities' strategic plans and programmes. A gender equality unit was established to monitor and evaluate municipal strategic plans and programmes to tackle gender bias.

UNDP improved services delivered to women with disabilities.

Country	Achievements
Turkmenistan	UNDP partnered with the Deaf and Blind Society to provide services to increase the leadership and ICT skills of 140 women with disabilities, improving their access to public services and knowledge.

UNDP enhanced the expansion of women's access to health services.

Country	Achievements
Kyrgyzstan	As a result of UNDP initiatives, 97 percent of households with pregnant women and 93 percent with children under five were provided with mosquito bed nets to protect them from malaria.
Ukraine	UNDP ensured that gender equality principles and measures to combat gender-based violence were integrated into the National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS to improve access to critical medical treatment by women at risk.
Uzbekistan	UNDP supported the provision of free universal medical treatment, which led to a 20% increase in the number of patients receiving antiretroviral therapy for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. An additional 2631 men, 3677 women, 2398 boys and 1383 girls received treatment.

UNDP increased access to justice for women

Country	Achievements
Albania	Strategic litigation supported by UNDP resulted in greater access for women to international judicial or quasi-judicial mechanisms.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	UNDP has increased access to free legal assistance for survivors of sexual and domestic violence, including survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, through measures to protect them and witnesses before, during and after trials.

HIGHLIGHTS IN INCREASING ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

Georgia	As a result of UNDP advocacy, the High School of Justice curriculum for the judiciary incorporated gender equality principles to provide future judges with an in-depth understanding of gender inequality issues.
Moldova	UNDP advocated for the inclusion of gender aspects in the guidelines for prosecutors investigating cases of torture so that the judiciary understand the wide range of actual and potential torture of women when it assesses prosecutions and supports survivors.
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	UNDP worked with the Academy for the Training of Judges and Public Prosecutors to develop a training curriculum on gender-sensitive approaches to domestic violence cases. This was used to train 126 appellate court judges and public prosecutors. To help convey the challenges more directly, UNDP filmed two short video testimonies by domestic violence survivors who related the obstacles they faced in securing justice. One case is from a <u>civil court</u> , the other from a <u>criminal court</u> .
Uzbekistan	UNDP supported the introduction of an “ <u>e-Sud</u> ” (<u>e-court</u>) application process, which improved women’s access to justice. This resulted in 89% of alimony applications by women being successful, with alimony payments being awarded by the courts.



Levent Kulu Photo: Strawberry fields in Turkey.



UNDP Photo: The closing of the “16 Days of Activism” campaign, a human ribbon symbolizing commitment to end gender-based violence. Filip II Square in Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, December 2014.

Close-up: New law and training for judges improves protection for domestic violence survivors in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

“We were together for 15 years. During our marriage I suffered from constant psychological violence. I thought it was something that everyone went through but nobody talked about,” says a survivor of domestic violence in Skopje.⁴⁹ “Later, psychological violence turned into physical violence that he called a moment of weakness.” She often wondered whether she had done something to provoke him. After she ended her marriage all these attacks only increased.

Violence against women is pandemic. In the Europe and CIS region, 29 percent of women suffer from physical and psychological violence from their intimate partners.⁵⁰ Survivors of domestic violence face especially difficult paths to justice. Police and

judges often discourage legal action when there are no witnesses other than the survivor and the perpetrator. Material evidence is often unavailable, especially in the case of non-physical violent acts. Police and other institutions responsible for responding to complaints often fail to undertake investigations. In part, this is the result of a lack of laws and procedures that would translate legal provisions into practical actions.⁵¹ But it also stems from widespread preconceptions that domestic violence is not a “real” crime but rather a marital matter to be settled within the family home.

In many countries in the ECIS region, UNDP is supporting efforts both to improve legislation and to change social attitudes that condone domestic violence as a “family affair”. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNDP has been working to

enhance national efforts to prevent domestic violence and protect survivors. The efforts begun in 2012, with funding support from the Netherlands, bore fruit with the adoption of a law on domestic violence that took force in January 2015.

The new law is the country's first dedicated to domestic violence. The law contains some important new departures. It places domestic violence in the broader context of gender-based violence and mandates greater promotion of gender equality, starting from the earliest years, as part of prevention. It requires social welfare and healthcare workers to report suspected cases of domestic violence and imposes sanctions on those who fail to act. It broadens the legal definition of gender-based violence to cover acts beyond purely physical violence, including economic violence and stalking. Moreover, it enacts new provisions that empower police and judges to take urgent measures to protect women at high risk of violence, including the preventive removal of the perpetrator from the family home.

The new law builds on lessons learned from joint work by UNDP and UN Women to assess the degree of gender bias in court rulings in cases of domestic violence. This analysis showed that judges often ruled based on prejudices rather than putting the rights of the survivors first.

To address this problem, UNDP and UN Women worked with the Academy for the Training of Judges and Public Prosecutors to develop a training curriculum on a gender-sensitive approach to domestic violence cases. This curriculum was used to train 126 appellate court judges and public prosecutors. To help convey the challenges more directly, UNDP filmed two short video testimonies

by domestic violence survivors who related the obstacles they faced in seeking justice. One case is from a [civil court](#), the other is from a [criminal court](#).

Combined with advocacy efforts by UN agencies, including the "[16 Days of Activism](#)" campaign in November-December 2014, the new law is having an impact. Even before it took force, the Ministry of Interior announced that reported incidents of domestic violence were 25 percent higher in 2014 than in 2013⁵², which is attributable to a higher public awareness of the issue and the new protection offered to survivors. Since the beginning of 2015, judges are showing increasing readiness to use the preventive measures codified in the new law.⁵³ In two cases, judges have imposed protection measures against potential perpetrators lasting a full year (the previous practice was three months, even in extreme cases). In one case, a 34-year-old man from Ohrid who assaulted his wife and threatened to kill her was not only forbidden from contacting her but was also required to undergo treatment for alcoholism and a mental disorder.

The battle is far from over, however. UNDP is currently helping national partners to draft the three bylaws for the new law to ensure that its provisions are put into effect, and is working with UN Women to draft a protocol so that the many actors involved – police, prosecutors, judges, social welfare workers, healthcare staff and civil society organizations – work together to address domestic violence. The longer-term goal is to advance the ratification of the "Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence". The convention – the "gold standard" for gender-based violence – was signed in 2011 but still awaits ratification.⁵⁴

ERADICATION OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Situation in the region

Awareness of gender-based violence is rising in the countries of Europe and CIS region, although the number of incidents still remains high. Approximately 29 percent of women in the ECIS region suffer from sexual or/and intimate partner violence.⁵⁵ In Serbia, over 54 percent of women have experience family violence in their lifetime⁵⁶, while in Turkey, since the age of 15, 39 percent of ever-married women have experienced physical violence, 15 percent have experienced sexual violence and 44 percent have experienced psychological violence.⁵⁷ Only one in ten women who experience violence seeks help or reports acts of violence to the relevant authorities.⁵⁸

As the eradication of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) can accelerate the well-being of women, families, communities and nations⁵⁹, UNDP has been supporting governments to eradicate the scourge in a number of ways. UNDP has:

- Encouraged national and local partners to develop and implement legislative frameworks to strengthen national laws, strategies and action plans to eradicate SGBV.
- Supported institutions to improve their capacity to respond to and protect survivors of SGBV.
- Worked to raise awareness of the entry points to prevent and address SGBV.

Countries and territories

Albania
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Croatia
Kazakhstan
Kosovo
Kyrgyzstan
Montenegro
Serbia
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Gender-based Violence

"Gender-based violence (GBV) is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men (...) Gender-based violence, which impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms under general international law or under human rights conventions, is discrimination within the meaning of Article 1 of (CEDAW)."

"...any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."⁶⁰

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE ERADICATION OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

UNDP supported the strengthening of national laws, strategies, action plans to eradicate sexual and gender-based violence.

Country	Achievements
Belarus	UNDP analyzed the challenges related to SGBV, culminating in a report providing practical recommendations on how to prevent and curtail sexual and gender-based violence and human trafficking, especially in relation to irregular migrants. A concrete action plan is being discussed in partnership with local partners.
Croatia	UNDP supported the Government with evidence and legal analysis to draft and adopt "The Law on rights of victims of sexual violence during armed aggression on Republic of Croatia in Homeland War" (adopted in May 2015, entered into force in June 2015). This is the first law in the region to provide civilian victims of sexual violence in armed conflict with a comprehensive set of reparation measures: medical and psycho-social rehabilitation, financial compensation, legal aid and symbolic acts of reparation. UNDP also supports the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs to implement mechanisms assessing the eligibility criteria for the status of a survivor of sexual violence in armed conflict.
Kazakhstan	UNDP contributed to the incorporation of the gender dimension in the amendments to the Law on Domestic Violence that was enacted in February 2014.
Kosovo	UNDP supported the finalization of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Trafficking of Human Beings 2014-2019.
Kyrgyzstan	UNDP has supported the drafting of a law combating domestic violence (to be adopted in 2015). With UNDP support new mechanisms of primary aid for and rehabilitation of survivors of violence were developed and trialled successfully on a local scale.
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	With UNDP support, the Government adopted the Law on Prevention and Protection of Domestic Violence.

UNDP strengthened the capacities of institutions in responding to and protecting survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

Country	Achievements
Albania	UNDP helped to develop an online tracking system for domestic violence to analyze incidents and direct amendments to relevant legislation as required. The number of reported cases increased from 400 in 2013 to over 900 in 2014.

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE ERADICATION OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Bosnia and Herzegovina	UNDP increased access to free legal assistance for women in 2014 particularly survivors of sexual and domestic violence.
Croatia	UNDP prepared and ran a pilot project to provide psycho-social support to 24 survivors of sexual violence in conflicts in post-Yugoslav space in 1990's.
Montenegro	UNDP worked with partners to provide survivors of domestic violence with an effective protection system which, once implemented, resulted in reported cases tripling in one year (2013- 2014), as more women came forward and sought protection.
Serbia	In line with the Istanbul Convention, UNDP supported women's NGOs as specialist service providers of an SOS helpline for survivors, resulting in more than 5000 women receiving specialized assistance in 2014.

UNDP helped to change public perceptions of violence against women

Azerbaijan	In 2014, UNDP organized a range of advocacy campaigns and innovative initiatives during the 16 Days of Activism campaign. For instance, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, during a Fashion Week in Skopje in 2014 , UNDP supported two young local fashion designers to design T-shirts with the message, "Let's end violence against women and girls now!" This initiative aimed to raise awareness of gender-based violence and engage directly with men and boys. In Albania, UNDP advocated for the adoption of the National Action Plan involving Men and Boys as Partners to Women and Girls in Challenging Gender Stereotypes and Combating GBV – as part of the United Nations Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign. Over 1000 young boys and girls participated in the campaign, with over 400,000 more involved through social media, all highlighting the fact that gender-based violence is not only a women's and girls' issue.
Albania	
Kosovo	
Montenegro	
Serbia	
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	



UNDP Photo: UNDP in Albania marks the International Day to End Violence against Women, November 2014.



Close-up: tackling violence against women in Serbia through multi-sectoral cooperation

Logo of a project promoting multi-sectoral cooperation to tackle violence against women in Serbia. Each finger represents one of the five sectors (health care system, education, social and family, legal protection, police, and the judiciary) responsible for providing help to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

In Central Serbia the rate of a domestic violence is 54.2 percent. In three out of four cases, the perpetrator is a current or former partner of the survivor. As only in one in ten cases is reported to state authorities, the vast majority of perpetrators are never charged with their crimes. This is compounded by the fact that state institutions tasked with providing protection are not always capable of addressing survivors' needs.

In 2013, the Serbian Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy adopted the "Multi-sector Cooperation – Institutional Response to Violence against Women".⁶¹ The protocol was developed by UNDP, UN Women and UNICEF, in partnership with the Serbian authorities, especially the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy. It aims to strengthen the coordination of state institutions to prevent and eliminate violence against women and promote policies to combat gender-based violence. The protocol provides guidance on improving

cooperation among professionals in key public sectors: health care, education, social and family legal protection, police and the judiciary, to enhance multi-sector support and the protection of survivors. This new approach is designed to break down barriers between individual services, centralize the available resources for response and embed the new policy framework to achieve an integrated service response to incidents of GBV.⁶²

UNDP supported the development and implementation of a national strategy for preventing and eliminating violence against women in family and in intimate partner relationships (2011-2015), which set out protocols for cooperation in cases of violence against women in family.

Throughout 2013-2014, UNDP and UN Women worked at a local level to ensure the full implementation of this policy framework by providing specialized training in 15 towns across

Serbia. The training focused on two key aspects of GBV responses: how to improve service provision to GBV survivors, and how to challenge service providers' stereotypes and prejudices towards survivors of violence.

One [training course](#) in South Serbia revealed that personal beliefs and opinions had affected the selection of appropriate intervention strategies and hindered the overall service response. Professional service providers admitted facing challenges in empathizing with survivors of violence who do "not fit" their idea of "victims" (e.g., survivors who do not have visible injuries, do not seem depressed, are emotionally flat or seem too angry or are themselves perpetrators of crimes such as robbery), with their response determined by their personal rather than professional judgment.

In one instance, a social worker admitted that in the past she had initially acted on her own prejudices. A case she outlined centred on an abusive husband who had tortured his wife both physically and psychologically for years and then started to sexually abuse their daughter. The mother, instead of protecting her daughter, also turned violent towards the girl. The social worker said: "We (the colleagues who worked on the case) struggled with the idea that this wife/mother was a "victim" herself.

"Personally, I could not accept that she was a victim, as her position did not seem to be that bad. Now, I see that we prejudged her without proper understanding of her position."

During the training the social worker came to understand that the woman was destroyed and disempowered by her own long-term abuse.

She realized how being exposed to intimate partner violence had transformed her into a dysfunctional parent.⁶³

The development of the protocol, combined with the training courses, ensured that service providers gained a thorough understanding of how inter-service cooperation can improve responsiveness and provide survivors with more effective help. The training also allowed them to reflect on their own personal behaviour and actions and deepen their understanding of the complexities of GBV.

For more impact, UNDP in partnership with B92 Foundation, part of one of the largest regional TV stations, set up a ["web-one-stop-shop-info-centre"](#) with comprehensive information on how to tackle violence against women, with annual visits to the website in excess of 30,000. UNDP also established a professional SOS helpline for survivors of domestic violence, which is run by 11 NGOs across the country. More than 5,000 women use this helpline every year.

A combined response to all these elements underpinned the success of UNDP and its partners in improving the protection and support provided to victims of violence. In 2013-2014, criminal charges against perpetrators of GBV initiated by social services doubled. Survivors are now more confident and willing to report crimes and to seek help and justice. This demonstrates that social change is possible as a result of joint and comprehensive interventions.⁶⁴

[Stay inspired by UNDP in Serbia here and here. Download the protocol here.](#)

CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

Situation in the region

Countries in the Europe and CIS region are vulnerable and exposed to natural hazards. In 2014, massive floods hit Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, affecting over million and a half people. In addition, heightened political tensions and security challenges were observed in the region. Over a million people fled the fighting in Eastern Ukraine, while communities in Southeast Turkey have been affected by the conflict in neighbouring Syria.

While crises impact entire communities, they affected women and men are in differently ways. Women are usually at greater risk. Their vulnerability is not due to differences in physical characteristics but is a reflection of women's different roles and responsibilities and their exclusion from decision-making processes. For UNDP, harnessing the strengths and capacities of women is integral to building individual, institutional and societal resilience. This can be achieved by ensuring that women are engaged in all stages of formal and informal peace and recovery processes and that their priorities inform the agenda for conflict prevention, early recovery from crises, durable peace, resilience and sustainable development.⁶⁵ UNDP has ensured that women's priorities inform the agenda for crisis prevention and recovery in the region by:

- Setting a minimum quota for female participation in disaster risk recovery plans.
- Incorporating the gender dimension during early recovery efforts.
- Supporting the advancement of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and women's participation in peacebuilding efforts.

Countries and territories

Armenia
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Georgia
Kosovo
Kyrgyzstan
Moldova
Montenegro
Serbia
Tajikistan
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Ukraine

HIGHLIGHTS IN CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

UNDP introduced gender-sensitive indicators in disaster risk reduction (DRR)⁶⁶ and climate mitigation plans and solutions.

Country	Achievements
Armenia	UNDP supported women-headed farms through the implementation of climate risk mitigation plans in Tavush and Vayots Dzor. Women have started diversifying their agricultural activities and know how to reduce the consequences of climate change on production.
Kyrgyzstan	UNDP integrated the gender dimension in the design of climate-resilient pasture management techniques in the Suusamyr Valley. This resulted in reliable access to irrigation water for 932 people in Kojomkul village, 40 percent of whom were women, allowing them to breed livestock safely.
Kyrgyzstan Moldova Tajikistan	UNDP worked with partners to incorporate a gender dimension in DRR plans and policies through; e.g., quotas for a minimum of 30 percent of women members of DRR committees.
Georgia Kosovo	UNDP assisted in the revision of the National Plans of Action for DRR to ensure that they addressed gender issues. In Kosovo, UNDP conducted assessments culminating in the publication of a <u>report</u> that identified critical success factors for building the resilience of women during disasters, such as overcoming “cultural” vulnerability factors, including women’s inability to swim and climb, their psychological unpreparedness, and their responsibility of caring for the most vulnerable members of the family.
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	UNDP conducted analysis of gender trends and opportunities to mitigate climate change. Following that, UNDP developed a <u>report</u> with practical recommendations and indicators on gender and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

UNDP incorporated gender into flood recovery programmes

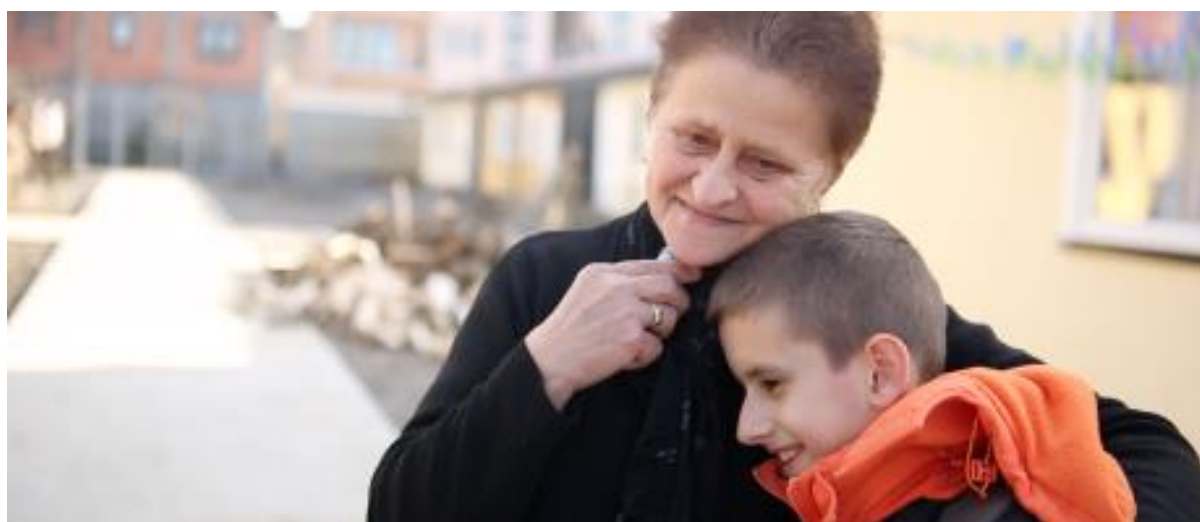
Country	Achievements
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Following massive floods in May 2014, UNDP reconstructed 310 homes of women-headed households and set up and fully equipped two mobile health clinics to secure access to obstetrics/maternal care for pregnant women and women in labour. A total of 88 public institutions, including one-stop-shops, were reconstructed, providing a significant number of women with public sector jobs in schools, health care and centres for social work. This helped to normalize access to services.
Serbia	UNDP incorporated a strong gender component in the selection criteria for employment-creation programmes that increased women’s access to safe and productive livelihoods. A third of all jobs created were filled by women.

HIGHLIGHTS IN CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

UNDP supported the advancement of the [UNSC Resolution 1325](#), women's participation in peacebuilding efforts and provided help to people in need in conflict situations.

Country	Achievements
Georgia	UNDP ensured women's participation in peacebuilding efforts by providing a platform for women to voice their priorities during reconciliation processes.
Ukraine	UNDP supported recovery and helped internally displaced people in Eastern Ukraine, with priority given to pregnant women and families with children during the distribution of humanitarian aid.

Several UNDP Country Offices contribute to advancing the agenda of UNSCR 1325: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.



UNDP Photo: 60-year-old Netka Džordži with her grandson. The Džordžić family is one of 28 families in Alžirac whose possessions were washed away by floodwaters in May 2014 and whose homes remained under water for 10 days. With EU support, her house was rebuilt by UNDP in December 2014.



UNDP Photo: Floods hit Bosnia and Herzegovina, Domaljevac Šamac May, 2014.

Close-up: one month after “the flood of the century” in Bosnia and Herzegovina, local companies are back in action

Founded over 40 years ago, the Premier Limited Company in Dobož in North Bosnia and Herzegovina, had an established reputation in the textile industry. At its peak, it employed nearly 550 workers. The outbreak of war in 1992 spelled ruin for the company for almost two decades, until Rankica Panić took it over in 2012. Under her management the company started producing garments again and employed 60 workers. It was supposed to be the dawn of a new era. However, Premier’s success suffered an abrupt setback in May 2014 when floods hit Bosnia and Herzegovina and neighbouring Serbia.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the floods affected one million women, girls, men and boys, destroying infrastructure, businesses, livelihoods and agriculture. A swift response and close cooperation among the UN agencies, the national authorities, the European Union, the World Bank and

other donors expedited the start of the recovery process. Premier Ltd wasted no time in starting its own recovery. Just one month after the floods, Rankica Panić resumed production, although at significantly reduced capacity. The floods inundated the textile mill (with its special floor, walls and installations) and its machines (the water level rose to three metres). While some machines were saved, many were beyond repair.

But help was at hand. Premier was one of 56 small and medium enterprises awarded grants by UNDP as part of its economic disaster recovery plan to preserve or establish new businesses. Panić’s company was selected for several reasons, including the feasibility of her business plan, her proven leadership skills and her recognition of the potential of women in the local community, whom she planned to employ in large numbers. Panić used the UNDP grant to restore the building and replace the



UNDP Photo: Rankica Panić, owner of the Premier Ltd Company.

destroyed machines so that she could resume production at pre-flood levels. Her goal was to keep all her previously trained and skilled workers, who she knew were among the

company's greatest assets and the key to a strong comeback for Premier Ltd in the future.

A year after the floods, the company employed 45 people, nearly 90 percent of whom were women from all ethnic groups. "The machines and materials donated by UNDP ensured the running of my business after the floods," says Rankica Panić.

"If not for the project's support, I would have been forced to take a bank loan, which would have put additional strain on my company which was already in debt." Instead, she says, UNDP support helped her to keep her company, keep production running and secure continued orders from buyers.

Close cooperation among textile companies also played a part. Premier would not have been in a position to fulfil its contract to provide uniforms to the Republika Srpska police without woman workers and machinery offered by Company Kismet from Doboj-East.

Premier Ltd is one of the few companies to provide job opportunities for the local community. Its women employees not only get a chance to earn a regular income, but also to develop tailoring skills through everyday work and training. Panić is applying for further external grants to double the number of employees to 100 and expand the company's annual production. She is in advanced talks exploring opportunities of exporting her clothes to other European countries, including Austria, Poland and Slovenia. By attracting companies that would order her products, she hopes to employ more women thereby ensuring more financial benefits flows into the community which would result in better conditions for all (better education, nutrition and health care for children and families, and more possibilities for travel).

Prompt financial support provided by UNDP helped to sustain a viable business during the immediate aftermath of the crisis, ensuring continuity not only for the business and its customers but through salaries paid to its employees. The financial benefits for employees lessened the impact of the crisis for the local community, reducing their vulnerability to the impact of the flood, and laying the foundation for long-term benefits.⁶⁷

Highlights and results

- 56 SMEs that were flooded in May 2014 received a total of 3million BAM in grants from UNDP. This saved 1,861 jobs, with minimum of 30 percent jobs filled by women.
- A quota of a minimum of 30 percent was set for the other pillars of the flood recovery programmes: emergency response, including rehabilitation of public institutes, household recovery and r emergency livelihoods support.



UNDP Photo: Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator (centre), Louisa Vinton, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Croatia (right) and Cihan Sultanoğlu, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (far right), with UNDP Country Office staff in Zagreb, Croatia, January 2013.

UNDP ACCOUNTABILITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY

UNDP has a number of accountability mechanisms to improve gender results in its policy and programmes. The organization uses tools such as the gender marker and the Gender Equality Seal to monitor performance in gender mainstreaming, and publishes its results in annual reports to the Executive Board and the senior management (the Gender Steering and Implementation Committee).⁶⁸

Gender marker

Launched in 2009, the gender marker is an internal mechanism to track gender-related investments and assess the extent to which financial allocations and expenditures are gender-responsive. All Country Office projects are rated against a four-point scale that measures their contribution towards the achievement of gender equality.

Following its introduction, there has been a yearly improvement in the overall level of projects and programmes contribution to gender equality.

In 2014, a quarter of UNDP projects in the ECIS region had gender equality and women's empowerment either as a primary or secondary objective.

Table 1: 2014 Gender Marker Ratings in the Europe and CIS region

	GEN 0	GEN 1	GEN 2	GEN 3
2014	16%	58%	23%	3%
2013	14%	60%	23%	3%
2012	17%	59%	22%	2%
2011	19%	55%	22%	4%
2010	25%	53%	20%	2%

0 - Outputs that are not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality;
 1 - Outputs that will contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly,
 2 - Outputs that have gender equality as a significant objective,
 3 - Outputs that have gender equality as the main objective.

Source: ATLAS Financial System, 31 December 2014. Figures are subject to rounding errors.

The Gender Equality Seal

The Gender Equality Seal, launched in 2011, is a UNDP certification process that “recognizes good performance of UNDP offices/units to deliver gender equality results. The seal provides a framework to guide senior managers in meeting performance standards”.⁶⁹

The certification process is voluntary and begins with a self-assessment by a participating Country Office.⁷⁰ This helps to set a baseline and identify strengths and weaknesses in promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment. An action plan is then developed to meet set goals. During this period staff in the Country Office are trained on how to successfully integrate gender dimensions into programming, communications, knowledge management and policies and practices, to ultimately achieve transformative results. Once the action plan is implemented, the Country Office is assessed first by internal and then by external experts. Its performance is measured against a set of 44 quality benchmarks which, if met, are recognized with the award of gold, silver or bronze seals. The Gender Equality Seals signify the capability of UNDP offices/units to implement national gender equality strategies and support gender mainstreaming in national policy reforms, as well as to improve their internal policies and working environment from a gender perspective.

In June 2015, four Country Offices from the ECIS region were awarded the UNDP Gender Equality Seal 2013-2014. UNDP in Moldova and UNDP in Montenegro earned silver seals, and UNDP in Belarus and UNDP in Kosovo won bronze seals. The Country Offices were recognized for their efforts in driving the gender equality and women’s empowerment agenda forward.

Table 2: Gender Equality Seals for UNDP in the ECIS region in 2014

Countries	Certification Level
Montenegro	Silver
Moldova	Silver
Belarus	Bronze
Kosovo	Bronze

The offices/units are awarded a bronze seal if they meet at least 50 percent of performance standards, a silver seal if they meet at least 70 percent and a gold seal for meeting at least 80 percent of performance standards.

What the Gender Equality Seal means in practice

In **Moldova**⁷¹, the Seal initiative triggered internal discussions on how to embrace gender equality priorities more effectively in everyday work. As a result, UNDP staff were able to bring principles of gender equality and women’s political empowerment to the fore while working with Parliament and the Central Electoral Commission. With UNDP support both bodies have initiated their own gender mainstreaming processes. UNDP worked with the Ministry of Justice to enact a law to increase women’s representation in decision-making processes and reduce gender inequality in employment.

In **Montenegro**, the Seal allowed the Country Office to objectively reflect on its work and intensify the efforts of programme staff to achieve more significant results. These included local partnerships that led to the creation of an efficient system to protect survivors of domestic violence, the introduction of a minimum gender quota of 30 percent for political parties, and strengthened capacities in municipalities to support women entrepreneurs.



UNDP Photo: Olivier Adam, Deputy Director, Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, receives the Gender Seal Certificates for UNDP Country Offices in Belarus, Moldova and Montenegro.

In **Belarus**, participation in the Seal certification has helped the UNDP team to better support the Government in embracing gender equality principles in judicial reforms. The Country Office worked with national partners to establish a system for collecting sex-disaggregated data to monitor and reduce HIV prevalence. UNDP in Belarus has also been able to position itself as a credible, gender aware agency through its knowledge management and communication activities.

In **Kosovo**, the Gender Equality Seal process has increased awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming in UNDP development work. UNDP has supported the drafting of a national action plan against domestic violence, and related by-laws and administrative procedures. The County Office has also promoted the economic empowerment of women through microfinance programmes.

Annex 1

Selected Gender Inequality Index data of the countries in the ECIS region

Country	HDI Rank	Gender Inequality Index Rank, 2013	Maternal mortality ratio, 2010	Adolescent birth rate, 2010/2015	(%) Share of seats in parliament, 2013	Female Secondary Education Level (%)	Male Secondary Education Level (%)	Participation rate, 15+, female, 2012	Participation rate, 15+, male, 2012
Cyprus	32	23	10	5.5	10.7	72.2	79.6	55.8	70.8
Croatia	47	33	17.0	12.7	23.8	85.0	93.6	44.8	58.5
Montenegro	51	..	8	15.2	17.3	84.2	94.7	..	..
Belarus	53	28	4	20.6	29.5	87.0	92.2	49.9	62.7
Romania	54	54	27	31.0	11.6	86.1	92.0	48.5	64.7
Russian Federation	57	52	34	25.7	12.1	89.6	92.5	57.0	71.4
Turkey	69	69	20	30.9	14.2	39.0	60.0	29.4	70.8
Kazakhstan	70	59	51	29.9	16.2	99.3	99.4	67.5	77.5
Azerbaijan	76	62	43	40.0	16.0	93.7	97.4	62.5	68.9
Serbia	77	..	12	16.9	33.2	58.4	73.6	..	..
Georgia	79	..	67	46.8	12.0	..	..	56.2	74.7
Ukraine	83	61	32	25.7	9.4	91.5	96.1	53.0	66.6
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	84	31	10	18.3	34.1	40.2	55.6	42.9	67.3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	86	36	8	15.1	19.3	44.8	70.0	34.1	57.2
Armenia	87	60	30	27.1	10.7	94.1	94.8	51.6	73.4
Albania	95	44	27	15.3	17.9	81.8	87.9	45.0	65.4
Turkmenistan	103	..	67	18.0	16.8	..	..	46.7	76.5
Moldova	114	51	41	29.3	19.8	93.6	96.6	37.0	43.3
Uzbekistan	116	..	28	38.8	19.2	..	..	47.9	75.2
Kyrgyzstan	125	64	71	29.3	23.3	94.5	96.8	55.7	79.0
Tajikistan	133	75	65	42.8	17.5	89.9	95.0	58.7	76.9
ECIS Average			36	28.7	19.6	70.4	77.5	46.9	65.1
World		—	145	47.4	21.1	54.1	64.2	50.6	76.7

Maternal mortality ratio: Number of deaths due to pregnancy-related causes per 100,000 live births.

Adolescent birth rate: Number of births to women ages 15–19 per 1,000 women ages 15–19.

Share of seats in national parliament: Proportion of seats held by women in a lower/ single house or /and an upper house/ senate expressed as percentage of total seats. For countries with bicameral legislative systems, the share of seats is calculated based on both houses.

Population with at least some secondary education: Percentage of the population ages 25 and older who have reached (but not necessarily completed) a secondary level of education.

Labour force participation rate: Proportion of a country's working-age population (ages 15 and older) that engages in the labour market, either by working or actively looking for work, expressed as a percentage of the working-age population.

Source: UNDP Gender Inequality Index

ENDNOTES

¹ UNDP, UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, 2014, p. 2.

² The UNDP Gender Development Index measures gender gaps in three basic dimensions of human development: health, measured by female and male life expectancy at birth; education, measured by female and male expected years of schooling for children and female and male mean years of schooling for adults ages 25 and older; and command over economic resources, measured by female and male estimated earned income. More information can be found [here](#).

³ UNDP, Gender Approaches in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations, 2002, p. 8.

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⁷ Office of the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, "Gender Mainstreaming: Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality Document", 2001.

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¹¹ Gilmour N., "Why Accountability is What Matters: Achieving Critical Mass with Targets or Quotas", 2010.

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¹³ See Annex 1, p. 51.

¹⁴ World Economic Forum, <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/economies>, accessed, 15 June 2015.

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¹⁸ The close-up includes information obtained from the following UNDP resources: [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

¹⁹ Turkish Statistical Institute, March 2015.

²⁰ The close-up includes information obtained from the following UNDP resources: [here](#), [here](#), [here](#)

²¹ These include: a bed and breakfast founded by women in Mardin which is providing sustainable incomes for local women; a local kitchen in Seferihisar, a "cittaslow" where gastronomic tourism can be enjoyed,

grants for six university students in Şanlıurfa to learn 12,000-year-old stone masonry skills and techniques and new business skills and a better understanding of the tourism industry for women in Malatya so that they can take advantage of the tourism sector as it expands further.

²² FAO, Rural Women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 2014, p. 3.

²³ World Bank, FAO Aim to Boost Women's Land Ownership in Central Europe, 2014.

²⁴ FAO, Gender and Land Rights, <http://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/en/>, accessed at 10 June 2015.

²⁵ FAO, Rural Women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 2014, p. 38.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Eurasianet, "Tajikistan: Energy Shortage Accelerates Deforestation", 2011.

²⁸ World Bank, "Adapting to Higher Energy Costs: Findings from Qualitative Studies in Europe and Central Asia", 2015.

²⁹ Shahriari, H., Danzer, A. M., Giovarelli R. & Undeland, A. "Improving Women's Access to Land and Financial Resources in Tajikistan", 2009, p. 7. See also: FAO, "Rural Women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia", 2014, pp. 8-11.

³⁰ The project was a joint initiative of UNDP in Tajikistan and in Croatia and drew on the experience of the Croatia team in installing solar systems in villages cut off from the electric grid during the conflicts in post-Yugoslav space in 1990's. The initiative was undertaken as part of the projects, "Technology transfer and market development for SHP in Tajikistan" funded by UNDP/GEF and "Livelihoods Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross-border Areas," funded by the Government of Japan.

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⁴³ UNDP, Annex No 4 to UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, 2014, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁴ UNDP, "UNDP Annual Report 2014-2015: Time for global action", 2015, p. 27.

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⁴⁶ The close-up includes information obtained from the following UNDP resources: [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

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- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ The close-up includes information obtained from the following UNDP resources: [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
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- ⁶⁶ This is UNDP's approach to identifying, assessing and reducing the risks and impacts of disasters. It aims to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks to prevent them and limit the adverse impacts of hazards.
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