

to women's leadership initiatives to raise the profile of women and gender equality advocates.

These should result in increased and meaningful participation by women, particularly the most vulnerable groups, as well as gender equality advocates in local decision-making so that everyone benefits equitably from governance reforms and recovery efforts.

What will it bring?

Through this project, we plan to restore effective governance in areas affected by the conflict in the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts and promote dialogue and trust between the local communities and the authorities.

Ultimately, all women, men, girls and boys in the conflict-affected areas of eastern Ukraine, as well as local authorities and their staff at the oblast, rayon, town and Hromada level, will all benefit from this project. The project will:

- Help regional and local governments better plan their recovery activities and deliver services that also integrate the specific needs of women affected by the crisis;
- Ensure that policy-making processes take a participatory approach by involving all stakeholders, in compliance with the decentralization and local government reform agenda;
- Enhance the overall security of persons forced out of their homes by the crisis and the communities hosting them in conflict-affected areas;
- Improve the credibility and legitimacy of local governments and encourage trust between local authorities and communities in government-controlled areas;
- Strengthen the advocacy and organizational skills of gender equality advocates and women affected by the

- conflict to demand accountability and transparency in local decision-making, planning and spending.

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Restoration of Governance and Reconciliation in Crisis-Affected Communities of Ukraine

Why reconciliation and restoring governance?

The ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine negatively affects Ukraine's capacity to recover from hardships, maintain social cohesion, preserve livelihoods, ensure community security, and apply the rule of law across the country.

The ambitious decentralization agenda, now being pursued by the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts (government-controlled areas) as a key governmental reform, must enact territorial administrative reforms to consolidate units of local governance.

The effective decentralization of political power, establishment of decision-making processes that are accountable, recovery planning, and services that address the needs of everyone, women and men, girls and boys equally, as well as greater security and social cohesion, will help build peace and prevent further conflict in Ukraine.

In order to increase community participation in their own future development, especially that of women and girls, the project for "Restoration of Governance and Reconciliation in Crisis-affected Communities in Ukraine", co-led by UNDP and UN Women and funded by European Union, has been initiated. The joint project will apply approaches to development that are based on Human Rights and gender equality¹, which make beneficiaries the agents of their own development rather than the mere passive recipients of external aid and services. Such approaches also place special emphasis on promotion of gender equality and ensuring gender-sensitive approaches throughout implementation of the proposed interventions. The project will operate in the following 20 target Hromadas (communities): Lyman, Cherkaske, Mykolaivka, Bahmut, Sloviansk, Kramatorsk, Druzhkivka, Mariupol,

¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FAQen.pdf>

Vuhledar, and Velyka Novosilka in the Donetsk Oblast, and Bilokurakyne, Novopskovsk, Bilovodsk, Krasnorichenske, Markivka, Popasna, Novoaidar, Chmyrivka, Kreminna, and Troitske in the Luhansk Oblast.

What will we focus on?

Decentralization, gender-responsiveness and participatory approach in recovery planning and service delivery

Decentralization and territorial administrative reform will significantly impact institutions, as they require redesigning organizations, developing new processes and procedures and equipping staff with new knowledge and skills.

Socio-economic analysis, technical assistance and training to manage territorial amalgamation will significantly support the **decentralization** process in government-controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.

The project will strengthen the capacity of the local and regional authorities to develop policies, plans and budgets that are based on gender analysis and responsive to the needs of women, men, girls and boys. In addition, the project will ensure equal and meaningful participation by women and men, particularly the most vulnerable, in the decision-making process.

Implementing participatory and gender-sensitive approaches to development budgeting and planning, implementing e-governance tools, and enforcing anti-corruption practices in all local government operations will **restore and improve public services**.

Community security and social cohesion

Strengthening the security of the community is a prerequisite for the effective recovery and reconstruction of conflict-affected areas of Ukraine.

Moreover, effective coordination among law enforcement bodies, local authorities, and communities, combined with increased access to information and community awareness of security-related issues, has been shown to **improve community security** for displaced people and host communities, especially for women and vulnerable groups.

The project will therefore enable the local communities to identify their own needs, and will ensure the involvement of all local stakeholders in planning and decision-making with respect to the allocation of resources.

The project will work to improve community security by preventing and responding to the increased risk of gender-based violence (GBV) in local communities. The project will raise awareness and build the capacity of local authorities and law enforcement agencies in the pilot Hromadas ("duty bearers") on applying GBV survivor-focused approaches to ensure high-quality, accessible, and affordable assistance to the survivors. The project will also build the capacity of women and men and boys and girls to recognize sexual and gender-based violence in public spaces as a violation of women's rights, and to respond and prevent such acts. Finally, the project will work with men and boys on behaviours and perceptions by encouraging their participation in local initiatives to address gender stereotypes with respect to the role of men in a militarized environment, and to prevent sexual and gender-based violence.

Restoring social cohesion and trust between local authorities and communities

Mobilizing and empowering men and women in the conflict-affected areas so that they can register their opinions on local development, recovery planning, service delivery and community security decisions, is a crucial element of reform ownership and success.

Through the community mobilization for empowerment and small grants the project will support mobilization for empowerment of the local communities, specifically targeting women's groups.

The project will facilitate creation of women's advocacy initiatives encouraging women to let their voices be heard and increase their participation and influence on decision-making with respect to recovery, planning and budgeting, and community security.

Supporting intra- and inter-communal dialogue on, and a conflict-sensitive approach to, local governance, recovery and peace-building, as well as the development of objective local media reporting will restore trust between local authorities and communities and help reconciliation.

Enhancing the capacities of women and gender advocates

The project will strengthen the capacities of regional and local authorities with the necessary skills in gender-responsive planning and budgeting and deliver gender-sensitive security policies. It will also foster improvement in the capacity of women's groups to participate in local development and decision-making.

The project will focus on raising awareness of gender equality issues and women's rights, and providing support