

2021 Mid-Year Progress Report	Civil Society for Enhanced Democracy and Human Rights (CSDR)
	Date: 31 st of July 2021

Progress reporting template – long version, adapted from the "General guidelines for grant administration through Danish NGO's." Revised 7th of January 2015.

Complete this form electronically in Word using Calibri 11 font. The report should be forwarded in English.

Does this status report contain any information requiring specific decisions? (e.g. changes in the project's objectives, expected output or budgets?)	YES	In which point is it described?
		NO

1. File no.	403.Ukraine.1-28
2. Contact person and email	Ms. Oksana Kosenko – Civil Society Project Coordinator (oksana.kosenko@undp.org) United Nations Development Programme in Ukraine
3. Programme title	Civil society for enhanced democracy and human rights in Ukraine
4. Total budget (DKK) and accumulated expenditure by the end of reporting period.	Budget 2017-2022: DKK 30,359,998; USD 4,555,822.00 Expenditures during reporting period: DKK 1,785,106; USD 267,873 Cumulative expenditures 2017-2019: DKK 27,197,379; USD 4,081,239

6. Programme period		
Start (day/month/year) 1 st of April 2017	Completion (day/month/year) 31 st of March 2022	
7. Reporting period		
From (day/month/year) 1 st of January 2021	To (day/month/year) 30 th of June 2021	
8. Monitoring and reviews <i>Give an account of the main monitoring activities during the period, e.g. steering committee meetings, visits, reviews etc. (in bullet points)</i> Board meetings: 18 th of March 2021		

<p>9. Assessment of external context, assumptions and risks relevant to the Programme <i>A brief description of the national context that is relevant for the Programme.</i></p> <p>Key contextual changes and considerations</p> <p>The political context in Ukraine in the first half of 2021 continued to be influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, along with political reshuffling, and attempts to defuse the power of certain oligarchs. In June, President Zelenskiy's approval rating was <u>33%</u> (vs. <u>41%</u> in June 2020). The Servant of the People party's approval is 18.8% (vs. 20.5% in June 2020), indicating a steady downward trend of trust towards the President and his political party. Freedom House recently cited endemic corruption as a key concern, and classified the country again as "partly free".</p>

On the 2nd of February President Zelenskiy signed a decree sanctioning MP Taras Kozak which resulted in the closure of the TV news channels ZIK, NewsOne and 112. These news channels were affiliated with the pro-Russian politician, Viktor Medvedchuk, the leader of political party "Opposition Platform for Life". V. Medvedchuk was later sanctioned and put under house arrest and charged with treason. This decision was largely welcomed by the public but drew concerns around the upholding the principles of freedom of speech, by human rights groups and the UN. In June, the President introduced the so-called "de-oligarchization" bill, under which the most powerful businessmen in Ukraine would have to disclose their assets and be banned from funding political parties. The bold moves of the President are aimed at loosening the grip of certain individuals, who have significant influence over the media, business and politics, but concerns arise around the feasibility of the Parliament adopting this law and whether these moves are driven by an attempt to oust the President's main opposition leader, former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko.

COVID-19 continued to impact economic and social life in the country. As of June 2021, [the total number of cases](#) since the beginning of the pandemic reached 2.3 million, with over 54,000 deaths. Still, Ukraine's COVID-19 testing rate per 1,000 members of the population remains the lowest in Europe. The actual number of confirmed cases is expected to be higher, while the real death toll is estimated to be [2.5 to 3 times more](#) than official figures (from 100,000 to 150,000). In April, the number of COVID-19 positive cases [peaked at all time high](#) of almost 20,000 new cases a day, prompting the authorities to impose tough restrictions in large cities. By the beginning of June, cases started to decline to a 7-day average of less than 1,000 cases per day, which resulted in an [easing of most quarantine restrictions](#).

Ukraine started its vaccination programme on February the 24th, months behind other European countries - following what critics claim have been delays due to political infighting and corruption. The lack of transparency in the beginning of the vaccination communication campaign, coupled with poor communication about the types of vaccines and ways to make an appointment, has contributed to high vaccination hesitancy among the general population. [Around 40%](#) of medical workers are refusing to get vaccinated due to missing clinical product information on the vaccines (such as how was it developed and trialled, how exactly it works, the quality of production, etc.). Among the general population, [63% are willing to get vaccinated](#). The vaccination campaign started very slowly, however, it picked up pace to over [76,000 shots per day](#) in June. By July the 1st, [over 2M](#) Ukrainians received at least one vaccination dose (4.5% of the total population), and [766,483 or 1.7%](#) of the population received two doses. The easing of restrictions and low vaccination rates continue to raise concerns over a potential surge in cases, as the more contagious and deadly Delta variant of COVID-19 becomes the dominant strain.

As of June 2021, Ukraine's economy is recovering and is expected to grow strongly by the end of the year, but many uncertainties remain. [According to IMF forecasts](#), the trend in unemployment, which was heavily affected by the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching 10.1 percent in 2020, will fall off only slightly, to 9.3 percent in 2021. The situation in the shadow economy—which [accounts for about 43 percent](#) of Ukraine's GDP—is now much worse. The poorest part of Ukrainian society was deriving its income from the shadow economy. Now, that the level of unemployment in the shadow economy is much higher than the official unemployment rate, the most vulnerable Ukrainian households are on the verge of economic desperation once again.

Ukraine's economy has also been impacted by its sanctions against Belarus. Following the hijacking of the flight carrying opposition journalist Roman Protasevich, Ukraine cancelled flights to Belarus, and Lukashenko's administration eventually closed the border.

Reforms. The Government is now a hostage to an economic crisis posed by COVID-19 on one hand, and **the energy market reform**, that has dramatically increased household prices for gas and electricity on the other. The reform was a requirement of the IMF in order to continue to receive loan tranches. However, this move caused a wave of mass protests across the country against unaffordable tariffs and the Prime Minister, Denys Shmygal, had to concede by promising to go back to the state regulation of the energy market, which prompted the IMF to raise concerns and hold off the next tranche of the critical USD 5 billion programme due to the lack of progress in reforms.

The anti-lockdown protests, followed by anti-tariff protests, coupled with continuous drop in trust towards the one-party government, creates opportunities for political opposition forces to step up and gain more decision-making power. The merger of the political opposition's interests with growing social protests may pose a critical threat to the stability of order in Ukraine.

Despite a strong push and assistance from civil society and international partners, including explicit emphasis on the need to implement critical reforms by the U.S. State Secretary Antony Blinken and Under Secretary for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland during their visit to Kyiv, President Zelensky and the parliament were slow to implement a comprehensive **rule-of-law reform** that would provide independence and transparency in the selection of judicial governance bodies and ensure their integrity. According to a recent survey, even among Servant of the People supporters, [only 8 percent of respondents](#) see the courts reform as successful. In February, Zelensky filed a bill securing immunity for the current serving members of the High Council of Justice. On May the 19th, the draft bill successfully passed its first reading. However, Ukraine received a real chance to jumpstart the rule-of-law reform, after the VRU adopted the law №5068 in its second reading. This law incorporates the recommendations of civil society and the Venice Commission to give a final voice in rebooting the High Council of Justice to include international experts. The law also envisions the creation of an independent Ethics Council where at least two international experts must support the decision for it to be considered adopted. President Zelenskiy still needs to sign this law.

The Ukraine Reform Conference, which was postponed in 2020 due to COVID-19, took place offline in Vilnius, Lithuania on July the 7th and 8th, 2021 and was attended by the highest levels of Ukraine's leadership and international partners. The key reforms which lack significant progress and hinder Ukraine's further democratic and economic development are the rule of law and anticorruption reforms, as stressed by the majority of the Conference speakers.

The reform of State Security Service of Ukraine (SSU), was initiated by the President. According to the [draft law](#), [the](#) SSU will no longer be a law-enforcement body and will mainly focus on counterintelligence. The draft law was approved in its first reading and is now being revised by the relevant Committee of the Verkhovna Rada. However, the draft law contains provisions that could be damaging for human rights, human rights groups said, urging Ukrainian lawmakers to address problems stemming from the draft law's lack of clarity and properly defined powers and roles, and its provisions maintaining, or in some cases strengthening, regulations that jeopardize human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human Rights Watch (HRW) and more than twenty other groups have encouraged Ukraine's parliament to address shortcomings in the proposed draft to reform the country's security service before passing it.

The Minister of Community and Territorial Development - Oleksiy Chernyshov stated that **decentralization reform** should be completed in 2021. A law was passed in Q3 2020 to complete the reform, approving the activities of local councils in connection with the liquidation and creation of new districts. It is also necessary to adopt amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine. However, the Ministry of Community and Territorial Development is considering two reform scenarios - with or without changes to the Constitution.

The Conflict: the conflict in eastern Ukraine [has been intensifying in 2021](#) after an almost six months long ceasefire. Active hostilities have been registered every month and over [50 Ukrainian servicemen](#) have been killed. In April 2021, Ukraine was facing the biggest build-up of Russian military troops along the border since the onset of the conflict in 2014. The troops were later withdrawn, following the wave of new US sanctions and pressure from NATO countries, though the actual reason for Russian military de-escalation hasn't been confirmed.

According to HRMMU the only entry-exit crossing points (EECPs) open for civilians to cross the contact line were in Novotroitske and Stanytsia Luhanska, while the planned opening of EECPs in Shchastia and Zolote did not occur. Despite some [increase in the number of monthly crossings](#) (32,791 in February, 52,823 in March and an estimated 50,000-60,000 in April), it remained 95 per cent lower than in the pre-COVID-19 period (around one million crossings per month occurred in January and February 2020). On 14 January, the [European Court of Human Rights \(ECHR\) has ruled](#) that a complaint brought by Ukraine against Russia alleging human rights violations in the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 is "partly admissible."

OVERVIEW

Trends in Civil Society:

Ukrainian civil society continued to enjoy high levels of public support - [53%](#) of Ukrainians trust civil society organizations. At the same time, between January - March 2021, there have been over 30 cases of violence against civic

activists. The attacks were directed against human rights defenders, including female human rights defenders, environmental activists, anticorruption activists and investigative journalists. Impunity for such attacks persisted, due to slow, or non-existent, police action.

On June the 16th, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted the draft of the National Strategy for Promoting Civil Society Development 2021-2026 to be further approved by the decree of the President of Ukraine. The National Strategy defines four strategic objectives for the authorities to create favourable conditions for developing CSOs, charitable foundations, and self-organization bodies. The Strategy was developed in an open and transparent manner where thematic working groups were co-chaired by respective ministries and civil society representatives. The main principle that underlines the state policy is "no decisions for civil society without civil society". The purpose of the Strategy is to create favourable conditions for public initiatives and self-organization and the establishment of partnerships between them and the authorities. Implementation of the Strategy will support the realization and protection of civil rights and freedoms and ensure public participation in decision-making processes.

[Experts have noted](#) a decrease of the civil society voice as stakeholders in policymaking. Mainly due to the domination of the majority party at many Parliamentary Committees and the lack of effective cooperation, a unified voice, and a joint vision on key reforms among civil society actors.

Human Rights and Gender Equality:

There have been several important human rights legislative developments in Ukraine - the adoption of the National Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan, adoption of the Barrier-free strategy and the law "On Indigenous People of Ukraine".

The President of Ukraine adopted the National Human Rights Strategy on the 24 March, 2021. The strategy was developed in an inclusive manner, following thorough consultation with authorities, civil society and international organizations including the UNDP. The Cabinet of Ministers promptly adopted the National Human Rights Action Plan which includes around 100 actions to be implemented over the next three years, fully integrating gender into the activities. The new strategy aims to consolidate society based on human rights values, to address systematic problems in the human rights area, ensure that human rights are fulfilled on the basis of principles of equality and non-discrimination, and to address new challenges that have arisen. Among its key priority areas, the new strategy includes activities aimed at enhancing public awareness about human rights and the existing mechanisms to protect them. The new strategy also builds on the work of the previous National Human Rights Strategy, which was adopted in 2015, the five-year action plan for which came to an end in 2020. Assessment of the plan's results demonstrated that the strategy required significant updates and amendments.

Further, the Verkhovna Rada adopted the law "On Indigenous People of Ukraine", initiated by the President. In accordance with the provisions of the legislation, the indigenous peoples of Ukraine and their representatives have the right, collectively and individually, to the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as defined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in international agreements, the binding nature of which has been approved by the Verkhovna Rada, as well as provided for in the Constitution and laws of Ukraine. The document guarantees the cultural, educational, linguistic and information rights of the indigenous peoples of Ukraine, and the rights of the indigenous peoples of Ukraine to sustainable development.

In 2021, the Government of Ukraine continued to advance the gender equality agenda and committed to joining three international gender equality Action Coalitions along with France and Mexico on GBV, economic justice and rights, technology and innovation for gender equality. Joining these Coalitions indicated Ukraine's euro-Atlantic integration commitments to strengthening the human rights and gender equality agenda. Further, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a State Social Programme on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence and GBV until 2025. As the current National Strategy on Gender Equality is expiring in 2022, the Government has already started the process of preparing the next strategic document.

To celebrate International Women's Day on March the 8th, Ukrainians held rallies throughout the country in which activists called on the government to do more on gender equality and safety for women. Rallies were held in Kyiv, Lviv,

Kramatorsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhia, and were focused on the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on women and on gender-based violence faced by women in Ukraine.

Youth Civic Engagement:

The Law on The Basic Principles of Youth Policy was adopted by the Verhovna Rada in its second reading and signed by the President in May 2021, thus modernizing youth legislation. The key provisions of the Law include: establishing a National Youth Council as an advisory body under the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine; outlining infrastructure for youth policy implementation which includes youth, youth workers, youth centres and youth spaces, youth and children's public associations, charitable organizations, youth councils, student self-government bodies (organizations), and informal youth associations; establishing a network of youth centres; establishing a Ukrainian Youth Foundation which will serve as a budgetary institution that performs special functions to facilitate the implementation of youth policy objectives; providing social guarantees for young people related to housing, employment, entrepreneurship, education, culture, tourism, health and recreation, physical culture and sports, health care, etc.

Further, [The Strategy on Youth Policy Development by 2030](#) has been approved by the Government and signed by the President. The document covers formal and informal education, gender equality, inclusivity and human rights, health, economic integration of young people into the labour market, volunteerism, and youth policy within the decentralization process.

[The State Target Social Programme "Youth of Ukraine" for 2021-2025](#), developed with UNDP support, was approved by the Government in June 2021. The programme focuses on strengthening the social cohesion of young people, intensifying the involvement of young people in decision-making processes, raising the culture of volunteering, raising the level of youth competencies, including civic participation, etc. The target of the Programme is to increase the share of young people engaged in public life to 25% (up from the current 16,7%) The Programme is a key strategic policy document for subnational authorities on development and implementation of local youth policies.

[The Youth Participation Index](#), which was developed with UNDP support demonstrates that in Ukraine 56% of the youth are excluded from lives of their communities, 27% of young people are informed about the opportunities but hesitate to engage, and 16.7% of young people participate in different forms of community activities to some extent.

Developments in important assumptions and risks

Civil society continued to enjoy a high level of trust by Ukrainian citizens in the reporting period. The draft laws on lobbying #3059, 3059-1, 3059-2, 3059-3 which could negatively impact the work of civil society were recognized as unconstitutional.

Risks related to youth policy and the Youth Worker Programme were somewhat reduced due to the adoption of the key policy documents: The Law on the Foundations of Youth policy, State Target Social Programme "Youth of Ukraine - 2025" and The National Youth Strategy 2030. In addition, oblast State Administrations are now required to report on the number of officially trained and certified youth workers in their oblasts, which promotes the Youth Worker Programme even further.

Even with adoption of the National Strategy for Barrier-Free Society in April and the National Human Rights Strategy 2021-2023 in June, the risks of deterioration of the human rights situation in the country remain the same due to a COVID-19 related spike in GBV and domestic violence cases, lack of progress in investigating attacks on civil society activists and the smouldering conflict in the Donbass. However, the increased attention on the human rights situation in the country should be noted. The attention of the First Lady, Olena Zelenska, to these issues might be an additional reason for this tendency.

10. Status – Contribution to the Programme’s outcome objectives

Give an account of selected contributions to the Programme’s objectives and indicators.

Please refer to Annex B: Status in Logical Framework

Outcome: *Civil society has a stronger impact on the reform processes in the country including in the regions in the areas of democracy and human rights and contributes to a more inclusive, democratic and rights-based governance through enhanced capacity, better coordination and networking.*

1. 6 hubs of the second wave have successfully completed their organizational development process which is confirmed by the independent final assessment.
2. UNDP-supported CSOs were enabled and empowered to advocate for the implementation of the innovative All-Ukrainian Public Budget instrument. The Government has allocated 18.2 mln. UAH (674 thousand USD) for the implementation of three winning projects of the pilot phase.
3. By the end of June 2021, the Government of Ukraine was able to implement 26% of the accepted Universal Periodic Review recommendations (42 out of 163 where 16 recommendations out of 163 are completely implemented and 26 recommendations are satisfactory implemented based on the civil society assessment). Additional 22% of the UPR recommendations were partly satisfactory implemented as assessed by the civil society experts.
4. Youth policy implementation was improved through adoption of State Target Social Programme “Youth of Ukraine 2021-2025” and funding allocation for 2021 and the Law “On the Foundations of Youth Policy”. Both policy documents were developed with active CSDR participation and support.

11. Status – programme outputs

Describe the progress and difficulties in the planned outputs and indicators during the 12 month reporting period (as above – please include the entire programme period). Indicate if an output also has been supported by another international agency. Include quantitative as well as qualitative data.

Please refer to Annex B: Status in Logical Framework

OUTPUT 1. *Civil society organisations strengthened to promote democracy and foster participatory and results-driven Government-CSO dialogue in Ukraine*

Output 1. Key results

❖ ***CSO hubs are strong and influence key local democratic and human rights reforms***

According to the results of the independent assessment of the organizational development progress of the six UNDP supported CSOs hubs of the second wave, all of them increased their capacity in the areas of democratic governance, management processes and financial control systems. The results of the improvement of strategic and operational planning demonstrates that the CSO hubs organisations are increasingly linking current planning to the strategic areas. The greatest overall progress in the organizational development was demonstrated by the Khmelnytskyi CSO hub which made the transition from the initial level of development to a high one by improving its score from 2,5 (in 2017) to 4 in 2020.

Significant progress was also made in ensuring transparency and accountability for program activities and financial resource management. As a result, all hubs have established a practice of annual public reporting to ensure accountability to their target groups and partners.

Furthermore, CSO Hubs have diversified their engagement approaches of target groups and beneficiaries to include and represent them better in development and implementation of projects and programs. Hubs started to use various forms of feedback from their target groups, to study the needs of target groups, and to conduct consultations with the local authorities and other CSO partners. CSO hubs increased a practice of conducting training, consultations, and educational and informational events for the initiative groups and CSOs of their regions. In addition to this, some organisations spread their own positive practices of organizational development. The results of focus groups with representatives of CSOs in the regions where hubs operate demonstrated that among local civil society organisations the CSO hubs have been recognized as leading organizations, both in the field of program activities and in the field of organizational development.

All 6 organisations have significantly strengthened their relationships with local authorities and are positively perceived by them.

❖ ***The CSO hubs Network has been strategically developed***

To assess the CSO hubs Network development, the relevance of its activities, specific contributions, and impact, as well as sustainability, the final assessment of the CSO hubs Network organizational development, its capacity to promote democracy and human rights at the subnational level, its influence and impact in the regions, started in May 2021. The main purpose of the assignment is to harvest key achievements, lessons learnt, and identify best practices. The impact assessment part will consider the events and results of the period between April, 2017 and July, 2021 and will include all 15 CSOs of the CSO Hub Network. Currently, experts are conducting all necessary consultations, interviews, focus groups with the members of CSO hubs Network, beneficiaries, and stakeholders to present preliminary observations, key findings, lessons learnt and recommendations (please refer to the **Annex D**. CSO hubs assessment inception report). The final report of the assessment will be ready by the mid-October 2021.

❖ ***Enabling policies for CSO-government partnership at subnational levels are developed***

Poltava CSO hub was significantly strengthened to influence the national level policy with UNDP support. The Institute of Analysis and Advocacy (IAA) in a partnership with the Ministry of Digital Transformation introduced new electronic tools which will significantly reduce corruption and use of paper documents during freight transportation in Ukraine. In addition, the implementation of this project is aimed at the improving business conditions and preventing traffic congestion that destroys the road surface in Ukraine. The Waybill System was advocated by the IAA with the engagement of business and with the wide support of the public.

As a result of the advocacy campaign, the Waybill System was successfully implemented in an experimental mode and the first 100 waybills were successfully registered in the system. Therewith, the IAA was assigned as an administrator of the Experimental Project for the Implementation of the Electronic Freight Waybill in Ukraine, according to the Procedure for Implementation of the project that was adopted by the Ministry of Infrastructure and registered with the Ministry of Justice.

The UNDP supported national coalition of 26 anti-corruption CSOs have effectively cooperated with local self-government in order to establish more transparent and accountable processes of decision making and implementation prior to the local elections in Ukraine. The Coalition members held the consultations with Ukraine's National Agency on Corruption Prevention (NAPC) partners and developed a methodology for analysing anti-corruption programs for local self-government bodies that allows for evaluation of such programmes on multiple criteria - from the quality of source analysis to the transparency in the decision-making procedures. As a result, a comprehensive analysis of 24 subnational anti-corruption programmes, a list with the most common corruption risks in local self-government was developed as well as [rating of oblast anticorruption programmes](#) and recommendations for local self-government bodies on how to improve anti-corruption programme implementation in the future.

158 anti-corruption commissioners of local state administrations and local governments improved their skills and knowledge in the area of land resources, construction and communal property at the webinars organized by NGO "Anti-Corruption Headquarters" in a partnership with "Together against Corruption" and NAPC with UNDP support.

As a result of a year-and-a-half long UNDP supported civil society advocacy campaign, the All-Ukrainian Participatory Budget (AUPB) instrument was successfully piloted. The Government provided 18.2 mln UAH for the implementation of 3 winning projects, they are: Adventure Park (a rope park) in Boryslav, Lviv oblast, establishing of the safe city systems in Kremenchuk, Poltava oblast, and supplying a hospital in Chernigiv oblast with the latest x-ray diagnostics equipment. In total, four oblasts participated in the piloting, another three have adopted policies and are ready join the next round and five more oblasts are in the process of developing the policies necessary for participation.

Further development of AUPB is included to National Strategy of the Civil Society Development 2021-2026 which was approved by the Government and awaits its signing by the President. It is envisioned, that AUPB should be financed not through the State Fund of Regional Development because it brings many limitations to the process, but through a separate financing mechanism which has to be developed and established. CSO partners have developed several possible financing models and cooperate with the Ministry for Communities and Territories and the Ministry of Digital transformation for their further implementation.

Within the framework of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Initiative, the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine are implementing an initiative to launch an online platform for interaction of executive bodies of power with citizens and civil society institutions ("Vzaemo.Diia" platform) with UNDP support. The aim of the initiative is to introduce user-friendly online tools for interaction of citizens and civil society organizations with the executive bodies of power on a single digital space, where people would be able to receive information about government activities and participate in decision-making. One of the key components of the Vzaemo.Diia platform is a module on public consultation which is aimed at providing interactive opportunities for citizens and civil society institutions to participate in public discussions of the draft regulations and more. However, the implementation of the module on public consultation requires not only development of technical solutions, but also changes in the relevant legislation. UNDP is supporting the development of the relevant legislation and the communication efforts of the MDT in order to successfully launch the platform thus promoting better civil society-State cooperation.

The UNDP supported VoxUkraine CSO has significantly contributed to the enhanced capacity of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (SSSU) in producing high quality statistics as well as advocated for the improvement of relevant legislation. In order to align Ukraine's law on statistics with EU norms and UN model law, civil society expert groups in a cooperation with the State Statistics Service of Ukraine organized a series of discussions on the draft law on official statistics with the involvement of journalists, experts, the government, and policymakers. The draft law received positive feedback from the UN Statistics Commission and further advocacy efforts for the adoption of the law are ongoing. Civil society experts also supported the SSSU in the developing and implementation of the communication strategy. A mentorship programme aimed at improvement of SSSU communication department specialists' communication and visualisation skills was conducted. As a result, 20 representatives of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine mastered different skills in making calculations, presenting and data visualization, especially regarding gender equality data and SDG progress.

On June 2021, the State Statistics Service of Ukraine in partnership with UNDP-supported CSO VoxUkraine, presented the results of a pilot study utilizing the UNESCAP methodology that aimed to assess progress in implementing the SDGs at the subnational level. The results of the pilot study demonstrate that 84 out of 183 indicators have full subnational data in place, data on another 47 indicators are not available in several oblasts, some 42 indicators have no subnational data (only national level data is available) and 10 indicators has no data at all.

Output 1. Challenges

1. Even though the National Civil Society Development Strategy is approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine it still awaits signing by the President.
2. After the discontinuation of the civil society and State website there was no platform for communication of civil society with the Government. This issue was raised in the Open Government Partnership Initiative plan for 2018-2020 but no further actions were taken.

Output 1. Next steps

1. Once the National Civil Society Development Strategy is adopted, to hold a series of subnational consultations and public awareness events in cooperation with CSO hubs Network in order to expedite the process of the Strategy implementation in regions and ensure the ownership of the process by local CSOs and initiative groups.

2. Support the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in implementing an initiative to launch an online platform for interaction of executive bodies with citizens and civil society institutions (the "Vzaemo.Diiia" platform).

OUTPUT 2. Capacities of human rights actors enhanced to promote and defend human rights in Ukraine

Output 2. Key results

❖ *Ukrainian civil society efficiently monitors Ukraine's progress on international and national human rights' obligations and commitments*

One of the commitments of Ukraine after joining the Biarritz Partnership includes building a barrier free society and spaces. CSDR supported civil society organizations which have contributed significantly to the promotion of the more inclusive business practices by establishing a new section on Barrier-free [business](#) at the Diia.Business web portal in cooperation with MDT. CSOs have conducted a desk-research, analysed a regulatory framework, interviewed 8 representatives of companies, business associations and non-profit organizations. As the result, they have prepared a series of articles with advice to SME business owners on how to become an inclusive company. They have also prepared three video success stories about the companies which have hired people with disabilities. This information has formed a separate section on the Diia.Business portal which now has recommendations, successful cases, and expert advice on the implementation of the principles of barrier-free approach. This new section was officially presented by the partners from UNDP, Office of the President of Ukraine, the Ministry of Digital transformation at the press-conference in February 2021. Almost 145,000 individuals were reached with the publications on barrier-free approach in business only in January-February 2021.

❖ *Conflict-related human rights challenges are reported*

Activities of the civil society organizations aimed at contributing to the development and implementation of key elements of transitional justice mechanisms in Ukraine were supported through a joint UNDP and International Renaissance Foundation Competition.

Human rights Center 'Diya' provided legal support to 25 people whose rights were violated due to the conflict. The CSO team conducted analysis of the criminal proceedings as well as answers of investigative bodies and prosecutor's office responses. The legal support also included preparing petitions, statements and analysis of materials provided by victims. Based on the collected information and analysis, nine new appeals were submitted to the European Court of Human Rights.

The Regional Center for human Rights has supported 6 victims of conflict related human rights violations and 6 subsequent appeals were submitted to the European Court of Human Rights. Submission to the International Criminal Court on the forced displacement of the civilian population in the context of the occupation of the Crimean Peninsula was prepared. As a result of the monitoring and documenting activity of the CSO, the facts of illegal forced movement of 275 civilians from the occupied territory were established. At the same time, a reliable evidence base was collected for 179 people in the form of procedural court documents, explanations of victims, and correspondence with the Crimean authorities.

CSO coalitions have cooperated with the Permanent Representative of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (PRPUARC) in order to provide policy and expert support in launching the Crimean Platform. The

CSO experts have assessed the issues related to the perception of the Crimea in Latin America and analysis of the voting of the countries of the region for the "Crimean" resolutions in the UN General Assembly was prepared. The PRPUARC were briefed on the findings, established communication with Latin American countries on the topic of the Crimea and met with one of the Ambassadors. PRPUARC staff understanding of the Latin America region has also improved.

❖ ***CSOs are monitoring the progress of reforms from the human rights perspective.***

To address COVID-19 related human rights challenges, the CSO Centre "Democracy Development" established cooperation with representatives of local self-governments and civil society organizations of the small towns and remote villages in 6 oblasts of Ukraine: Ternopil, Lviv, Kherson, Poltava, Chernihiv, Kirovohrad. 225 individuals, among which there were representatives of the departments of education, health care, CSO leaders, received knowledge about online program tools that created opportunities in the future to engage and reach local communities and to provide psychological and informational support to women and girls in rural areas. Additionally, 197 individuals - educators, medical workers, social workers, local self-government representatives, improved their competencies on the issues on panic and burn-out prevention, bullying, domestic violence, and sexual harassment. Through knowledge gained during training, the educators, civil servants and social workers, were able to respond professionally to difficult situations in their communities.

As highlighted by the UN Committee on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the inclusive employment of people with disabilities remains a challenge which is often only formally implemented by employers. Chernivtsi PWD CSO has established cooperation with local employers' associations as well as the State Employment Centre in order to raise awareness about the issue in Chernivtsi region. The success stories of employment of people with disabilities were promoted through social media, the employers interested in making their business more inclusive received the necessary training and 5 people with disabilities gained their first employment.

❖ ***CSOs are addressing COVID-19 related human rights challenges with UNDP support***

The CSO Hubs Network has supported vulnerable women and men during the COVID-19 related restrictions by increasing the efficiency of local councils to remotely involve citizens in the decision-making process and protection of socio-economic rights in crisis situations. The Network members conducted an [analysis of the tools of local democracy with a focus on their use during the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic](#) and [impact of COVID-related restrictions on upholding of the rights of vulnerable groups](#). The results of the research were then translated in concrete recommendations and promoted through active advocacy campaign by the CSO. Six additional policies were adopted by the local self-governments mostly focusing on improving the communication and consultation processes in territorial communities by revising rules of procedures to allow for the use of modern digital tools for increased transparency and cooperation. Additionally, over 1600 representatives of vulnerable groups from five oblasts of Ukraine received the necessary legal support from the CSO hubs Network members.

To address the rise in the number of gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence cases, the project held a grant competition "Civil Society Response to the Violations of Human Rights of Vulnerable Groups of Women and Men during COVID-19 Outbreak in Ukraine". 95 project proposals were submitted to this competition. As a result of the consideration of technical requirements and eligibility criteria, 7 projects received funding for the implementation of their projects in Dnipro, Kharkiv, Khmelnytskyi, Kyiv, Lviv, Poltava, Rivne oblasts. Supported initiatives include coordinating efforts of key stakeholders at the subnational level, advocacy for funding allocation for women's shelter; rehabilitation programme for the perpetrators, educational and media activities aimed at different audiences - decision-makers, women who suffer from domestic violence, including Roma women.

Output 2. Challenges

1. As highlighted in the recommendations of UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the CSOs of people with disabilities are largely excluded from the opportunity to receive state funding. More than half of the annually allocated 100 million UAH is distributed directly to a handful of CSOs by the Ministry of Social Policy.

Despite some small progress, a competitive and transparent process of funding of PWD CSOs is yet to be established.

2. The COVID-19 and lockdowns resulted in a spike of GBV and domestic violence cases.

Output 2. Next steps

1. UNDP will support the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine in the development of the conceptual approach of the institutional support mechanism and respective policy documents for providing state funding for organizational development of civil society organizations of people with disabilities. It is envisioned that the developed mechanism will ensure competitive, transparent, and efficient process of allocating state funding for and subsequent monitoring of institutional development of PWD CSOs.
2. UNDP will support the efforts of civil society organizations to address GBV and domestic violence issues at the subnational level and provide legal and psychosocial support to the survivors.

OUTPUT 3. *Enhanced civic youth engagement and youth participation in decision-making*

Output 3. Key results

❖ *Certified youth workers effectively engage youth in civic life*

In close partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, UNDP has successfully adapted the Youth Worker Programme to an online format to ensure the continuation of the Programme despite possible lockdowns. During the reporting period twenty-one basic and one civic education training sessions were completed, and 436 (341 women, 95 men) improved knowledge and skills on how to use innovative tools to engage young men and women in community life, which is essential in view of the final stage of decentralization reform. Online formats of the basic and specialized civic education training courses for youth workers were developed upon the request of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Before the pandemic only youth workers who completed the offline training course could receive official State certificates. Effective cooperation with the Ministry and timely development and piloting of the online formats of basic youth worker training as well as a specialised civic education course, has allowed youth workers to receive much needed officially recognized certification online.

In 2018, UNDP in partnership with UN Volunteers developed a specialized course "Management and Engagement of Volunteers", that has been an integral part of the Youth Worker Programme. This course provides youth workers with comprehensive knowledge and skills engaging young man and women in volunteering activities and projects. Since 2018, more than 150 youth workers from all oblasts of Ukraine graduated from this course. During the reporting period, the online version of the course "Engagement and Management of Volunteers" was also developed and piloted among 16 youth workers (12 w, 4 m).

The First Youth TV Channel is emerging as a unique communication platform for all youth workers throughout Ukraine. The Channel was conceptualised in 2020 at the 4th Annual Youth Worker Forum and was seen as a compromise to the offline event which was impossible to conduct due to COVID-19 related restrictions. The format of the First Youth Chanel will be sustained by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and its structural unit, the All-Ukrainian Youth Centre. The First Youth Channel will serve as a youth policy information platform which will operate on [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#) to inform professionals working with young people about the latest youth work opportunities and trends. The UNDP supported First Youth TV channel coordinator has already developed the Channel's communication strategy and media plan and engaged at least 10 youth centres in creating fun, informative and engaging content for youth workers. The Platform already has 1500 subscribers on Facebook.

The process of developing and updating subnational target social youth programmes in accordance with the National Programme "Youth of Ukraine 2021-2025" began in 2021. On the request of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, UNDP initiated development of an appropriate training course for representatives of departments and units responsible for implementation youth policy in subnational public administrations with the aim to provide methodological support on a cycle of targeted social programme elaboration. The specialized course will be the part of the State Youth Worker Programme. It is planned to start the roll-out of the course in autumn 2021.

[Recent research on youth in the times of COVID-19](#) revealed that men pay less attention to protective measures and thus are more exposed to COVID-19. Experts across the globe consider this behaviour as a masculine trait. To explain how masculinity influences young men and if it is widespread in Ukraine, the Project in cooperation with the All-Ukrainian Youth Centre has organized [a discussion](#) "How is the pandemic affecting men? Masculinity during COVID-19". In addition to the discussion which was [broadcasted online](#), the Project has produced a series of self-explanatory [infographics](#) and an [article](#).

❖ ***The Youth of Ukraine are making a difference in democratization and human rights***

Online public discussion on the draft State Target Social Programme "Youth of Ukraine 2021-2025" gathered 100 (60 duty bearers, 40 right holders) youth activists and public servants responsible for youth policy on subnational levels with the aim to collect proposals and comments for the future document. The event was organized by the UNDP on the request the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The UNDP provided grant support for the NGO "Ukrainian Volunteer Service" on the implementation of the Youth Development Programme "Agents of Volunteering" with the aim to strengthen local initiatives of civil society organizations by enhancing the capacity and competencies of the most promising youth activists from the regions. The program envisages comprehensive training on project management, volunteering, volunteer management and organization of public initiatives and events for 30 participants from 15 cities of Ukraine. When participants complete the training, 10 activities aimed at involving young people in volunteering will be implemented by project participants in partnership with local CSOs.

❖ ***Youth is engaged in policy- and decision-making at the subnational level***

The UNDP initiated an external assessment of the results and impact of youth led initiatives implemented with UNDP support, namely civic education for youth workers, youth banks, U-Inn and mentorship programme for young people to provide the UNDP, stakeholders and implementing partners with the results achieved throughout 2017-2020. The main objective of the assignment is to assess the efficacy of implemented initiatives, relevance of their activities, specific contributions and impact, efficiency and cost effectiveness. The assessment should highlight strengths, weaknesses/gaps, good practices and provide recommendations for similar initiatives for youth in Ukraine. The report will be presented in September 2021.

[A catalogue of best practices of youth work](#) - 2020 was prepared and published in February 2021 and widely used for the promotion of youth work across the country; as of June 2021, it was downloaded 2873 times. The main thematic focus of the publication is the use of digital tools in youth work with an emphasis on the transformation initiatives during quarantine restrictions. The catalogue includes 107 stories from all oblasts of Ukraine focusing on the use of youth participation instruments, volunteering, human rights education, democratization, and digital tools in youth work, youth engagement through social networks, digital literacy for young people. In total, 29 percent of the submitted practices contribute to the achievement of SDG 17; 20,8 percent - to SDG 17; 20 percent - to SDG 3; 18,8 percent - to SDG 11 and 11,8 percent to SDG 16. 16 percent of all practices were submitted by organizations from small communities.

Output 3. Challenges

1. The sustainability of the Youth Worker Programme, including its specialized courses, depends mostly on state and subnational financing. The level of understanding among the management of the regional authorities and local self-government bodies about the priorities of youth work is uneven across the country.
2. Despite making tremendous step forward with the adoption of the State Target Social Programme "Youth of Ukraine 2021-2025" and the Law on the Foundations of the Youth Policy, the biggest challenge is now with the implementation of those policies. The Ministry of Youth and Sports will require additional staff in an already understaffed institution and approached the UNDP with the request to support several experts to establish a Reform Office.

Output 3. Next steps

1. The UNDP will provide expert support to the capacity development of the Ministry of Youth and Sports as well as contribute to the implementation of the State Social Target Programme "Youth of Ukraine 2021– 2025" and the Law on Basics Principles of Youth Policy in a transparent and participatory manner.
2. Support the specialised course for civil servants on development of the youth programmes on the subnational level to speed up the implementation of the State Programme.

SYNERGIES

In framework of the project implementation in the first half of 2021, the following synergies were established to avoid overlapping and effectively use the resources:

Together with International Renaissance Foundation "Human Rights and Justice" programme, the Project supports civil society efforts to respond to and document conflict related human rights violations through a joint competition "Respect for Human Rights and Administration of Justice in the Context of Armed Conflict in Ukraine" with the total budget of the competition was 112,000 USD with UNDP contributing up to 50,000 USD.

Synergies with other UNDP projects has brought about a meeting with the participants of the internship programme in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. This meeting was requested by the Secretariat of the VRU because of the high interest among interns to get to know more regarding the UNDP in Ukraine. The location of this meeting was very symbolic – Vernadsky National library of Ukraine which has served as a United Nations depository library since 1964 (the library receives all English and Russian language publications from the United Nations and its special institutions). The Project supported this event because youth is one of the primary focuses of our work and it was a great opportunity to showcase UNDP initiatives including those aimed at young people.

CSDR has received a request from the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine to support development of the mechanism of institutional support of CSOs of people with disabilities. Project has established the working group and invited the representatives of the key organizations who have major experience in providing such support to civil society organizations – The Embassy of Sweden (SIDA), ISAR Ednannia, The International Renaissance Foundation, PACT, The Ukrainian Culture Fund and others. A working group has assessed the current situation with CSOs of people with disabilities (PWD) and identified the most relevant approaches which are available for implementation in Ukraine and have drafted a paper on the institutional support which was presented in the Ministry.

In 2020 the UNDP supported the Government of Ukraine in organizing consultations with civil society on the new Open Government Partnership Action Plan. This year, during Open Government Week in May 2021, the UNDP and other development partners, as well as civil society organizations, have supported the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers in developing a [comprehensive agenda](#) for the OGP Week which resulted in more than 50 events all over Ukraine.

The Project has initiated a multidimensional cooperation with the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. CSDR grantee Vox Ukraine supports SSSU in improving collection of data including sex-disaggregated data and this cooperation allowed engaging other UNDP projects. For example, the Swiss-Ukrainian Project "Strengthening Business Associations of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (Stage 2)" presented its research "Women and Men in Leadership Positions in Ukraine: 2017-2020" which is based purely on sex-disaggregated data and might be used by the SSSU to improve their own approaches. Moreover, this event was included into the official list of events during the Open Government Week.

To engage active youth, the UNDP presented its activities to 50 young men and women, participants of the internship programme at the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. In cooperation with other UNDP portfolios a special event was conducted on the premises of the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine.

12. Deviations from planning in the original programme document

Give an account of significant differences in implementation compared with the approved project document.

No deviations from planning in the original programme document occurred during the reporting period.

13. Sustainability and exit strategy

The sustainability and exit strategy of the project remains unchanged, and foresees the following logic:

The sustainability of the project approach has been further maintained through the CSO Hubs Network. The CSO hubs Network is officially registered as a union which demonstrates signs of financial sustainability. All members of the Network have established and are maintaining cooperation with local civil society groups and subnational authorities. The CSO hubs Network has a strong capacity to engage citizens and CSOs in promoting democratic reforms and human rights at subnational level, as seen by the results of the joint advocacy campaigns.

The Youth Worker Programme is now an integral part of the State Target Social Programme "Youth of Ukraine 2021-2025" and establishes a sustainable framework for the youth civic engagement component of the project, as it is funded by the state and co-funded by local budgets, and thus is replicated across Ukraine regardless of the amount of financial support from UNDP. The Law on Basic Principles of Youth Policy is envisioning youth workers as a component within infrastructure for youth policy implementation. These are important steps towards recognition of the Youth Worker as a profession.

With regard to Ukraine's human rights commitments, CEDAW concluding observations and UPR recommendations, as well as shadow reporting to other UN HR treaties, are the guiding documents for state and non-state parties throughout the next reporting cycle, as the state assumes responsibility for their implementation. [The Ukrainian government have adopted an Action Plan on the implementation of the third cycle of UPR recommendations, the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the CEDAW recommendations](#), the law on preventing and counteracting domestic violence, and the [State Social Programme for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men](#). The President of Ukraine has signed the National Human Rights [Strategy](#) in March 2021 and the Government has complemented it with the respective action plan in June 2021. UNDP has significantly contributed to the development of these documents and advocated for their adoption.

14. HRBA and Gender equality

During the reporting period, HRBA and gender were addressed by UNDP via the following remarks:

1. Integrating gender and HRBA into grantees' activities

Three supported advocacy initiatives of the CSO Hubs Network members focus on analysing local policy documents from HRBA and gender perspective and advocating for the adoption of necessary changes. The overall results of these campaigns ensured the adoption of 30 subnational policies.

Training on gender responsive communication and sexual harassment was conducted for the members of the CSO hubs Network during working meetings and for all new grantees during their induction training.

7 CSO projects to address GBV and domestic violence were supported.

2. Support to civic monitoring of the international human rights treaties

Due to COVID-19 pandemic the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies allowed later submissions of the thematic reports so human rights reporting was rescheduled for 2021 in many countries. UNDP in Ukraine is supporting the Coalition Women's CSOs to monitor the implementation of the National Action Plan on the Implementation of the Recommendations provided in the CEDAW Concluding Observations.

3. Engaging youth and aligning their work at the local level with SDGs, and particularly with SDG 5 - gender equality

Yurii Romashko, who is a co-founder and Executive Director of the CSO "Institute of Analysis and Advocacy" (one of the CSO Hubs), was selected to be one of 8 global young leaders of the joint UNDP and Samsung [Generation17 initiative](#). He is the only representative from Europe. Led by Yurii, Institute of Analysis and Advocacy is one of the top 100 think tanks according to the "Global Go to Think Tank Index Report" in the category "Best think tanks in Central and Eastern Europe." Under Yuriy's leadership the team is digitally transforming their hometown, IAA introduced the "Poltava - smart city" information ecosystem. The IAA team developed and transferred to the authorities two web resources: "Affordable Medicines" (increasing transparency in the use of drugs purchased with budget funds), and a price register and public dashboard for declaring changes in retail prices for social and anti-epidemic goods during the pandemic.

UNDP supports the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine in establishing a communication platform called the First Youth TV Channel. It was established in December 2020 to conduct an annual forum of the Youth Workers in an innovative and online way. But because of the successful launch it was decided to sustain this format by transforming it into the communication platform for the Youth CSOs. A coordinator was hired for the dedicated development of the platform and according to the concept its thematic areas will be building around Sustainable Development Goals because Ukrainian youth is very alert and perceptive to the values of the SDGs.

15. 'Added Value' and Advisory from contract partners

Provide examples of how the contract partners have provided "added value" to their partner(s)

To be reported at project completion.

16. Lessons learned

Mention 1-3 important lessons learned during the reporting period.

The following lessons learned were indicated during the reporting period:

1. Due to COVID-19 pandemic related public uncertainty, lockdowns and economy downturn, there was a significant growth of reported cases of domestic violence. The overwhelming response from the civil society to the open competition announced by UNDP which submitted almost 100 proposals signifies that this issue is on the high agenda in territorial communities. UNDP and the other development partners should further support the civil society efforts and advocate for stronger government policies to respond to GBV and domestic violence.
2. Adoption of the National Human Rights Strategy, National Strategy on Barrier-Free society and several other key documents demonstrates that there is a good momentum for advancing human rights issues even further. First Lady, Olena Zelenska, pays much attention to the human rights and inclusion issues and there is a window of opportunity which should be used to push for the implementation of the adopted documents with engagement of civil society.

17. Comments on the financial reporting

Please refer to Annex A: Financial status.

Project expenses in the reporting period constituted USD 267,873 or 42.23% of the budgeted amount for 2021. Cumulative expenses amounted 89.58% of the overall budget.

Annexes

Annex A. Financial status

Annex B. Status in logical framework

Annex C. Risk Analysis

Annex D. [CSO hubs assessment inception report](#)

