



# FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT (0 draft)

July 2014 – December 2017

“Women in Politics” Programme, Chişinău, December 2017



United Nations  
MOLDOVA



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## FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

### UN Joint Programme

**“Enhancing Women’s Political Representation through  
Improved Capacity and Enhanced Support in Moldova”**

*July 2014 – December 2017*

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

<b>AAPM</b>	Association of Advertising Agencies
<b>API</b>	Association of Independent Press
<b>CALM</b>	Congress of Local Authorities
<b>CEC</b>	Central Electoral Commission
<b>CCET</b>	Centre for Continuous Electoral Training
<b>CPD</b>	Centre Partnership for Development NGO
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>DEC</b>	District Electoral Commission
<b>EEF</b>	East-Europe Foundation NGO
<b>EMB</b>	Electoral Management Body
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GEP</b>	Gender Equality Platform
<b>LPA</b>	Local Public Authority
<b>MHLSPF</b>	Ministry of Health, Labour, Social Protection and Family
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>PCIO</b>	Parliamentary Constituency and Information Offices
<b>PEB</b>	Precinct Electoral Bureau
<b>RM</b>	Republic of Moldova
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>ToT</b>	Training of Trainers
<b>TSM</b>	Temporary Special Measures
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UN Women</b>	United National Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>WiP</b>	Women in Politics
<b>WEM</b>	Women in Electoral Management

## Executive summary

Over the past several years the United Nations (UN) has provided support to national and local stakeholders in Moldova in strengthening democratic governance and advancing women's rights through initiatives aimed at reforming the electoral system and decentralization of government. Following on these contributions, Women in Politics (WiP) Programme was designed to provide an enabling environment for increased representation and participation of women in politics. This programme was launched in 2014, through sole funding at USD 2,940,118 by Sweden through Swedish International Development Agency (Sida). Following agreement with the Embassy of Sweden, a one-year cost extension of the Programme has been granted for period January-December 2017, and the budget increased to \$3.485.690.

The assistance was grounded initially in the Swedish Country Strategy for Moldova 2011- 2014 which supported action to increase the number of women in leading positions in various social sectors and strengthened women's rights; and then aligned with the Swedish Results Strategy for Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Western Balkans and Turkey 2014-2020 that supports the achievement of three gender focused results in Moldova including implementation of normative gender equality frameworks and strengthening women's participation in politics and decision-making. WiP Programme was implemented jointly by two UN Agencies: UN Women and UNDP and two Moldova based NGOs, Centre "Partnership for Development" (CPD) and East Europe Foundation (EEF).

"Enhancing women's political representation through improved capacity and enhanced support in Moldova" (aka WiP Programme) was designed to provide an enabling environment for increased representation and participation of women in politics, as response to the recommendations issued by the UPR Working Group and CEDAW Committee. Implemented jointly by two United Nations (UN) Agencies, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), this Programme continued the long-term engagement of the UN to support national and local stakeholders in Moldova in strengthening democratic governance and advancing women's rights through initiatives aimed at reforming the electoral system and decentralization of government. This support was grounded in the mandate of the UN and enshrined in its main strategic documents and normative frameworks for gender equality and women's empowerment including UDHR, CEDAW Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and MDGs.

Conditions for bringing more Moldovan women to the political and decision-making space have been created through significant contributions of WiP Programme. Continued programming should pay attention to lessons learnt to deepen the positive results secured through this first phase of WiP Programme.

Action focusing on women's political empowerment is an important angle to bring more women in politics. However, this may prove limiting in scope in areas where gender equality is poorly known and a political discourse is seen as disadvantageous.

Although significant progress had been made towards promoting women's political empowerment through Law 71, further support is needed to improve aspects of this law, as well as facilitate understanding and implementation of this legal framework at the central and local level.

WiP Programme has contributed to sustaining results acquired through previous programming through creating/strengthening institutional and individual capacity especially at the central level. However, more work is needed to consolidate these results at the local level and especially among disadvantaged groups and in the media as one of the main actors in advocacy work.

Gender equality and human rights considerations have been integrated into programme design and implementation. However, addressing discrimination and inequalities faced by women in politics should ensure that men also participate equally in programming as "agents of change."

While project implementation is described as successful, future programming and evaluation needs to consider limitations observed during this brief report.

Important findings of the Programme are:

- Increasing participation of women in politics and decision-making takes time and interventions need to take this into account.
- Work with political parties can be challenging in a context where there is no accountability by these parties.
- Partnering with CSOs needs to be managed carefully so as not to create fragmentation.
- Complementary support and overlap need to be managed through keeping communication channels open.
- Study visits provide an opportunity for quick learning and action planning.
- Drafting and adoption of legal frameworks require comprehensive strategies, need to be highly participatory and support inclusion and ownership.
- Capacitating local community members (through training, support to conduct gender analyses and mentoring) while also empowering and supporting aspiring women to articulate their needs and priorities and participate in decision-making processes has produced satisfactory results.
- The decision of project staff to reach out to and establish partnership with various sub-contractors/subgrantees contributed to results that otherwise might have not been achieved with the same rate of success.

## Results

### **Outcome 1: Legal frameworks and policies to advance women's right to participate in decision making at national and local levels are reformed/adopted and/or implemented.**

National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2017-2021 and its Action Plan was adopted on April 28, 2017 based on Governmental decision no. 259 and published in the Official Gazette no. 171-180 on June 2, 2017. Strategy envisages under its *General Objective No. 1 Ensuring gender dimension a specific objective* and the Specific objective 1.1: Strengthen the legal and institutional mechanisms promoting women in the decision making. Under this objective, 12 activities are envisaged on women's political participation, such as development and promotion of mechanism of women and men's placement on candidates' lists, enhancing capacities of women in decision making on gender equality, strengthening the women mayors' network, promotion of women in decision making through informative campaigns and media products, etc.

The *Law no. 71 on amending and supplementing specific legal acts in the area of gender equality*<sup>1</sup>, also known as the draft Legislative Package no. 180, was voted by the Parliament in the second and final hearing on 14 April 2016 and entered into force on 27 May 2016. The Law modifies 15 legislative acts to ensure better respect of gender equality. The Legislative Package 180 was voted by an almost absolute majority of Members of Parliament (86 out of 87 present, 1 abstained). The adoption took place after nearly two years since the first hearing in the Parliament in July 2014. It is a culmination of a multi-year process that has involved all branches of Government of the country, as well as its civil society, media, experts and UN and developments partners. Civil society organizations and gender advocates have engaged in long-term and persistent advocacy with Parliament and Political Parties. In relation to the introduction of a 40% gender quota on party lists, the very important clause for placement of either gender on party lists contained in the draft Law 180 was not voted. This will likely weaken the effect of the Law, due to the tendency of parties to put women in lower positions on their lists.

Following adoption of the Law, the Women in Politics Programme worked on raising awareness of the new provisions among different groups, both duty bearers and rights holders, and towards the implementation of the specific provisions in the area of sexist advertising. In this regard, the draft Regulation for establishment and functioning of the Experts' Council in the field of advertising, with a special focus on sexism in advertising, was improved based on international expert review and consultations with representatives of state institutions and advertising agencies. The draft Regulation

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<sup>1</sup> <http://lex.justice.md/md/365019/>

remains to be reviewed by the Competition Council, and subsequently to undergo a public consultation process and Government adoption.

The Programme also contributed to strengthening the capacities of the civil society Gender Equality Platform since it was established as it was instrumental in the adoption of the Law 71 and has been recognized as a key actor in support of Government efforts on gender equality. This is visible from their inclusion as a partner in the new National Strategy on Advancing Gender Equality (2017-2022) which is currently pending adoption by the Government.

Despite the adoption of the gender quota, one of the major constraint is the perceived lack of political party leaders to adopt placement requirements. This still allows the possibility to party leadership to place 40% of women on the bottom of the candidates' lists.

Another significant constraint that may jeopardize the application of adopted gender quota for the 2018 Parliamentary Elections is the change of the electoral system<sup>2</sup> for the Parliament from Proportional to Mixed Electoral System. Under such circumstances, the consolidate voice of the Civil society and development partners will have to be more present at the local level, encouraging local branches of political parties to nominate more women in Single Mandate Electoral Districts.

One more limitation that may endanger 40% quota in the Government composition is the new Law on Government adopted on July 2017<sup>3</sup>.

The CEC and CCET has played a leading role in the establishment of the International Association of Women in Electoral Management Bodies, an initiative that has enabled the Moldovan experience on gender mainstreaming in electoral processes to be shared with other countries' EMBs.

Drawing on its improved data collection and analytical capacities, the CEC and CCET have led to production of a comprehensive "eye-opening" set of sex-disaggregated data on different aspects of the electoral process which allows for monitoring of trends and advocacy by different actors.

### **Output 1: Capacity at national and sub-national levels to develop and implement legal frameworks and policies to advance women's right to participate in decision making enhanced.**

During its duration, the Programme supported creation and activity of the Gender Equality Platform (30 NGOs and individuals) and their Gender Equality Agenda for Actions which served as a baseline for advancing women during previous Parliamentary and local elections and which will be undertaken during the future ones to be undertaken during future parliamentary and local elections.

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<sup>2</sup> The changes to the electoral system were introduces on July 2017 by Law no. 154  
<http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=370943>

<sup>3</sup> <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=370935>



WiP Programme supported **high-level advocacy for adoption and implementation of the temporary special measures jointly with the civil society and media**, utilizing a variety of strategies throughout the Programme implementation.

One-one advocacy with key decision-makers took place during numerous meetings organized at the initiative of CSOs in the course of the year, and during meetings held with UN representatives. Decision-makers both from Government (Prime Minister, Minister of Labour, Social Policy and Family) and Parliament (Speaker, Deputy Speaker of Parliament, MPs) were targeted.

The advocacy on TSM's adoption and further on the promotion of the newly adopted legal provisions has been carried out through TV public debates with political parties, TV shows and press conferences. 10 TV spots on promoting gender quotas in politics and in the decision making, presenting the best practices examples of the states, which have already adopted the quotas, as well as TV spots on promoting the legislative innovations have been broadcasted on the national and regional TV channels.

The Gender Equality Platform (GEP) seized all the opportunities to advocate for TSM including through Public Forums, Position Papers, Declarations, Press Conferences, Press Clubs and public actions in front of the Parliament.

Mass media has been widely mobilized by the WiP programme to serve as an advocacy platform for TSM adoption. Media actors have expressed their position and their concerns about the lack of actions by the Parliament regarding the adoption of legislative packages, publishing numerous articles and stories advocating for urgent adoption of Package Law no. 180, mentioning the arguments for ensuring gender equality and increasing representation of women in politics and decision making.

Another way to advocate on adoption of the TSM was to contribute to the organization in 2014 and 2015 of several Forums aiming to promote women leadership and women's equal participation and representation:

- National Forum of Women in Business;
- National Forum of Women with Disabilities;
- National Forum of Women Mayors;
- National Forum of Women Lawyers;
- National Forum of Women from ethnic minorities.

The Forums have resulted in Resolutions requesting an increased representation of women in decision-making positions, including by being adequately represented in all Government coordination/advisory platforms through the means of TSM. The Resolutions have been submitted to the Parliament, Government and relevant stakeholders.

Also, in 2014 a study visit to Brussels has been organised for a group of 13 gender advocates representing Networks of Women Mayors, Lawyers, and Women with disabilities, Business women, Trade Unions women' organizations, and Romani women from Moldova where these women-leaders have acquired valuable lobby and advocacy skills on advancing women's political representation as a

result of bilateral exchange meetings held with: the European Women Lobby (most important platform of lobbying for women's rights that unites over 2,000 member-organizations), high-ranking officials from the Gender Equality Sub-Directorate under the European Commission's Justice Directorate, female politicians from Belgium, representatives of the European Disability Forum, European Trade Union Confederation, European Women Lawyers Association and Business Professional Women of Europe. As a follow up to the visit, the respective group of women-leaders has established a Task Force to further advocate for TSM adoption in the final reading, especially in the context of upcoming local elections.

Public at large became more aware about the stereotypes existing in society on women's implication in politics and about the positions and profiles of women and men candidates and elected at the local level due to the findings of comprehensive research "Gender Equality Barometer", launched in May 2017.

Main researches and legislative changes were illustrated in Infographics in three languages and widely disseminated via media and public events<sup>4</sup>.

Based on the fact that sexism in media and in advertising has been defined and regulated for the first time by the Law no. 71 (including establishment of sanctions for non-compliance), Women in Politics Programme focused specifically on the area of **combating sexism in advertising and media**, in partnership with the MHSPF and the Association of Advertising Agencies (AAPM). The legislation in the field of sexism in advertising and social advertising has been reviewed and relevant amendments have been proposed in order to correlate national legal framework to the international standards. A Guideline<sup>5</sup> to assess sexism in advertising has been developed and published. The draft Regulation for establishment and functioning of the Experts' Council in the field of advertising, with a special focus on sexism in advertising was consulted in a series of roundtables and workshops with participation of an international expert.

In 2017, the Programme also conducted a policy review of the legal framework concerning incompatibility requirements that are applied to local elected officials (mayors, local, municipal and rayonal council persons). Given that most of the women involved in local politics come from the educations/social care fields while men come from business background, incompatibility provisions are expected to have a more disproportionate effect on elected women. The legal study will be shared with MPs and other decision makers in order to take action towards the existing legal framework.

To intensify the advocacy efforts for gender equality, nine male champions have been identified to publicly express their commitment to women's empowerment and participation in politics and public life, and join the global UN Women HeForShe Solidarity Movement for Gender Equality. These men come from different professional and social backgrounds and are the first ones involved in a nationwide awareness campaign, which is expected to attract more male champions. Three "call for action"

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<sup>4</sup> <http://md.one.un.org/content/unct/moldova/ro/home/presscenter/press-releases/barometrul-de-gen-cum-particip-femeile-i-brbaii-in-politic-i-in/>  
<sup>5</sup> <http://www.aapm.md/rus/rukovodstvo-po-otcenke-seksizma-v-reklame.html>

video spots<sup>6</sup> with the HeForShe champions' declarations to support women have been broadcast on TV with a nationwide coverage, including in Gagauzia, as well as widely shared on various on-line platforms.

### **Output 1.2: Capacities at all levels to promote women's participation in electoral processes both as candidates and voters enhanced.**

Over 10 organizations supporting women candidates and demanding women's equal participation within political party nominations have been receiving capacity development support (7 political clubs established in 7 districts, 3 women's organizations of 3 political parties, Romani Women and Girls Network, Gender Equality Platform consisting of 30 organizations).

A curriculum for capacity building of women before, during and after the parliamentary and local elections was elaborated based on several needs' assessment exercises organised with women candidates for the parliamentary elections, women heads of governmental agencies and departments, heads of districts, women councillors and women mayors.

Nearly 1000 (949) women candidates received training or individual coaching before the local elections through the combined efforts of the WiP Programme partners. 8 of these were subsequently elected as mayors and 90 as local councilors. Significant effort was invested to identify women candidates in the first place, through nomination campaign and outreach in the communities. In 2016, over 1000 women received capacity building on leadership and political participation aimed at enhancing their skills to serve as mayors, as elected or appointed officials at the local level, as well to run as candidates for future elections. In 2017, other **205** women received support and capacity building to efficiently lead in their communities or at their work place.

#### ***Support to CSO umbrella organizations***

The WiP Programme from its very start has been designed as a joint collaboration with two prominent human rights and gender NGOs: East Europe Foundation (EEF) and Centre Partnership for Development (CPD) that are equal partners with UN Women and UNDP. One of the main objectives of EEF and CPD was to consolidate the platform of NGOs active in the area of gender equality promotion and to use it as a tool of pressure on the stakeholders responsible for TSM adoption. This objective was achieved with the establishment of the Gender Equality Platform in July 2015. Currently, the Platform brings together 30 prominent NGOs and individuals committed to gender equality (such as Women's Political Club 50/50, Centre Partnership for Development, Gender Centre, Promo-Lex, CReDO, East Europe Foundation, Tineri si Liberi Resource Centre, Association of Women's Entrepreneurs from Moldova, etc.).

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<sup>6</sup> Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M67qHSGpX4A>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttIMuboABuo>

The WiP Programme has further strengthened the institutional capacity of the GEP through supporting its Secretariat function in 2015, 2016 and 2017 and the development of three key documents to guide its work in the upcoming period: Gender Equality Agenda for 2014-2018,

Strategic Plan of the GEP for 2016-2018 and Action Plan for 2016-2017. The Platform was also entrusted with the administration and updating of the gender equality web platform [www.egalitadedegen.md](http://www.egalitadedegen.md) which was originally developed by UN Women. The web-page has been re-branded and expanded by the Platform with information about its work and with updates on developments in the area of gender equality. It is intended to serve as a knowledge hub containing various resources (reports, briefs, training materials, etc.) on different topics that can be easily accessed by the general public. It is enriched with news/ articles and resources on a continuous basis.

The program facilitated the on-going coordination among civil society organizations for scaling up advocacy efforts, identifying and disseminating best practices.

### *Using arts to change gender stereotypes on women in leadership*

The WIP Programme has made significant contribution to increasing **media reporting on positive and inspirational representation of women**, as well as challenging public's perceptions on "typical" positions and occupations of women and men. This has been done through partnerships with the Association of Independent Press, selected Public Relations (PR) agencies, notable journalists and photographers in the country.

Through the success stories women leaders from different walks of life – in politics, business, civil service, civil society, etc. – and from all corners of the country, have been identified and featured on print, online and audio-visual media.

**300 "success stories" of women leaders** from different walks of life – in politics, business, civil service, civil society, etc. – and from all corners of the country, have been identified and featured on print, online and audio-visual media in the course of the year. The stories reflect women in leading positions, non-traditional occupations, and who contributed to their communities' development. Having women prominently featured in media as successful politicians/entrepreneurs/opinion leaders or in other prominent roles is contributing to changing both public perceptions about the role of women in society, and journalist practice that has traditionally portrayed women in secondary or sexist roles.

An additional **60 success stories** about women entrepreneurship were developed and disseminated on different online platforms<sup>7</sup> as well as in a brochure. **15 short videos** were developed featuring some of the most inspiring women leaders in business.<sup>8</sup> The information about all existing resources for women entrepreneurs is presented on a web platform: [www.platformafemeilor.md](http://www.platformafemeilor.md). The platform aims at providing easy access to information for women entrepreneurs, as well as encouraging interested women to start their own businesses by showcasing positive examples.

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<sup>7</sup> Former ealider.md platform integrated within platformafemeilor.md, and AFAM's Facebook page)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpH2N7a4AGY>

The stories reflect women in leading positions, non-traditional occupations and as contributors to their communities' development. This is contributing to changing both public perceptions about the role of women in society and journalist practice that has traditionally portrayed women in secondary or sexist roles. Besides this, the *journalists* involved in the developing of success stories became more aware about how to present women and gender equality topics in a non-stereotypical way, as well as to avoid sexism in language and in photos/ images. The WiP Programme provided individual feedback on each success story and the improved performance of at least 18 journalists is noticeable.

The first of its kind in the country national [Photo contest "Equality through lenses"](#) launched in 2015 for amateur and professional photographers resulted in 31 photo exhibitions and 30 debates on the topic of "*Women and Men seen through the photographers' lens: realities and inspirations*" featuring the best 50 photos.

The exhibitions were organized in the period December, 2015- April, 2016 in Chisinau (7) and other 24 districts of Moldova and were accompanied by public debates on gender equality. The events took place in different educational institutions from throughout the country and were attended primarily by students. The communities where the exhibitions and debates took place are portrayed on the online [map](#)<sup>9</sup> which includes pictures and quotes from the participants of each exhibition. About 15,000 women and men viewed the exhibitions and 1,650 attended the public debates. The [Facebook page](#) created to promote the contest and showcase the photos is followed by 1,317 people. Following completion of this initiative, the 50 photos were handed over to the Academy of Arts, Theatre and Music and are currently exhibited at the Academy. Moreover, the pictures were exhibited at the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History during the European museum nights on May 21<sup>st</sup>, and was visited by hundreds of people during day and night.

During 2014, the Centre for Continuous Electoral Training (CCET) has developed new capacities in addressing gender equality in electoral process. The support received from the "Women in Politics" programme resulted in the following: CCET has developed gender-mainstreamed training materials for electoral administrators; a dedicated training module on ensuring gender equality in elections and a gender-sensitive Electoral Communication Guide have been developed and incorporated in CCET' training programs. The CCET' team of trainers has developed adequate skills and knowledge and have delivered the gender equality module in the training of the electoral administrators involved in the 2014 Parliamentary elections. As result of WiP support, a total of 95 District Election Council (DEC) members, including 46 women (of which 11 presidents, 10 vice-presidents and 24 secretaries) have been equipped with knowledge and skills on ensuring a gender sensitive parliamentary elections' management process. 11,163 people, nearly 80% of which are women, have been trained by the CCET prior to the local elections of 2015 on the basis of electoral training materials gender-mainstreamed with support of the WiP Programmes. *The CCET has been a prominent voice for gender equality in elections and politics, and together with CEC, Moldova engaged directly over 2,000 people, primarily*

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<sup>9</sup> Map of the Photo contest "Equality through lenses" <http://coderi.net/profile-map/index-ro.html>

youth and people living outside Chisinau, in awareness raising events on elections and gender equality in the course of 2015.

Women's organizations of political parties received support to strengthen their capacities to recruit, train and support potential women candidates. Based on the expressed will, the Women's organization of 3 political parties (Liberal Party, Democrat Party and Liberal Democrat Party) have benefited from a number of capacity building activities provided by the Programme, including assessing institutional capacities; provision of tools on recruiting new members within women's organizations; and ToT for women's organizations on topics such as recruiting, communication skills, etc.

### **Output 1.3: Capacities of the Election Management Bodies on gender responsive electoral management enhanced.**

In the course of 2014-2017, the Women in Politics Programme supported the efforts of the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the Centre for Continuous Electoral Training (CCET) of Moldova in championing a strong gender perspective in election management and electoral processes. The key areas of cooperation and results are mentioned below.

#### *Civic education campaigns for specific groups of voters*

Prior to 2014 parliamentary and 2015 local elections, the Programme supported **8 CSO-ran voter education campaigns** that reached a total of 442,096 people including ethnic minority women, women with disabilities, first-time voters, etc. who have been encouraged and informed to cast meaningful vote. On average, the **voter turnout of the Roma population** during the 2015 local elections **increased by 60 %** in the target communities covered by the WiP supported voter education campaign complementary to other efforts and initiatives.

#### *Building gender-responsive capacities of electoral officials*

Prior to 2015 local elections, and 2016 presidential elections, a total of **17,091 people** (including 13417 women and 3674 men) received gender sensitive electoral trainings on basis of the 14-electoral training materials gender-mainstreamed with support of the "Women in Politics" Programme. The Programme has enhanced the gender related expertise of **25 local and regional CCET trainers**<sup>10</sup>.

#### *Enhancing awareness of electoral stakeholders on gender perspective of different electoral systems*

Prior to the electoral system change in Moldova from Proportional Representation (PR list) to a Mixed Parallel one<sup>11</sup>, the Programme has supported the Central Electoral Commission of Moldova (CEC) and the Centre for Continuous Electoral Training (CCET) to inform people in a nonpartisan and inclusive way about all electoral systems and their gender equality implications. Therefore, a total of 69 people

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<sup>10</sup> Press release "22 electoral officials trained today on becoming leaders tomorrow", 15 May, 2015, <http://cicde.md/index.php?pag=news&id=1063&rid=777&l=ro>

<sup>11</sup> 50 Members of Parliament (MP) will be elected in Single Member Districts (SMD) using the First Past the Post (FPTP) system, and 51 through a closed lists PR system. Electoral Code of the Republic of Moldova <http://cec.md/files/files/Legi/Codul%20electoral.pdf>

(45 women and 24 men) representing 11 CSOs, 10 political parties and 8 media organizations learned about the peculiarities of different electoral systems and the recommended Temporary Special Measures (TSM) that can be applied under each system to advance the representation of women, and other under-represented groups, in politics and decision making<sup>12</sup>. As result of pressure from WiP supported Gender Equality Platform<sup>13</sup>, specialized international bodies and society at large, a series of TSM<sup>14</sup> have been introduced in the new electoral law to encourage the nomination of women candidates in SMDs, including: (a) 10% increase in the yearly public funding, and a multiplication factor for each female candidate elected in a SMD for parties that will put forward at 40% of women candidates in the respective constituencies and (b) 50% decrease of the number of signatures required to register a woman candidate in SMD compared to men candidates<sup>15</sup>.

### *Gender-disaggregated electoral statistics*

With the support of the Programme and in partnership with UNDP Democracy Programme, [the CEC and CCET produced, for the first time, a series of infographics](#)<sup>16</sup> presenting a comprehensive and user-friendly analysis of data on the participation of women and men throughout the electoral cycle – as voters, candidates, elected officials, observers, beneficiaries of electoral training during the 2014 parliamentary elections, 2015 local elections and 2016 presidential elections. The respective infographics, along with the other actions of the CEC and CCET in advancing gender responsive and inclusive electoral practices, have been presented in various international fora<sup>17</sup> and acknowledges as a good practice.

### *Gender balance in election management*

The Central Electoral Commission has undertaken dedicated efforts to address the under-representation of women in top leadership positions of the electoral management bodies (EMB). Therefore, in 2015 CEC issued a **decision recommending a balanced representation of men and women in leadership** (at chair, deputy chair, and secretary of the Council positions) of District Level Electoral Commissions (DEC)<sup>18</sup>. Complementarily, an educational and awareness video advocating for higher representation of women in leadership positions within EMBS<sup>19</sup>, has been developed and incorporated

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<sup>12</sup> Article: Moldova: Enhancing awareness of electoral stakeholders on the gender perspective of different electoral systems” <http://www.bridge-project.org/en/news2/europe-cis/1588-moldova-enhancing-awareness-of-electoral-stakeholders-on-the-gender-perspective-of-different-electoral-systems.html>

<sup>13</sup> Position of the Platform for Gender Equality regarding the draft law no.60 of 14.03.17, on changing the electoral system in Moldova. <http://egalitadedegen.md/en/pozitia-platfomei-pentru-egalitate-de-gen-fata-de-proiectul-de-lege-nr-60-din-14-03-17-care-presupune-schimbar-sistemului-electoral/>

<sup>14</sup> Electoral Code of the Republic of Moldova, Articles 41, para(21) and (22) <http://cec.md/files/files/Legi/Codul%20electoral.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, Article 80, para (1) <http://cec.md/files/files/Legi/Codul%20electoral.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/library/effective\\_governance/infograficele\\_egalitatea-de-gen-in-procesele-electorale-din-rep/](http://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/library/effective_governance/infograficele_egalitatea-de-gen-in-procesele-electorale-din-rep/)  
<sup>17</sup> World Exhibition on Best Practices of Training and Using Information Technologies in the Electoral Process<sup>17</sup>, January 12-17, 2016, New Delhi, India; Workshop on the [role of electoral management bodies in enhancing women’s participation in elections](#)<sup>17</sup>, April 19-21, 2016, Dead Sea, Jordan; [25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Association of European Election Officials \(ACEEEO\)](#), September 21-23, 2016, Tirana, Albania<sup>17</sup>; [Seventh Global Elections Organization \(GEO-7\) Conference](#), November 6-10, 2016, Washington, United States of America.

<sup>18</sup> Quote, point 4 of CEC decision “Upon election of the chair, deputy chair and Secretary of the Council, it is recommended to observe the gender balance” CEC decision on the establishment of District Level Electoral Council (example Soldanesti), point.4, CEC, April 22, 2015, <http://www.cec.md/index.php?pag=news&id=1001&rid=12808&l=ro>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuW6SSmL7RI>

in the mandatory CCET training kit for electoral officials. For e.g. in 2015 local elections in progress has been achieved compared to 2014 parliamentary elections at the levels of women's representation as vice-presidents of Level II DEC - 49% in 2015 compared to 44% in 2011 - which represents a 11.4% increase.

In 2016, **two women** have been included in the CEC composition and both have been voted in leadership positions- i.e. chair and deputy chair - which constituted a premier for Moldova. Shortly after taking office, the programme provided tailor made capacity development to the new CEC leadership in the area of strategic and gender-sensitive communication and engagement with media.

### ***Association of Women in Electoral Management (WEM) - International***

The CEC and CCET have gained international recognition in mainstreaming a strong gender equality perspective in elections (including but not limited to implementation of gender statistics in elections, gender-responsible electoral trainings) and led the establishment of the [International Association of Women in Electoral Management – WEM International](#). Starting with 2015 when the two institutions embarked upon this initiative, Women in Politics Programme supported the development of the Association's conceptual framework (i.e. Strategic Plan and Charter) brand identity and website and offered critical support to carrying out the initial Secretariat function of WEM-International and the registration of the Association in Belgium in December 2017.

In 2017, the Programme supported WEM-International in organizing its first international thematic conference as an organization – the [Round Table “ Advancing Gender Equality in Elections: best practices”](#) which brought together in Moldova over 80 election and gender experts and electoral officials who shared their experience about the role of women participation in political and electoral processes and mechanisms to advance the engaging of women as candidates, elected and electoral officials.

### **Outcome 2: Gender equality advocates influence legal frameworks and policies to increase women's leadership and political participation.**

For the first time in the history of Moldova, Roma women (7 in total) were registered on electoral lists of political parties and as independent candidates in the local elections. 2 Romani women were elected as local counselors in Chetrosu village and in Riscani town – blazing trails and setting an example for other Romani women to follow. The Programme worked individually with each of these Roma women, encouraging them to run for the local elections, as part of dedicated awareness-raising workshops. New networks and platforms representing the rights of women from specific groups and bringing women in public life together have been established and have engaged in advocacy with decision-makers on agreed priorities, as well as are working internally to empower their members for stronger public and civic engagement. Various forms of dialogue took place between Members of Parliament



and women at the local level, for many of whom this represented the first opportunity to address their concerns directly to legislators and decision-makers. Significant tailor-made capacity development in the area of gender equality was provided to all key stakeholders in Parliament. Embedding gender equality in the ongoing work of Parliamentary structures, such as the Parliament Secretariat, Constituency Offices, and Standing Parliamentary Committees, as well as investing individually in each of the 21 women MPs, is likely to contribute to more gender sensitive Parliamentary operations, methods and work.

Women's leadership skills have been enhanced and they have taken a more active role towards solving pressing community problems and advancing gender equality, particularly at the local level. Over 2300 women have been involved in different capacity building activities during 2014 -2017 that enabled them to become more effective leaders. These include, but not limited to: political clubs in 7 districts that serve as knowledge and leadership centers for women before, during and after elections; pioneering mentorship programme that put women local councilors in the lead of 24 community initiatives in areas ranging from health to environment to violence against women; peer-to-peer learning and training sessions for women mayors and women local councilors that have led to them undertaking new initiatives to advance community well-being and good governance, mentorship program for women from communities where women are not represented, etc. In response to the Mid-Term Review of the Programme in 2016, new target groups have been added in capacity building activities, namely women mayors and men local/district councilors as well as there has been increased focus on hands-on and practical exchange of good practices between peers. Roma women and girls, as one of the most under-represented in decision-making group, have received support throughout the Programme's implementation to network and develop advocacy actions towards concrete problems. Bringing duty bearers (Members of Parliament) and rights holders (women and men from different communities and groups) together has resulted in 650 constituents from all corners of Moldova (84% women) raising their issues and demanding legislative actions, with concrete steps undertaken by legislators as a result. Increased leadership and commitment to gender equality issues was demonstrated by the Parliament Secretariat.

Challenging the entrenched journalist practice to represent women in secondary or sexist roles, women are now more prominently portrayed as successful politicians, entrepreneurs and opinion leaders. A series of trainings for journalists on equitable portraying women and men in media products and using of gender sensitive language have been conducted during the Programme's implementation. After the eight-month process of 30 media institutions carrying out self-assessment from gender perspective, an increase in gender balanced coverage was achieved, whereas women's representation as main protagonists increased by 7 percent points from September, 2015 to April, 2016. 7 media institutions (out of the 30) have achieved an almost equal representation of women and men in their coverage. 37 media institutions agreed to commit to concrete targets in ensuring more gender sensitive and non-sexist coverage. Individual journalists have also reported using more gender sensitive language in their reporting. This is contributing to changing public perceptions about the role of women in society.

Nevertheless, an external evaluation conducted as a follow up in 2017 identified that the results were not sustained.

### **Output 2.1: Capacities of the media on gender responsive coverage of political issues enhanced.**

Public at large became more aware and sensitive about women leadership due to increasing women's portraying in media. Since its launching, WiP Programme organized trainings which involved 93 journalists from various media institutions to build their capacities on gender sensitive reporting.

Using and refining a methodology piloted by UN Women in Moldova in previous years, 30 print, online and broadcast media were engaged in a process of self-assessment of their coverage from a gender perspective. A total of 54,588 media articles were evaluated in the process. This has driven further awareness and concrete actions towards achieving a fully gender-balanced coverage. Over the eight-month self-assessment process, the share of women featured as main protagonists has increased - from 14% in September 2015, to 21% in April 2016 in the media concerned.

In addition to discussing ways to increase the number of women protagonists in general and in sections where they are particularly missing (such as political), another focus of the round tables was on qualitative monitoring of content from the gender perspective. The qualitative monitoring aimed to complement the quantitative one, by focusing on how women are portrayed and the existence of pre-judgments and gender stereotypes in journalistic messages, including sensationalist and sexist reporting. Five external monitoring reports by an independent expert have been developed and presented at the round tables, spurring debate on portrayal of women in media<sup>20</sup>

As a result of the increased sensitivity of participating media and the high visibility ensured of the self-assessment process, a total 37 media so far (29 participating and 8 additional ones) signed a commitment to respecting gender equality principles, specifying concrete steps they will perform.

Although, increase was visible across all thematic areas analyzed: social topics, political topics and economic topics and seven of the 30 participating media outlets have nearly balanced their coverage, achieving a relatively equal presence of men and women as main subjects in their political, economic and social sections an external evaluation conducted in 2017 showed that the results were not sustained.

Guidelines "Gender Balance in media products"<sup>21</sup> has been elaborated and published by API experts as a knowledge base to be used by journalists and media directors in order to better understand gender equality principles in media. The Guidelines contains the following chapters: arguments for ensuring gender equality in media products, myths of promotion gender equality in media, gender language in

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<sup>20</sup> <http://api.md/news/view/ro-echilibrul-de-gen-in-mass-media-schimbarea-vine-de-la-jurnalisti-1201>  
<http://www.api.md/news/view/ro-jurnalistii-au-discutat-despre-impedimentele-in-reflectarea-echilibrata-a-realitatilor-de-gen-1217>  
<http://www.api.md/news/view/ro-echilibrul-de-gen-legislatie-practici-si-inovatii-1252>

<sup>21</sup> [http://api.md/upload/Ghid\\_gender\\_2016.pdf](http://api.md/upload/Ghid_gender_2016.pdf)

media, the national and international regulations on gender equality. The guidelines are available [online](#) for wider public use as well.

### **Output 2.2: Capacity of gender equality advocates to promote women's leadership and political participation strengthened.**

Diverse range of initiatives have been undertaken to demand inclusion of women's needs at both national and local levels. These include:

- Gender Equality Platform
- 5 Platforms of women representing women from different groups
- 7 women's political clubs
- Power mapping and needs assessment in 15 localities with predominant Roma population
- GirlsGoIT (Programme contribution to other partners' initiative)
- Forum "Partnership for an Inclusive and Prosperous Moldova"
- 3 regional workshops for business women
- 5 NGOs conducted women's empowerment campaigns at local level
- 24 small community initiatives undertaken by women local councilors at first mandate
- 7 community small initiatives undertaken by women leaders from 7 communities with zero representation of women in decision making
- National Network of Women with Disabilities has been launched
- 10 peer-to-peer learning visits in 15 communities (12 headed by women mayors and 3 by men mayors) for women mayors
- 3 regional initiatives launched by young Roma women and men
- 16 Days Campaign on ending violence against women, including those led by women MPs and women mayors placing the survivors at the center
- One of the two Roma women local councilors organized an initiative to encourage Romani women to participate in local council meetings

#### ***Support to women from under-represented groups***

Over 100 **Romani women** from across the countries, members of Romani Women and Girls Network (RWGN), participated in the meetings held in Chisinau. One of the meetings held in 2016 contributed to elaboration of the Strategic Plan for 2016-2019 and Action Plan for RWGN for 2016. The participants provided their inputs for development of these important strategic documents for the Network which were then consolidated by an expert and are being used as a basis for the current and future activities of the RWGN. The meetings also aimed at familiarizing women with the content of the previous Government Action Plan to Support Roma Ethnic Group in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2015 and the findings of its evaluation.

25 **young Roma** (17 girls and 8 boys) enhanced their capacities on gender equality, promotion of women's rights and on civic mobilizations by attending a first of its kind summer school dedicated to women's empowerment and gender equality in the period 24-29 June, 2016. The 6 days-long training programme was organized by Roma National Center with support of WIP Programme alongside others (Council of Europe and UN Women regional project on gender responsive policies). In addition to expanding their knowledge on the above issues, the participants developed and implemented 3 project initiatives aimed at practice advocacy and community mobilization techniques. These were related to: the importance of Romani girls' education, avoiding early marriages in Balti and Floresti and presenting positive examples of successful Romani women from Moldova and from abroad in 4 localities: Drochia, Gribova, Baraboi and Otaci, including visits to relevant institutions in Chisinau.

One of the two **elected Romani woman local councilors** (Laura Bosnea) was supported to mobilize the Roma community around key issues they face in the town of Rascani. The councilor carried out survey with Romani women to probe into their problems. A key problem identified, poor quality of roads, has been tackled by Ms. Bosnea in her capacity as a local councilor, and reconstruction work was undertaken. Based on efforts by the Roma councilor to activate Romani women's civic participation, several of them attended for the first time the local council's meeting in Riscani town and raised their issues. In addition, in relation to the presidential elections on October 30 and November 13, 2016, the Roma councilor informed the Roma community about the need to participate in the Presidential elections, encouraged them to vote and informed them about the location of voting booths.

Around 200 Roma women from 15 widely populated Roma communities<sup>22</sup> took part in capacity development and awareness-raising workshops prior to the local elections. As a result, 7 Roma women among them registered on electoral lists of political parties and as independent candidates (5 and 2 respectively) in the local elections. They were among the 15 Roma who ran in local elections; previously, no Roma women had ever run for local office in Moldova. Another historic first took place on Election Day, when out of these 7, 2 Roma women were elected as local councilors in Chetrosu village and in Riscani town. Furthermore, the Programme supported the Network of Romani Women and Girls to convene on a regular basis, get further formalized and sustainable, and to expand its membership.

A capacity building program on leadership, advocacy and gender equality for women from **groups that are underrepresented in decision-making processes** was implemented in 2016 and a follow up in 2017.

The overall goal was to strengthen the skills and knowledge of a group of 35 women from across the country, which included among others, women with different types of disabilities, Romani, and those with non-traditional professions.

Furthermore, six visits and dialogue sessions were organized with decision makers from Parliament and Government: Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family; Parliament of the Republic of

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<sup>22</sup> Chetrosu (Drochia), Tirnova (Edinet), Soroca (Soroca), Otaci (Ocnita), Riscani (Riscani), Schinoasa (Calarasi), Mingir (Hancesti), Carpineni (Hincesti), Hincesti (Hincesti), Balti municipality, Ceadir- Lunga (Comrat), Talmazza (Stefan Voda), Taraclia (Taraclia), Parcani (Calarasi), Stejareni (Straseni)

Moldova; Ministry of Youth and Sport; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education; National Anticorruption Center and Swedish Ambassador. This was the first time the women had the opportunity to interact directly with policy makers from these institutions and raise critical issues of concern. Likewise, for some of the duty bearers this represented a unique opportunity for dialogue with women from the aforementioned groups.

The program resulted in the women: 1) identifying community problems, developing projects for addressing them and pursuing further funding; 2) documenting concrete cases of discrimination in their communities and identifying ways to seek redress; 3) self-reporting increased confidence, knowledge of gender equality, knowledge of the channels for citizens' engagement in decision-making processes and higher motivation to utilize those and to get involved in political processes overall; 4) organizing briefing sessions with other women from their group/community where they shared the learning gained and practiced communications skills. Overall, the capacity building program has been assessed with 9.62 points, on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 the highest.

At the end of the program, participants were supported to develop 6-month individual work plans related to community mobilization, advocacy, addressing discrimination cases and participation in decision-making processes.

In 2017, a follow up was organized and the core group of up to **20 women from underrepresented groups**, convened and shared the progress achieved in implementation of their 6 months' individual action plans and, lessons learnt. The women also gained additional skills on anti-discrimination and project writing. The follow-up aimed at assessing the achievements obtained by women who had passed through the training sessions and the efficiency of capacity building program as a whole. By presenting the assessment plans in front of the audience, women shared their experience with other participants and exchanged the best practices of breaking through barriers. The general observation made after the evaluation of involved women's achievements is that they have been equipped with skills and competencies to become legitimate leaders in their fields, as well as to successfully advocate for their own causes. At least seven women exceeded the goals established in their individual work plans.

### ***7 Women's Political Clubs***

With Programs continuous support, the Women's Political Club 50/50 continued the coordination of **seven regional women's political clubs established** in seven regions: Briceni, Strășeni, Telenești, Cimișlia, Cahul and newly established in Orhei and Soroca. EEF and Women's Political Club 50/50 facilitated the dialogue and cooperation among elected women candidates in the targeted areas for advancing gender equality and solving community issues.

Over 920 women have been directly involved in activities of the local women's political clubs in seven districts since their establishment, which range from advocacy with local branches of political parties for voluntary quotas, identifying and trying to solve together community problems, raising awareness

on the importance of women to participate in political processes, etc. Key results include the implementation of recommendations from Gender Audits carried out by the clubs, under the guidance of the lead NGO WPC 50/50. The gender audits covered 28 communities from 7 districts and represented an important learning experience for the clubs in analyzing key issues, developing recommendations and lobbying for their implementation. The findings and recommendations were presented at the rayon level, involving representatives of Local public administration, NGOs, media and other relevant actors. As reported by the NGO partners, out of 40 gender related issues identified at community level, 55% (or 22) have been accepted by local stakeholders. Several recommendations related to specific issues have already been addressed by the local public administration: Poor quality of food delivered for kindergartens (in Cimislia); Offering financial support to people representing vulnerable categories (Briceni); Allocation of funds to support feeding the children from vulnerable families (Briceni); Ensuring of community support for elderly (Telenesti); Identification and provide a space for establishment of an orphanage for elderly (Cahul); Establishment of a local business incubator (Cahul); Providing tickets for camps to children from vulnerable families (Cahul). For other recommendations, the political clubs have received assurances by the authorities that they are already being addressed through different instruments or have been included as planned in their agenda.

Each regional women's political club held debates on the participation of women in the decision-making process. The participants concluded that the regional women's political clubs should continue and upscale their activity, sharing experience and good practices with women in surrounding districts.

#### *Peer-to-peer learning for women mayors*

As a response to the findings of the Mid-Term Review, the WIP Programme initiated capacity building with a target group not covered extensively so far: women mayors. A cooperation agreement was signed with the Congress of Local Authorities under the auspices of which operates the Network of Women Mayors of Moldova. In line with the Strategic Plan of the Network for the period 2014-2017, the WIP Programme provided support to strengthening capacities of the Network and its individual members with a focus on women mayors in their first mandate.

In 2016, 250 members of CALM Women's Network (women mayors, women local councilors and women having managerial positions within LPAs' institutions) improved their knowledge on how to better manage and develop a public administration by participating in 10 exchange study visits in 15 communities which are considered as good practices. The visits had a focus on benefiting women mayors in their first mandate. The 250 participants include:

- 82 newly elected women mayors (91% of total newly elected women mayors);
- 70 women mayors elected for 2 or more times (73% of women mayors with 2 or more mandates);
- 50 women local councilors;
- 48 women local public administration (LPA) employees

The study visits featured presentation of good practices on including citizens in decision-making processes, encouraging volunteering, involving women local councilors in LPA activities, developing communities' infrastructure, developing and modernizing local entrepreneurship in order to improve communities' welfare, etc.

At the end of each study visit, participants have been asked to reflect which of shared practices they consider relevant to their community and how they are planning to utilize the knowledge learnt. A common sharing of experiences and lessons learnt took place during final workshop on November 3, 2016.

In 2017, the Women in Politics Programme has adopted a prominent focus to support **women in decision making positions at local level** to become more effective and empowered agents of change driving an inclusive and gender responsive development agenda in their constituencies, in line with recommendations of the [Programme's Final Evaluation](#) completed in 2016. In this context, the WiP Programme provided support in the following areas of assistance that are also included in the CALM Women's Network Strategic Plan for 2017-2019:

- Strengthen the capacities of the Administration Council of the Women's Network under CALM in advocating for gender equality and demanding the implementation of GE gains enshrined in the legislation (for e.g. Law 71, National Gender Equality Strategy 2017-2021), particularly in the context of envisaged local public administration and electoral system reform;
- Enhance the visibility of CALM Women's Network nationally and internationally to stimulate local and regional coalition building on advancing gender responsive policies and practices;
- Provide critical capacity development support to all 90 women mayors at first mandate in effective local government functioning, finance, budgeting, including GRB, citizens' engagement and leadership for gender equality locally and internationally in two modules.

Taking this into account, in 2017 **86 women mayors at their first mandate** (about 47% of total women mayors) enhanced their skills in areas as gender equality, women's leadership, gender responsive local governance, budgeting (with a focus on gender responsive budget) effective communications, prevention of sexism and sexist language by participating in a comprehensive capacity building program. The training programme was delivered in two modules ( 2.5 days each) covering 4 groups of women mayors per module.

Following up to another recommendation of the Programme Evaluation, four women mayors with two plus mandates were appointed as co-trainers for some sessions thus transmitting the practical aspects of the trainings from own experience and expertise. In this respect, women mayors at first mandate could borrow from their more experienced mates information about rules and procedures in public administration, transparency and constituency engagement, local finances, budgeting, including GRB. Based on analysis of the filled in pre- and post- training surveys, it has been concluded that the level of knowledge of participants in the studied subjects increased with 34.55%.

**39 women with different types of disabilities** from across the country (including Gagauzia and Transnistria regions) have enhanced their skills to become actively involved in civic and political life. The capacity building programme was focused on the following topics: the role of women in history and society, National Strategy on Gender Equality 2017-2021, CEDAW provisions and recommendations to Moldova, legislation on the right of people with disabilities, management of electoral campaigns, gender equality and sustainable development, women's leadership, communications with media and with public institutions, non-verbal communications, Strategic Management and IT Technologies for Lobby & Advocacy. Besides enhancing their knowledge, women with disabilities identified the most stringent issues faced by them which are caused by both factors- disability and gender. The most stringent issues mentioned by women with disabilities were related to their reproductive rights with all the spectre of barriers resulted from here, such as discriminatory attitudes of doctors when advising on reproductive rights, pregnancy and delivery, discriminatory attitudes of family and society and the lack of accessibility within the medical institutions related to reproductive rights. Besides this, women mentioned about the necessity of financial independency of women with disabilities as a way to avoid and to run of violence. Three of them were presented during the National Forum of Women with Disabilities, along with solutions.

The National Forum of Women with Disabilities "We have abilities- we want possibilities!" took place on October 23, 2017, with participation of high-level officials, including Prime-Minister, several MPs and representatives of Ministry of Health, Social Protection and Family. 4 women spoke about 3 issues, presenting them based on their personal experience: women with disabilities entrepreneurship, access to education, protection of reproductive rights. The Forum's pinnacle was the launching of Women with Disabilities' Network, composed of 107 women with disabilities from across the country, with the possibility of extension of membership.

An awareness raising campaign has been launched in media. 6 (six) life stories of women with disabilities have been developed and shared in the media to present their motivation to be active citizens and human rights defenders, also to point the benefits of having women with disabilities in politics. A photo shooting was undertaken presenting women with disabilities as self-confident and skilled potential leaders. The photo album was widely shared on Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/pg/unwomenmoldova/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=880137978809699](https://www.facebook.com/pg/unwomenmoldova/photos/?tab=album&album_id=880137978809699)

In addition, the Programme worked to enable local NGOs conduct women empowerment campaigns at the local level:

- The organisation "Tarna Rom" worked in 8 targeted communities populated by Roma (from Calarasi, Riscani and Hincesti), empowering 102 Roma women to get involved in politics and raised awareness within these communities about the importance of taking part in the elections, by offering them capacity building and information.
- The NGO "Femeia Moderna" trained 210 women in 12 localities from Orhei, Soldanesti and Rezina encouraging them to get involved in politics. As a result, 2 women have been elected as mayors (v. Samascani/ Soldanesti and v. Ciniseuti/ Rezina). 34 elected women (2 mayors, 32



local councillors) enhanced their capacities on local public authority's administration, LPA's functioning and project management.

- The NGO Asociatia Comunitara Pepeni conducted a participatory nomination campaign, empowering 35 women from the respective village to get involved in politics. All 35 women identified after nomination campaign received capacity building to run for elections and were registered as candidates on the political parties' lists.
- Asociatia Comunitara Singerenii Noi facilitated the nomination campaign of 26 women in politics. The grantee facilitated the dialogue between the nominated women and political parties. The suffrage has been followed by a campaign involving women and men in a local development initiative.
- The NGO VESTA encouraged 20 women from the Southern region of Moldova to participate as candidates in the local elections. As a result, 2 women have been elected as mayors and 11 women have been elected as local councillors. The grantee broadcasted 4 TV shows and a spot on gender equality at the BAS TV station from Basarabasca.

*Output 2.3 Capacities of elected women parliamentarians and Councilors to perform the elected official's duties developed and strengthened.*

- **15 regional parliamentary** forums brought together 650 citizens, including 542 women, particularly from marginalized groups located in **41 administrative units** of Moldova, including Gagauzia and Transnistria, in direct dialogue with 26 Members of Parliament (12 women and 14 men) and local decision makers around issues important to women.
- All women MPs (those in their first term but also in consecutive terms) have received both training and individual coaching. Other Parliamentary structures received training as well (see Table below)
- 429 women and 35 men first-time councilors from **23 districts/rayons**, 1 municipality (Balti) and the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia enhanced their capacities in areas of local council functioning, fostering gender equality in local development agenda, finance, fundraising, communication and advocacy.
- 27 women first time councilors from different districts benefited from a pioneering mentorship program.

Under this Output, the Programme provided support to key stakeholders in Parliament to ensure strengthening of capacities and gender sensitivity, engaging with constituencies, as well as training sessions for women and men local councilors at first mandate (following 2015 local elections) and completion of the pioneering mentorship programme for women councilors.

*15 Dialogue forums between Parliament and constituents, primarily women, completed*

The commitment of the Parliament of Moldova to advance gender equality, inclusive and participatory governance has increased due to continued dialogue and engagement with constituents, primarily women from marginalized groups. An instrument in this regards were the *regional parliamentary forums* supported by the Women in Politics Programme and organized in close partnership with the Common Dialogue Platform of Women MPs and the Parliamentary Secretariat through its network of four Territorial Information and Constituency Offices of the Parliament (TIOPs).

June 2016, the series of **15 regional parliamentary forums** started in November 2015 has been completed. In total, the 15 forums brought together **651 citizens**, *including 545 women (84%)*, particularly from marginalized groups, in direct dialogue with parliamentarians and local decision. The forums provided a unique platform for Parliamentarians to interact with citizens, hear their concerns and proposals, particularly those faced/raised by women.

The forums, had a national coverage by engaging citizens from **41 administrative units** of Moldova, including Gagauzia and Transnistria, as follows:

- *32 Districts*: Orhei, Edinet, Leova, Ungheni, Ialoveni, Anenii Noi, Hincesti, Criuleni, Calarasi, Nisporeni, Straseni, Soroca, Floresti, Donduseni, Ocnita, Glodeni, Riscani, Falesti, Briceni, Rezina, Soldanesti, Dubasari, Cahul, Cantemir, Causeni, Stefan-Voda, Taraclia, Cimislia, Basarabasca, Drochia, Singerei, Telenesti.
- *2 Municipalities*: Balti, Bender;
- *4 localities from Transnistria Region*: Tiraspol municipality, Camenca, Rîbnița and Grigoriopol towns
- *3 localities from Autonomous Territorial Unit (ATU) Gagauzia*: Comrat municipality, Vulcanesti and Ciadir-Lunga towns.

An [interactive map](#) of the 15 forum has been produced containing both a summary and individual information on all of the forums, including disaggregated statistics on the participants, Members of Parliament, issues raised by citizens, and a photo gallery.

The **cross-cutting demand** of citizens in all the forums was the urging of parliamentarians to adopt the draft Law 180 on Gender Equality in final reading.

A post forums follow-up analysis revealed that a number of key demands voice by citizens during the forums, particularly by women, have been translated into legislative and normative changes thanks to the multi-faceted advocacy efforts of various stakeholders, especially civil society organizations.

### *Sustainability of regional policy forums format of policy dialogue between MPs and constituents*

Based on the methodology and practice of regional policy dialogue forums on gender issues coined by WIP Programme during 2015-2016, the Parliament of Moldova organized independently 5 regional

forums on women’s political participation in 2017<sup>23</sup> , and 8 forums on issues related to preventing violence against women, girls and children.

### *Capacities of women and men councilors on gender inclusive local governance developed*

Shortly following the June 2015 local elections, the Programme deployed an ample **training programme** for first mandate local and district women councilors that was completed in mid-2016<sup>24</sup> . based on the recommendation of the MTR, men councilors have also been included in the training programme.

A total of **464 local councilors**, including 429 women and 35 men from **23 districts**, plus Balti municipality and Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, enhanced their capacities in the areas of local council functioning, integration of gender equality measures in local development, principles of gender sensitive budgeting, leadership, communication, advocacy, negotiation, fundraising and partnership building in order to best address the needs of most vulnerable local constituents , including women.



*Women councilors present project ideas for the development of their communities*

The novelty of 2016, was the **inclusion of men councilors** at community and district level in the training programme as per suggestion of the donor expressed during the Mid-Term Review of the programme completed in early 2016. This mixed-gender training approach proved effective in expanding the understanding of men on and advantages of gender sensitive governance and contributed to strengthening cooperation between male and female councilors for further advancement of the gender equality agenda in local communities and districts.

*Binzari Igor, district councilors Balti municipality: “There were interesting discussions between men and women participating in the second Module. It played an important role in opening opinions and visions.”*

<sup>23</sup> [Press release by Orhei District Council “Role and importance of women’s participation in public and political life <http://or.md/index.php/2017/06/26/rolul-si-importanta-femeii-viata-publica-si-politica/>]

<sup>24</sup> Article “ Women councilors at first mandate, trained in fundraising and gender equality” <http://md.one.un.org/content/unct/moldova/en/home/presscenter/press-releases/consiliere-locale-la-primul-mandat-instruite-in-atragerea-fondu/>

At the end of module II, each group of councilors went on a **study visit to a model community** headed by a woman mayor where they had the possibility to learn about practical ideas they can implement back in their communities.



*Local councilors from Gagauzia Autonomy visit Budesti model community*

The post training survey (see below) indicated that, in 60% of cases women exchange between themselves practices to advance gender equality in their communities, and 30% of them launched joint programmes for community development.

Besides the knowledge acquired at the training sessions, the program led to building of lasting networks and cooperation participants. **57% of women**

among **councilors** indicated that they **initiated projects** for the community either in cooperation with NGOs, Local Public Administration or independently after the training received from the Women in Politics Programme.

### ***Mentorship programme for women councilors (also contribution to Output 1.2)***

A **comprehensive mentorship program** titled *Inspir-o!* for 27 first-time council women launched in 2015 by CPD was completed in 2016 with significant results. During the Mentorship Program, in 2016, the focus continued on capacity building, support in the implementation of 24 community based projects and mentorship relations. The participants went through 3 training modules on: (1) Good governance (Transparency in decision making process, Access to the information, Community mobilization), (2) Communication (3) Time and risk management. As part of the Mentorship program, small grants were offered in support of the implementation of 24 community initiatives/projects led by the mentees, with the two-fold aim of solving concrete problems as well as increasing the visibility of women in public positions in small communities, as agents of change and role models. The topics of the projects were different - education for a healthy life, community mobilization, environmental protection, gender education, education and training, combating violence against women. They were based on assessment of each mentee of the specific needs in her community. All the projects have been successfully implemented and had great support from the community and also media coverage.

Mentees were also supported to work on leading their local councils in increasing transparency and citizens' involvement in decision making processes.

**Key results from the Mentorship Programme are:**

- During the implementation of Mentorship Program and of community projects, 94 different activities/actions of community mobilization, voluntary work, participation in the activities, fund raising, public debates, etc. have been organized. It is estimated that 8.3% of the population in the target rural areas and small towns has been involved (excluding Balti city). The total number of beneficiaries (direct and indirect) is app.: 25539 persons, including 12785 women/young women/girls and 12744 men/young men/boys.
- Community initiatives led to tangible results. For example, an unauthorized waste was liquidated in Taraclia, Causeni district and a forest was planted in its place. In Stefan Voda a playground for children was built in a residential area. In the Rascaieti village, Causeni, sanitary corners in the sports hall of the local gymnasium were built, separate for boys and girls.
- The Local Public Administration, private companies, and NGOs have supported the 24 projects, through financial contribution or in-kind. The financial contribution is worth 581500 thousands of lei (LPA – 63% - the biggest contribution was offered by the Village hall of the Sadâc commune, Cantemir district – 100 thousands lei, Population – 11%, Voluntary work – 3.6%, Institutions – 7.4%, Private companies – 5%, NGOs – 9.4%, personal sources – 0.8%).
- The mentees have spearheaded their councils to develop and adopt local Plans on Strengthening Good Governance. Twenty two (22) such plans have been adopted. In the period following, 64 decisions of the local councils have been consulted with the population, with the total number of consulted people estimated at 3088 (1847 women and 1241 men).
- The mentorship relations developed during this year have been strengthened. The second networking event between mentors and mentees and the outdoor event aimed at identifying the success stories, the difficulties that mentors and mentees faced during their interaction and evaluating the relationships and setting future priorities and plans.

***Mentorship for women from communities with zero representation***

Considering the success and lessons learnt of the first mentorship Programme, a new INSPIR-O edition has been launched, oriented towards women from communities where, as a result of local election of 2015, was registered 0 (zero) representation of women in local councils. In this connection, the following approach was used: (1) active women, from the communities with female under-representation in LPA, have to become more visible, being empowered to become agents of gender mainstreaming, as a pillar of good governance; (2) the change of public perception regarding the role of women in LPA, thus, preparing the ground for the next local elections; (3) the possibility to share

experience and good practices with women councilors, participants of the previous Mentoring Program.

27 women mentees have been identified from 7 communities<sup>25</sup> with zero representation of women in decision making to enhance their skills to become legitimate leaders and be able to run for the next local elections. In this respect, women mentees have enhanced their capacities in such areas as, gender equality and leadership, good governance and community mobilization, local transparency and public access to information, time risk and management, project writing and project implementation. Based on acquired knowledge, 7 small community initiatives were developed and implemented in 7 localities. Women mentees worked closely with their mentors on preparing and submitting project. Assessing community problems, the initiatives were aimed at:

- Increasing women's representation in decision making at local level;
- Reducing the cases of traffic accidents through sharing information about the existing risks and fixing the crosswalks;
- Arranging a playground for children (2 community initiatives);
- Improvement of educational conditions within a college through ensuring the technical equipment;
- Ensuring adequate sanitation conditions for the pupils;
- Improving civic activism among women.

After implementation of mentorship programme, 27,261 direct and indirect beneficiaries have been reached, which represents 7,8% of population from the targeted communities. 83 community mobilization actions have been carried, with implication of 699 volunteers (467 women and 232 men). Additional financial contribution has been collected to implement 7 small community projects, thus 345,760.54 MDL (19,963.08 USD) has been collected from individuals and 225,500.00 MDL (13,019.63 USD) represents the financial contribution of the local public administration.

### ***Towards a more gender sensitive Parliament and Parliamentary Secretariat***

Significant tailor-made capacity development in the area of gender equality was provided to all key stakeholders in Parliament – female Members of Parliament (MPs), newly elected as well as those in subsequent mandates, the Parliament Secretariat, including its leadership and Constituency Offices, Standing Committees. Embedding gender equality in the ongoing work of Parliamentary structures, as well as investing individually in each of the 21 current women MPs, is likely to contribute to more gender sensitive Parliamentary operations, methods and work.

To further support the integration of gender equality in the core areas of Parliamentary activity, as a follow up to the recommendations of the gender audit, a total of **27 employees** (23 women, 4 men) of the **Parliament Secretariat** and the **Territorial Information Offices of the Parliament**<sup>26</sup>, enhanced their knowledge and abilities in in the area of gender sensitive human resource management as result a

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<sup>25</sup> Ialoveni (Ialoveni), Cociulia (Cantemir), Suruceni (Ialoveni), Morozeni (Orhei), Milesti (Nisporeni), Pelinia (Drochia), Rublenita (Soroca)

<sup>26</sup> Press release Parliament „Staff of the Parliamentary Secretariat trained in human resources management”

<http://www.parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/2713/Page/11/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

[two-day training](#)<sup>27</sup> programme provided with support of the Women in Politics Programme conducted in 2016.

The topics covered included the key areas and processes of Human Resources Management (HRM) – staff recruitment, induction and mentoring, professional development, performance management, motivation, role of the Human Resources Department and that of line managers in these processes - all presented through the gender lenses. The gender aspects emphasized included the importance and benefits of adopting a gender sensitive human resources management practices, principles of gender sensitive communication (internal and external), forms of sexual harassment and workplace discrimination as well as institutional policies to address the latter.

### *Engaging with youth in promoting gender equality and inclusive governance*

In 2016, in premier, the Parliament of Moldova Constituency offices organized an [essay contest](#) in 4 regions where the PCIOs are based on the topics of “Open Doors for Women in Politics”<sup>28</sup>. The inspiration behind this initiative of the PCIOs came from their active participation and co-organizing of the 15 regional forums where boosting political participation of women was high on the agenda.

High school students from 4 districts were invited to submit their essays on the topic mentioned above to a jury formed by the local branch of the Ministry of Education, teachers and experts which selected **20 winning essays**.

To acknowledge the children, the Women in Politics programme supported the Parliament of Moldova Secretariat in awarding the winners with Diplomas signed by the Speaker, as well as souvenirs from the WiP Programme and reading materials on gender equality and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. A total of **60 children**, including the 20 which occupied the first places, and the 40 which received second and third rankings in the essay competition were given the opportunity to visit the Parliament of Moldova on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 in the framework of the celebrations dedicated to International Children’s Day.

### *Supporting initiatives led by Women’s Platform in the Parliament*

In the framework of the 2016 Campaign “16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence”, the Women in Politics Programme together with UNDP Support to Parliamentary Governance in Moldova Programme (SPGM), supported the Women’s Platform with a series of awareness activities, policy discussions and debates organized in the framework of the campaign.

Following the format of regional parliamentary forums piloted by WiP, the programme supported the Women’s Platform in the Parliament to organize a large regional forum on the topic of [violence against women](#) in Cahul district.<sup>29</sup> The forum held on 12 December 2016, joined over **200 participants** from

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<sup>28</sup> Press release Parliament “A group of young people awarded by the Parliament following an essay contest on political participation of women” <http://www.parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/2531/Page/7/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

<sup>29</sup> Article “Free from Violence’ Regional Forum was held in Cahul” <http://md.one.un.org/content/unct/moldova/en/home/presscenter/press-releases/-free-from-violence-regional-forum-was-held-in-cahul-.html>

Cahul and neighboring districts, representatives of the local public administration, health services, law enforcement agencies, youth, clergy, civil society organizations, etc. in an open dialogue with women parliamentarians and Government representatives on the implementation of **the Law 196** from 28 July 2016 that introduces unprecedented measures to increase the safety of the victims of violence including a 10-day restraining order for the perpetrators of violence.

### High-level dialogue between Parliament and women mayors

In December 2016, the WiP Programme provided support to the Committee on Public Administration, Regional Development, Environment and Climate Change to organize a [Round table discussion](#)<sup>30</sup> on “Sustainable *partnerships between Parliament and Local Public Administration. Development opportunities in support of women mayors*”. The event gave possibility to over **150 mayors** from all over Moldova to learn first-hand about the on-going and future development opportunities available for local communities within the UN system, other development partners as well as the Government

### Advancing use of gender sensitive language in public and political life

In 2017 the Programme has made a dedicated effort to advance **gender sensitive language** use in public life and politics in light of divergent views in the society, including among women in leadership positions, fueled by resistance of Academia and some state actors. As result, the first ever comprehensive **Guide on non-sexist language** substantiated with theoretical and empirical evidence from best and relevant international practices, consulted with Academia and line ministries and CSOs was developed and placed in the public domain for further use and action. The in-depth research revealed that in fact 90% of the denominations of public functions have a feminine correspondent in the three major reference dictionaries of Romanian language. This will constitute a resolute argument in the efforts to pursue Academy of Sciences that is resisting the acceptance of feminine equivalents of professions which are currently enforced for less than 2 % of the tittles (mainly auxiliary/support jobs), and none for the leadership positions (for e.g. President, Minister, MPs, Mayor, etc.).

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<sup>30</sup> Press Release “150 women mayors in dialogue with Parliament”  
<http://parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/2764/Page/1/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>



## **Project Visibility and Communication of Results**

The Programme had a constant cooperation with media and, respectively, with the journalists from Republic of Moldova. Not only as beneficiaries, but also as partners. Although the topic of women's empowerment, political participation and gender equality is not one the most popular topic in national and local media, through constant communications about "Women in Politics" interventions, activities and results, journalists began to reflect more and more on this topic. Therefore, almost 70% of "Women in Politics" coverage have internal origin – press releases, articles, success stories, op-eds and interviews. More, "Women in Politics" staff was quoted in media on constant basis, especially in the last one and a half year.

"Women in Politics" Programme maintained its visibility not only through media, but also thorough social media and UN, UN Women and UNDP websites, including [UN Moldova Magazine](#). Every press release, story and the photos produced within WIP has been distributed widely on the social media platforms: UN, UN Women and UNDP Facebook pages and Twitter accounts; Flickr accounts; UN in Moldova Odnoklassniki account, Communicate.md and others. Also, on a monthly basis, "Women in Politics" developed a newsletter which was disseminated to the donors, partners and all interested stakeholders. Also, its news and articles were incorporated in the UN monthly newsletter.

"Women in Politics" has its own YouTube [playlist](#) on UN Moldova YouTube account, where all the videos produced during 2014 - 2017 were uploaded.

Also, in this period were developed [30](#) feature-stories and success stories with the direct beneficiaries of the Programme. They were published on the UN Women and UNDP regional and global websites, UN Moldova website and a larger number of posts were shared on local, regional and global and social media accounts.

All the press releases, articles and stories, can be found on [un.md](#) website.

## **Challenges and Lessons Learnt**

Increasing participation of women in politics and decision-making takes time. Implementation of measures to increase women's participation in politics and decision making requires institutional change in engaging with necessary systems and processes as well as individual change in terms of increased commitment and capacity of key actors to engage with the cause of women's participation in politics. Although the project has supported the adoption of TSM, more time and assistance will be needed to implement these measures. At the same time, capacity building activities, particularly for future candidates, should start long before elections (about 2-3 years before elections), in order to ensure greater impact.

Capacity building activities for women aspiring to enter politics, while crucial, needed to have been streamlined with the position and needs of political parties to include and promote women within their structures whether in elections, during the implementation of their mandate or while in opposition. For example, in 2015 the Forum “Women matter” organised by UN Women CO in partnership with CSOs, including the Gender Equality Platform in which representatives of political parties participated, the need to promote women from disadvantaged groups, including Roma was clearly discussed. In the course of work however it was discovered that the importance of including women in the party lists did not reach in the field, i.e., the branches of political parties. So, while significant work was done to build and strengthen capacities of Roma women to run as candidates in local elections, local branches of the political parties were not fully open to include them in such lists. Working with local branches of political parties so they include Roma women is important. Furthermore, political parties may be unpredictable; as one participant described, “they have no accountability”. Agreement to certain deliverables with political parties may not hold from the design to the implementation phase; therefore there needs to be flexibility in activities and budget allocations.

WiP Programme operated in a context in which civil society is dependent on donor funds. Some NGOs have weak capacities and no willingness to improve their internal governance; selecting an NGO vis a vis another is associated with a problematic of grudge and lukewarm readiness to cooperate. While the Gender Equality Platform did tremendous advocacy work toward adoption of Law 71, setting the Platform up was challenging, especially in cases where NGOs perceived that some were favoured with funding more than others. In the future, it may be beneficial to address NGOs and their expected contribution at the design stage, so they can contribute with their expertise and opinions.

While complimentary support with the same beneficiaries strengthens results, regular communication to avoid overlap is very important. As evidenced, WiP Programme built on previous and current interventions with a select number of stakeholders including the parliament. Some stakeholders may not necessarily see the difference among agencies as long as support is provided. In order for stakeholders to see the difference and value added at agency level, communication channels indicating who does what should remain open.

Learning by example and good practice has potential for emulation at all levels. For example, the idea behind the study visits with mayors was to promote best practices and good examples of women mayors and to inspire potential candidates and women leaders to run for office locally and regionally. As a result of the ten organized study visits, women mayors participants committed to apply in their communities practices such as running municipal enterprises, involving local councilors and citizens in community development initiatives, as well as calling citizens to financially contribute for implementation of projects, create a database of migrants and initiating projects and activities in this field. Women mayors stated their next steps to be followed in order to implement the best practices in their communities, first by informing local councilors, other mayors from their district and citizens about the best practices used in other communities. Stakeholders representing various levels of state and government pointed to study visits as a good methodology for being acquainted to and emulating good practice at a quick rate.

Another important lesson learnt is to exercise pressure from the very beginning of the MPs' activity by the different stakeholders, specifically NGOs and the different civil society platforms. Permanent bottom up and top down advocacy may subsequently lead to the creation of the critical mass in the Parliament necessary for the adoption of the quota.

Despite the adoption of the gender quota, one of the major constraint is the perceived lack of political party leaders to adopt placement requirements. This still allows the possibility to party leadership to place 40% of women on the bottom of the candidates' lists.

Another significant constraint that may jeopardize the application of adopted gender quota for the 2018 Parliamentary Elections is the legal initiative on changing the electoral system for the Parliament from Proportional to Single Member District (First-past-the-post) or Mixed Electoral System.

### **Good Practices**

Program had a unique set up and implementation of the intervention. Consistently, the implementation of WiP Programme seems to have produced good practices in every major programmatic area with which the project engaged and has done so from the perspective of the UN, the donor, government and CSOs as well as individual beneficiaries.

### **Comprehensive advocacy strategy for the same result**

A comprehensive strategy that includes multiple partners (media representatives, political parties, women leaders and community activists) and activities (social marketing messages, media briefings, gender sensitization sessions), is necessary to push for legislative reforms in favor of women's political participation. Advocacy campaigns were central to the efforts waged by UN Women toward the adoption of TSMs. This campaign featured such traditional instruments as supporting the Gender Equality Platform and organizing a series of public events, as well as lobbying for the adoption of the law by different actors, simultaneously exercising pressure on MPs, as well as less "traditional" tools, such as organizing a public event such as a "funeral" of the Package 180. Programme contribution to advocacy through engagement with MPs and the Women's Caucus jointly with the Democracy Programme also contributed to the success of adoption of TSMs. While not perfect, in the views of all stakeholders adoption of Law 71 was a first very important step. It was difficult to achieve but joint efforts from state and non-state institutions helped. As one participant described it: "On very negative landscape, we wanted to create a positive story."

### **Women in Electoral Management (WEM) – International**

Women in Electoral Management (WEM) – International was created as a result of project activities and led by CCET. During the 24th Annual Conference and General Assembly Meeting of the Association of European Election Officials held in Chisinau, Moldova, on 9-11 September, 2015, CEC Moldova and CCET launched a global call for action to establish an International Association of Women in Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs). Consequently, an Ad-hoc Working Group consisting of representative of CEC, CCET, UN Women and UNDP was created to define the future Association, with support by an international consultant. With continued support from WiP Programme, an initial Charter of the Association was drafted. WEM - International aims to promote an equal number of women and men in the election administration structures, particularly in senior leadership levels. Fieldwork found there is willingness to continue the work with WEM – International. Funding remains an issue, given that

there is no clear business model of how this association will continue its work. It is likely that this association will have a non-profit status, but it currently depends on donor funding to survive.

### **Comprehensive strategy to create change**

The strategic approach of combining activities to change policies at the policy level and change practices at a grassroots level with communities, media, NGOs has influenced the rate of success of WiP Programme. The tailored approach to the governmental institutions helped focus the support provided in alignment with institutional needs. WiP Programme was widely recognized for its responsiveness and familiarity with procedures and process related to functioning of governmental institutions and worked with them rather than imposed ideas. At the local level, the two-pronged approach taken by WiP Programme to capacitate local community members (through training, support to conduct gender analyses and mentoring) while also empowering and supporting aspiring women to articulate their needs and priorities and participate in decision-making processes has produced significant results. As one stakeholder expressed: "So, if women go to the front, villages will be developed."

### **Partnership Approach**

The partnership approach taken through the project ensured ownership and sustainability of assistance. The use of Project Cooperation Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding which outlined the types of assistance and resources to be provided in a transparent manner were also seen as important and useful in building effective partnerships between UN Women and the implementing governmental institutions and other partners. Effective cooperation between UNDP, Parliament and CEC, for instance, provided the necessary background for developing further the collaboration between WiP Programme and these institutions. At the same time, partnerships with implementing NGOs have provided added value and a very flexible mechanism of cooperation, which was highly appreciated by NGOs. Trusting a local partner proved to be a highly valuable approach, given the importance of quickly adapting to varying circumstances as well as using endogenous skills and knowledge to respond to community understandings of the importance of voting.