



**EU Support to the East of Ukraine -
Recovery, Peacebuilding and Governance**

Annual Progress Report

August 2018 – September 2019



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ASC	Administrative service centres
ATCs	Amalgamated territorial communities
CME	Community mobilization for empowerment methodology
CSO	Civil society organization
CSWG	Community security working group
DV	Domestic violence
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCA	Government- controlled areas
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting
GRPB	Gender-responsive planning and budgeting
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HRBA	Human rights-based approach
IDP	Internally displaced person
LGCC	Local gender coordination council
LNAU	Luhansk National Agrarian University
LSGBs	Local self-government bodies
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
NAP	National Action Plan
NCD	Non-communicable disease
NGCA	Non-government-controlled areas
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
RDA	Regional development agency
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SGF	Small grant fund
SHG	Self-Help Group
SSUFSCP	State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection Service
SSC	Security Service Centres
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UWF	Ukrainian Women's Fund
USE	United Nations Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine
UN SCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UN RPP	United Nations Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme
UTTM	Ukraine International Travel Market
VET	Vocational educational training
WPS	Women, Peace and Security



Executive summary

The ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine has had a direct and negative impact on the region's socio-economic development, decreased the level of social cohesion, community security and most importantly, disrupted the ability of the local governance structures to adequately address the public needs. This has brought further exacerbation of inequalities, erosion of trust in public institutions, especially notable in law enforcement and justice systems. Moreover, it has also disproportionately affected women, who are regularly confronted with gender stereotypes and insufficient inclusion of their needs in the local policies.

To address these critical challenges, UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and FAO are jointly implementing a project "EU Support to the East of Ukraine – Recovery, Peacebuilding and Governance". The project is an integrated part of the UN Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme (herewith the programme or UN RPP), which is an area-based programmatic framework supported by eleven international donors. The programme's overarching objective lies in building inclusive and responsive governance structures, stimulation of employment and economic growth, strengthening of social cohesion, community security as well as support to implementing health care reform at the regional and local levels.

In the first year of implementation of the Programme, notable progress and developments were achieved across all the aforementioned areas of work. The regional and local authorities were provided with extensive assistance in implementing gender-responsive decentralisation reform that aims at building transparent and accountable governance structures, capable of ensuring inclusive socio-economic development, provision of high-quality public and security services as well as establishing institutional platforms to engage with the citizens.

The UN RPP's contributions to these reforms resulted in the ongoing elaboration of Donetsk Oblast Regional Development Strategy until 2027 that contains gender equality objectives in the strategic goals related to building a competitive economy, foster human

development as well as ensure community safety and security. Moreover, to foster community-level strategic planning and development, the programme is supporting the elaboration of local socio-economic development strategies for 8 targeted locations, in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.¹ The strategies aim at facilitating medium-term strategic planning to ensure community's comprehensive development and address enduring gender inequalities in local policymaking and implementation.

Significant progress was accomplished with regards to supporting fiscal decentralisation through enhanced capacity and established institutional frameworks for local authorities to manage available resources and ensure transparency in public procurement processes. The targeted communities are now equipped with specialized models of effective public finance management, focusing on development of optimal tax and fee policies, municipal property management, attraction of additional financial resources and investments for the implementation of community development projects.

In further fostering decentralisation reform process, the programme has also facilitated an exchange of best practices through organization of study visits to various parts of Ukraine, including Cherkasy, Chernivtsi, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Poltava as well as Zaporizhzhia oblasts to receive first-hand information on the benefits of the amalgamation process, effective and gender-responsive use of public funds, delivery of administrative and social services, citizens' engagement in the decision-making processes and other aspects. More than 200 local partners (senior management, legal advisors, finance officers and other key personnel) went through extensive trainings on the benefits of the amalgamation process. Importantly, the trainings were accompanied by participation of representatives from the successfully amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs), who have shared their experiences and success stories.

Assisting local authorities' efforts to provide administrative and social services was central to

¹ Toretsk, Ocheretyne, Olhynka and Volnovakha in Donetsk Oblast; Hirske, Novoaidar, Shyrokyi and Krasna Talivka in Luhansk Oblast

alleviating the suffering of conflict-affected population and to rebuilding citizens' trust in state institutions. The adverse effects of conflict-inflicted damage are disproportionately borne by poorer households, the displaced and other vulnerable and conflict-affected groups, especially women. Continuous provision and improvement of public services remains essential for the stabilization of crisis-affected areas and for creation of the necessary conditions to ensure the further success of decentralisation reforms. This has been accomplished by enhancing the capacity of the staff of Administrative Service Centres (ASCs) as well as improvement of their electronic document management systems. To extend the provision of services, mobile ASCs, based on truck and vans, will reach the residents of remote areas, persons with disabilities as well as conflict-affected population who regularly cross the contact line.

Notable progress was also achieved in advancing gender-responsive decentralisation reform process highlighted by the fact that regional and local authorities (duty bearers) have enhanced their capacities in applying a human rights-based approach and gender equality in policy planning and budgeting, as well as in integrating the women, peace and security agenda in local governance and community security. Women and men in communities (rights holders), including the most marginalized ones (Internally Displaced Persons - IDPs, elderly, single parents, persons living with HIV, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ) have strengthened their skills, knowledge and self-confidence in identifying gender disparities and human rights concerns and act as agents of change and propose solutions affecting the lives of those who face intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination.

The programme has also created sustainable institutional platforms to advance gender equality. To date, 7 Local Gender Coordination Councils (LGCCs) in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts have been formally established by the decree of community heads, three in Luhansk Oblast and three in Donetsk Oblast (Dobropillia, Toretsk, Soledar). The LGCCs are comprised of representatives of local authorities, mobilized women as well as civil society activists and will

provide women facing multiple forms of discrimination a direct access to influence local decision-making and advocate for gender mainstreaming into local programmes and budgets. Moreover, 86 Self-Help Groups (SHG) are now also in place to systemically advocate for gender equality, inclusivity (inclusion) and intersectional approach to socio-economic development in the targeted communities.

A series of efforts were undertaken to assist regional and local authorities to systemically address corruption, that continues posing a major challenge and undermines public trust towards governmental institutions. A globally recognized anticorruption methodology, the "Islands of Integrity" was applied in Novopskov amalgamated territorial community (ATC) of Luhansk Oblast. The methodology is a practical tool for public leaders and managers to identify and change public policies and organizational systems prone to corruption applying strategic and participatory approach. As a result, Novopskov ATC developed and adopted its anticorruption strategy 2019-2021 that includes concrete actions to be taken to address corruption in various fields, including public property management, road maintenance and other areas of public concern. This positive experience is planned to be replicated in other targeted communities.

In fostering economic revitalization in eastern Ukraine, continuous support is rendered to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) through providing demand-driven business development services, improving access to credit as well as the system of vocational education training (VET). An assessment of the high growth potential and opportunities for rapid recovery of agricultural and non-agricultural value chains is available for both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. As a result, ceramic and textile products, the hospitality sector, food processing, dairy and beef, poultry and eggs, grain and oilseed production were identified as priority areas for upcoming interventions to stimulate employment and sustainable economic growth in eastern Ukraine. To date, over 800 (61% women) entrepreneurs have strengthened their business and marketing skills and received in-depth practical information on brand promotion, building of

networks and new partnerships, sales improvement as well as communication skills. The programme has also launched its small business grants programme, that through a competitive selection process, will result in the implementation of a first wave of over 150 business initiatives (to be selected in October 2019).

The UN RPP is providing technical and methodological support to VET institutions aimed at improving the quality of the educational processes to best meet contemporary market demands. The first year was primarily highlighted by the conduct of an in-depth analysis of the VET system in conflict-affected oblasts that provide comprehensive information on their work, curricula, state of their infrastructure as well as analysis of labor market developments. In line with recent analytical findings, the programme elaborated a guideline for effective management of the VET institutions and is currently cooperating with the State Employment Service and its regional branches to revise curricula and educational standards to adopt to market realities.

The social cohesion and community security workstream were highlighted by the ongoing efforts to mobilize and empower communities around common goals related to local development planning, promotion of gender equality, access to justice and the rule of law. Notable achievements included mobilization of community members to jointly design the so-called "community profiles". These documents provide a detailed information on the opportunities and advantages that a certain community possesses to respond to socio-economic, environmental and security challenges and also serve as an evidence-based grounding for local activists to implement civic initiatives.

Building on its previous positive experience in enhancing community security, the programme has set up thirty Community Security Working Groups (CSWGs). The groups provide space for structured discussions between communities and law enforcement agents, information sharing, raising security issues and concerns among the local authorities, security providers and communities at the

grassroots level. Importantly, the recommendations developed by the groups are subject to mandatory consideration by local governments in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Article 9 of the Law of Ukraine "On Local Government".

Expanding citizens' access to justice, especially the vulnerable groups, to effectively respond to existing conflict grievances remains a key priority. In this regard, the programme is closely working with its network of Free Legal Aid Centres to further institutionalize and improve the provision of primary and secondary legal aid. An updated mobile application "Your Rights" is now available for public use to provide legal assistance to its users, internally displaced persons (IDPs), survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) on the restoration and protection of their rights. The app goes beyond mere provision of information to also include step-by-step, practical guidance to its users on the protection and restoration of their rights, along with the contact details of the nearest Free Legal Aid Centres.

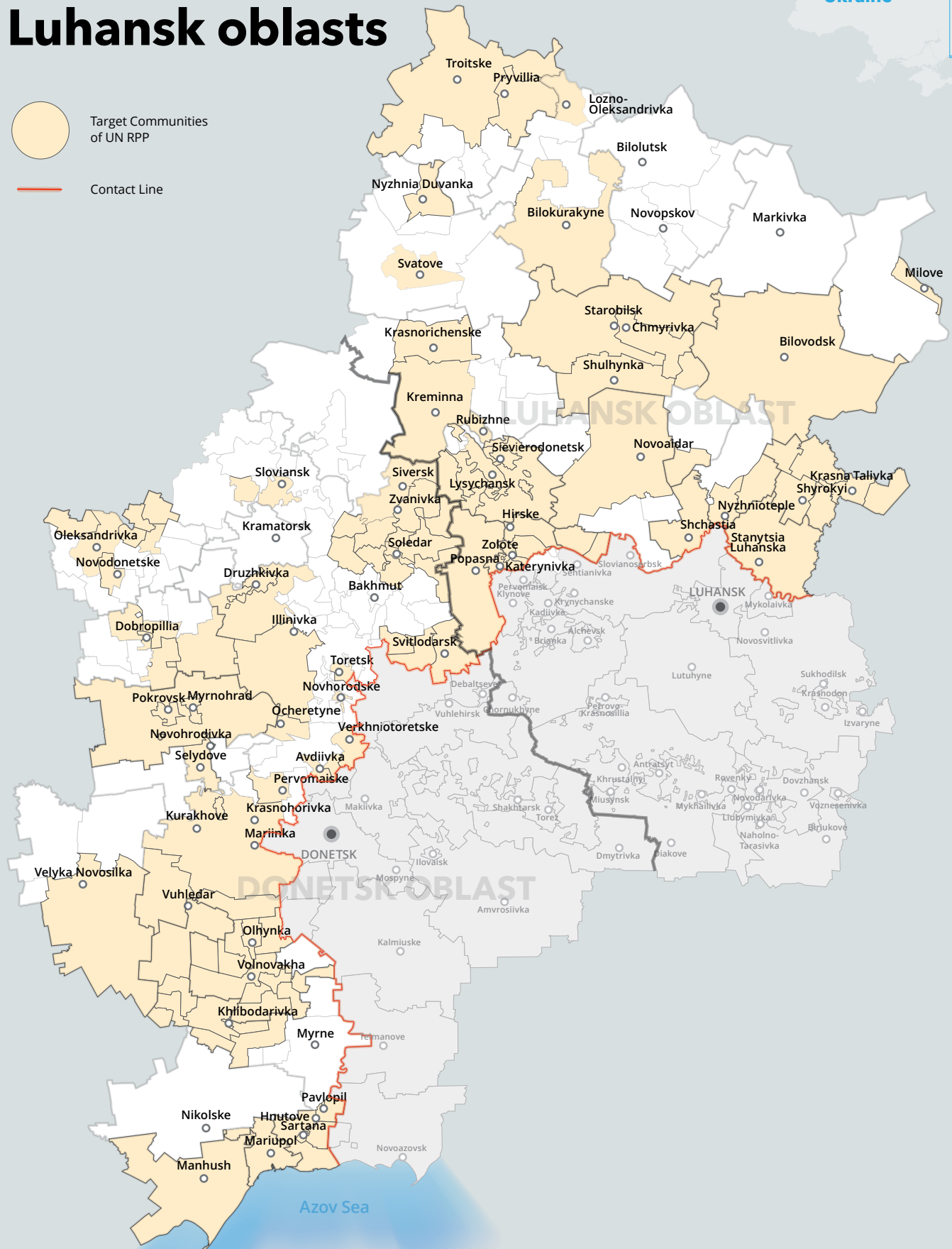
The programme also remains at the forefront of implementing health sector reform in eastern Ukraine. These efforts were marked by a situational analysis of the status of reform implementation, the availability of resources, challenges along the way, the quality of the medical services, and other important aspects. Special Task Force Groups composed of local healthcare managers, practitioners, and academics were created in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, to serve as advisory bodies for further promotion of health sector reforms, improving the quality of services and public procurement practices in hospitals. Four hospital districts in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts are benefiting from targeted assistance aimed at increasing their capacity in strategic planning through provision of training and support in elaboration of the development plans.

UN RPP Target Communities in Donetsk & Luhansk oblasts

Ukraine



-  Target Communities of UN RPP
-  Contact Line



Background

In April 2019, Volodymyr Zelenskyi won a landslide victory in the second round of the presidential election, and three months later his newly formed political party, the Servant of the People, won an absolute majority in the July parliamentary elections and a strong mandate to fight corruption and speed up reforms. A new Cabinet of Ministers was sworn in at the end of August and, like the new Parliament, is the youngest and politically least experienced in Ukraine's history, drawing on people from civil society, business and other spheres.

Such a consolidation of power, coupled with a strong popular mandate, allows President Zelenskyi and the new Parliament to vigorously pursue the three key pre-election promises – ending the conflict in eastern Ukraine, “breaking the old system” of corruption, and creating jobs and stimulating economic growth. The subsequent flurry of legislative activity has seen rapid deliverables but raises concern overdue process and the balance of power.

If party discipline will be maintained, we may expect to see swift progress on the reform agenda, including structural reforms, but adopting political decisions for resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine will remain both difficult and contentious.

The approach and tone of the new leadership to the resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine is a significant departure from the previous administration.

President Zelenskyi has repeatedly articulated a desire to advance peace by promoting inclusion and national unity, engaging residents of the non-government-controlled areas (NGCAs) and promised to “end the war” before the end of 2019

In his four months in office, there have been a series of achievements that would seem to add weight to his promises including agreements on the disengagement of forces at Stanytsia Luhanska and repair of the bridge there, the exchange with the Russian Federation of 70 detained persons, agreement to commence a disengagement of forces in two other previously agreed areas along the line of contact (Petrivske and Zolote, and written acceptance of the so-called Steinmeier formula for sequencing the implementation of political and security obligations covered by the September 2014 Minsk Memorandum and the February 2015 Package of Implementing Measures (the latter being endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2202 of 17 February 2015),. These developments, all in rapid succession, appear to have paved the way for a meeting of the four Normandy Presidents (France, Germany, Russia, Ukraine) before the end of this year (the last such meeting took place in October 2016), which may provide a new impetus for the stalled conflict resolution process.

At the same time, however, the simmering conflict in eastern Ukraine is well into its sixth year, and is neither dormant, nor frozen. It kills, maims and injures on a daily basis, and directly affects 3.5 million people. Between 14 April 2014 and 15 August 2019, the UN recorded a total of at least 3,339 conflict-related civilian deaths, including the 298 deaths on board of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17, which was shot down on 17 July 2014. The number of injured civilians is estimated to exceed 7,000, and an estimated 1.5 million people remain internally displaced. Donetsk and Luhansk Regions (with an estimated combined population of around 6.6m in 2013 and covering an area of ca. 43.000 km²) remain effectively divided be-

tween areas controlled by the Ukrainian government and non-government controlled areas, with an almost 500km long "contact line" separating the local population.² Roughly one-third of the region, mostly urban and industrial areas, remains controlled by separatists. The remaining two-thirds, mostly rural hinterland and smaller industrial towns remains under control by the Government of Ukraine.

Although a ceasefire and an outline for a political settlement were outlined in the Minsk agreements (see above), no effective ceasefire has taken hold for any significant period. The parameters for a political settlement include the creation of a special status for certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, anchored in constitutional law, and the return of the entire area under Ukraine's sovereign control and legislative supremacy. While the original target date of the end of 2015 for the required legislation and special local elections was not met, parties agree that the Minsk process remains the only available option for finding a lasting settlement for the conflict.

The persistent ceasefire violations and related trade boycotts have only exacerbated the pressure on the productive and public sectors in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, which were hit disproportionately hard by the recent years of economic crisis. A large part of the heavy industry and mines have been shuttered, wiping out much of the economic activities in Donetsk and Luhansk and aggravating the overall decline of the country's socio-economic situation.

On the government-controlled sides of both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, there has been a consolidation of governance structures since 2015, which has provided a

² See UNSCR 2202 (2015) and UN GA Resolutions for official UN positions.

basis for socio-economic recovery, and allowed these areas to participate in national reforms in administration, in particular, the decentralisation reform, one of the main reform priorities of the government. While the strains on local governance institutions in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts are already enormous because of the conflict, they are not exempt from following the demanding schedule of the national reform process, including the territorial-administrative reform to consolidate units of local governance into Amalgamated Territorial Communities (ATC). In this regard, enhancing local government capacities by improving transparency, accountability, equity, non-discrimination and responsiveness to community needs is a fundamental requirement if decentralisation and other reforms are to have a meaningful impact, especially in these two conflict-affected areas. This entails improving service delivery, community security and social cohesion for the local population, particularly women affected by conflict and other groups at risk of exclusion and discrimination. Given the local population's lack of engagement with the authorities, support to various platforms and mechanisms for open dialogue about needs, rights, visions and plans within and between groups of people, local and regional authorities, as well as service providers remains essential in building the much-needed trust and drive for reforms.

In its turn, failure to further address in a comprehensive manner the socio-economic development concerns related to the conflict will have serious implications in terms of increasing vulnerability, lost confidence in the state, and risk a renewed humanitarian crisis. The need to provide new employment opportunities for people formerly employed in heavy industry and mining in the region, including in agriculture and related businesses, is urgent. Inclusive economic growth needs to be advanced through support to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and trade development.

In conflict-affected communities, law enforcement agencies, security services and justice institutions require expanded capacity and means to ensure protection and restoration of rights, the rule of law, to mitigate dis-

putes and tensions, and to address violence and crime. Ongoing hostilities, related community-level violence, and misinformation contribute to prejudice, polarization, and deepening divisions. These developments call for a need to further expand community-based reference groups or networks to open a door to new and more constructive interaction between the law enforcement bodies and the members of conflict-affected communities.

The conflict and profound security, social, economic and political crisis have also resulted in deepening gender inequalities and discrimination, putting a key emphasis on men as protectors and heroes, and on women as caring supporters. The lack of adequate social support services has also brought increased burden on women to shoulder the responsibility of ensuring socio-economic well-being of the families. Moreover, women are confronted with insufficient inclusion of their needs in the planning, analysis and budgeting of local public policies with regards to service delivery, community security, social cohesion, reconciliation, peacebuilding and others. Notably, according to the results of Ukraine Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment, while women represent a majority in local governance structures, their capacity to influence decisions remains insignificant. In addition, while women submit 50 per cent of all the complaints to local authorities, only 19 per cent of them are addressed. The same report has also indicated that local authorities have limited understanding of gender analysis and the application of gender mainstreaming tools.

Implementation of reforms that consider needs and contributions of women- particularly the most vulnerable- is of renewed urgency due to the severe impacts the armed conflict is continuing to have on community security, social cohesion and resilience. It is crucial to thoroughly integrate gender perspectives and interventions that specifically target women affected by the conflict into reform processes, regional and local planning.

These pressing challenges are addressed by UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and FAO within the framework of the project "EU Support to the East of Ukraine – Recovery, Peacebuilding and Governance".

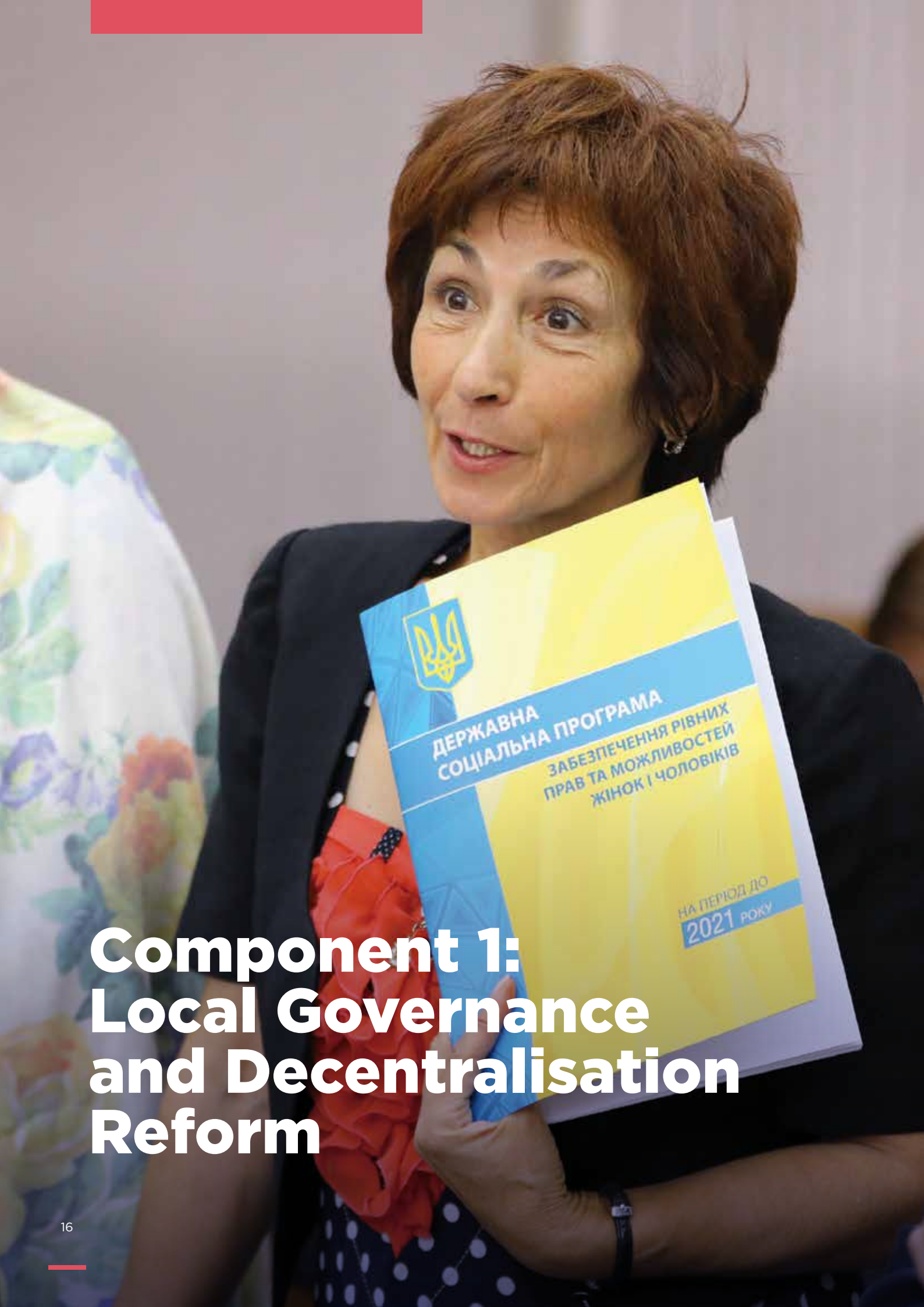


In line with the situational analysis above, the following major specific objectives are pursued by the project:

1. To enhance local capacity for gender-responsive decentralisation and administrative reforms to improve governance, local development and the delivery of services;
2. To stimulate employment and economic growth by providing assistance to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) development through demand-driven business development services and professional skills training;
3. To enhance social cohesion and reconciliation through promotion of civic initiatives;
4. To support sector reforms and structural adjustments in health, education and critical public infrastructure to mitigate direct impacts of the conflict.

Importantly, the project is integrated into a comprehensive UN Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme (UN RPP), which addresses priority needs in eastern Ukraine following the outbreak of the armed conflict in the spring of 2014. The programme is intended to strengthen community security and social cohesion, support the economic recovery of conflict-affected communities, and further the implementation of decentralisation and healthcare reforms in government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

The programme is supported by eleven international partners: the European Union, the European Investment Bank and the governments of Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Japan and the UK.



Component 1: Local Governance and Decentralisation Reform



Women from local communities discussing the State Social Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Photo: Oleksandr Myshko

The conflict created massive challenges to civilian governance structures in the government-controlled oblasts of eastern Ukraine, leading to a deterioration in social relations and trust in political and economic processes, and ultimately a sharp decrease in security and the quality of life. In this regard, the key objective of the Component One lies in building inclusive and accountable local government institutions that are capable of effectively addressing the public's needs. The programme's activities are aimed at providing technical and expert support for the implementation of a gender-responsive decentralisation reform process in Ukraine at regional and local levels with a focus on the following major areas:

- Improving regional and local authorities' capacity for participatory strategic planning and implementation of the development agenda;
- Improving the quality of public administration and the delivery of public services to community residents, especially vulnerable groups;
- Integrated implementation of the national gender equality policies at the oblast and local levels.
- Enhancing the performance of local state administrations by improving relations between local administrations, individuals, and legal entities through the introduction of e-governance;
- Implementing administrative-territorial reforms that allow for the amalgamation of existing communities into bigger units to increase transparency, accountability and openness;

The programming under this component addresses corruption at community and oblast levels, through the implementation of e-governance tools in the decision-making processes, delivery of services, and the launch of favorable conditions for business development.

RESULT 1.1 NATIONWIDE DECENTRALISATION REFORM IS FULLY IMPLEMENTED IN THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED AMALGAMATED TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES (ATCS) IN AREAS OF DONETSK AND LUHANSK OBLASTS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT.

The programme has worked extensively to increase the capacity of local stakeholders, ranging from representatives of the local authorities to civil society representatives from the targeted communities on key aspects of the decentralisation reform process. Through capacity building activities, a total of 200 local officials (154 women) have enhanced their skills and knowledge on key aspects of the decentralisation reform process, including issues related to the delegation of tasks from regional and local authorities, legal frameworks, the integration of gender-responsive measures into local policies and programmes. The participants have also received in-depth information on ways and mechanisms to ensure transparency in budgeting and procurement processes.

To date, a total of 101 public finance officers (79 women) have increased their potential and capacities related to efficient management of public funds, participatory budget development and adoption, resource mobilization, programme-based budgeting and evaluation. Additional training sessions were conducted for 200 officials on methods of effective coordination and organizational management. The participants engaged with theoretical and practical aspects of organizational management and received comprehensive information on efficient human resources management. Additionally, the programme has developed a series of models to ensure effective public finance management at local governance levels. The models focus on developing optimal tax and fee policies, attracting additional financial resources and investments to implement development projects, municipal property management. Now communities are able to evaluate financial management and budgetary systems by applying a specially developed methodology. This allows communities to analyse situations related to budget formation, investment opportunities, and policies. A total of 144 public finance officers have the resulting capacity to practically apply the elaborated models on efficient public finance management, inclusive budget formation, implementation, and evaluation.

To provide communities with tools and knowledge to effectively fulfil their competencies, a separate model on the establishment of an urban as well as rural amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs) is now available for use. The model outlines importance, timeliness and concrete steps to be taken to create ATCs that aims at uniting smaller communities into large territorial entities with more resources and potential for development. A total of 62 stakeholders from the targeted communities have visited various parts of Ukraine (Cherkasy, Chernivtsi, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Poltava, Zaporizhzhia) to receive first-hand information on the benefits of the amalgamation process, effective and gender-responsive use of public funds, delivery of administrative and social services, and citizens' engagement in the decision-making processes.

Significant progress has been achieved by the programme in ensuring implementation of the decentralisation reform process in a gender-responsive manner. Notable progress includes the fact that a total of 7 communities in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts³ have incorporated gender equality provisions into their draft Strategies on Socio-Economic Development 2020-2027 during the process of their amalgamation.

In total, 110 government officials (99 women, 11 men) from 20 target communities of Donetsk and Luhansk regions enhanced their capacities on gender analysis, gender-responsive planning and budgeting through training programmes on gender-responsive planning and budgeting facilitated by UN Women in June 2019. The training sessions were designed in line with the Methodological Recommendations on Implementing and Using Gender-Responsive Approach in the Budget Process issued by the Ministry of Finance.⁴

The above-mentioned tailored training generated an average 73 % increase of basic knowledge on gender-responsive planning and budgeting among local authorities. This initial progress has been further supported

³ Shyrokyi, Hirske Novoidar, communities in Luhansk Oblast and Ocheretyne, Olhynka, Toretsk, Volnovakha communities in Donetsk Oblast.

through a set of advanced training courses (such as on fiscal decentralisation and gender-responsive budgeting delivered jointly by UNDP and UN Women) and was followed up with the individual on-the-job coaching carried out in the period of March-May 2019. These tailored training courses and on-the-job coaching were designed, based on the thorough capacity assessment of selected number of civil servants, as well as gender analysis of regional and local budgets conducted by UN Women in November 2018 – February 2019.⁵

As of September 2019, seven Local Gender Coordination Councils (LGCCs) were formally established by the decree of community heads, four in Luhansk Oblast (Bilovodsk, Kreminna, Popasna, Rubizhne) and three in Donetsk Oblast (Dobropillia, Soledar, Toretsk). The LGCCs will provide direct access for women facing multiple forms of discrimination to influence local decision-making

and advocate for gender mainstreaming into local programmes and budgets. These Councils are comprised of representatives of local authorities, mobilized women, as well as civil society activists. These achievements are built on the successes of UN RPP's Phase I. In Phase I, LGCCs proved to be efficient and instrumental for ensuring community strategies and plans integrated measures to address the gender inequalities identified by the communities. The programme facilitated the establishment of these Councils through mobilization efforts, capacity-building of local activists, and performing a gender analysis of budgeting and planning. To assess the situation in Rubizhne city with regards to violence and risks of sexual harassment of women and girls in the urban areas, a Scoping Study was launched in April 2019. The findings of the Study will contribute to the development of the City Programme 2020, and its respective implementation.

Activity 1.1.1 Capacity development and technical assistance for local government authorities in administrative and fiscal decentralisation

Prior to increasing the capacity of local stakeholders on different aspects of decentralisation, the programme has carried out comprehensive surveying and analysis to identify 26 targeted communities, 13 from Donetsk and 13 from Luhansk oblasts.⁶ Gender specific activities are implemented in 20 locations (10 in Donetsk and 10 in Luhansk oblasts).⁷ All the communities were carefully chosen in line with clear selection criteria that focused on the following major features:

- Location of the communities near or close to the contact line;
- Low institutional and organizational development of the communities;
- Lack of communities' regular interaction with civil society;
- Weak development of the civil society sector to

serve as watchdogs and voice public needs;

- Interest of the communities to work and closely cooperate with the programme.

Following the preselection process, the programme has launched a series of meetings with authorities and representatives of civil society in respective communities. The purpose of the meetings was to present the programme, the cooperation framework, discuss planned activities, and to receive feedback and align interventions accordingly.

Moreover, evidence-based planning, monitoring and evaluation of the undertaken activities is of fundamental importance in ensuring the overall success of the programme. The quality of the interventions, the design,

⁴ Ukraine, Ministry of Finance, Order «On the approval of the Methodological Recommendations on Implementing and Using the Gender Responsive Approach in the Budget Process,» Order No.1 of 2 January 2019.

⁵ Thorough assessment of capacities has been carried out in 35 hromadas with 265 representatives of local authorities (244 women, 21 men).

⁶ 13 communities in Donetsk Oblast: Khlibodarivka, Kurakhove, Krasnogorivka, Mariinka, Olhynka, Ocheretyne, Pervomaiske, Soledar, Siversk, Toretsk, Zvanivka, Volnovakha and Verkhniotoretske.

13 communities in Luhansk Oblast: Bilovodsk, Hirske, Krasnorichenske, Kreminna, Krasna Talivka, Nyzhnioteple, Novoaidar, Popasna, Shchastia, Stanytsia Luhanska, Shyrokyi, Sievierodonetsk, Zolote.

⁷ 10 communities in Donetsk Oblast: Dobropillia, Druzhkivka, Khlibodarivka, Krasnogorivka, Kurakhove, Ocheretyne, Soledar, Toretsk, Velyka Novosiilka, Zvanivka, 10 communities in Luhansk Oblast: Bilovodsk, Hirske, Kreminna, Novoaidar, Popasna, Rubizhne, Shchastia, Stanytsia Luhanska, Shyrokyi, Sievierodonetsk, Zolote.

and accuracy of strategic resource allocation are crucial factors in efficiently addressing conflict consequences. In this regard, the programme has conducted a thorough assessment to measure the knowledge of the local counterparts on various aspects of the decentralisation reform, involving approximately 1,000 respondents from the selected communities of both oblasts. The findings of the assessment were incorporated in designing capacity building interventions reflecting the actual situation and the needs of the local partners and will also serve as a benchmark to measure further progress (see Annex 3a for assessment findings for Donetsk Oblast and 3b for Luhansk Oblast).

In line with the findings of the assessment, throughout February-March 2019, the programme has delivered a series of trainings to 200 (154 women) representatives from local authorities from all of the targeted communities. The trainings provided participants with the basics and objectives of the decentralisation process in Ukraine, its administrative, territorial, and fiscal aspects. The trainings have served as a platform to receive in-depth information and jointly discuss the delegation of tasks from regional to local authorities, legal frameworks, the integration of gender-responsive measures into local policies and programmes. The trainings have also provided participants with the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues related to ensuring transparency in budgeting and procurement processes. Moreover, special sessions were dedicated to discussing practical impacts of the decentralisation on public services, including education, health care, transport and communication, security, land management issues as well as organization of housing and communal services.

Fiscal decentralisation is a cornerstone for effective implementation of ongoing decentralisation reform processes. It envisages the ability of local self-government bodies (LSGBs) to effectively manage their financial resources through proper planning, public budgeting, tax and fee administration. In this regard, the reporting period was marked by increased potential and capacities of 101 public finance officers (79 women) from the selected commu-

nities on a wide range of aspects related to management of public funds, comprising inclusive budget development and adoption, resource mobilization, programme-based budgeting and its evaluation. The trainings have also included practical and informative sessions on the procedures for setting revenues and expenditures in the budget of the communities, compilation of relevant documents as well as optimization of financial management and fiscal policy at the local level.

Increasing the efficiency of the local governance structures requires the creation of administrative structures and optimal allocation of functions. In order to provide communities with tools and knowledge to effectively fulfil their competencies and potential, a model on the establishment of an urban as well as rural amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs) is now available (Annex 4 – both models). The process has included an in-depth analysis of the existing normative and legal framework on the work of the ATCs, focus groups discussions and interviews in the selected communities⁸ and follow up preparation and presentation of an analytical report. The focus group interviews revealed major problems surrounding the work of the ATCs with regards to human resources, distribution and delegation of functions, public finance management, inclusion of the community members in the decision-making processes, and challenges of the ATCs in tackling socio-economic issues. Moreover, the research has showcased stakeholders' understanding and attitude towards the ongoing decentralisation process, existing trends, its positive and negative aspects. Importantly, the developed model also focuses on mechanisms and ways to optimize human resources in the ATCs, offering key criteria to determine the optimum total number of employees to ensure their effective functioning. The model is based on objective criteria that takes into account the ratio between the number of employees and the number of community residents; ratio between the number of employees and the need for the performance of main tasks; ratio between the number of employees, the size of territory and the number of settlements; ratio between the number of employees and the development level of the self-government entity;

⁸ Selected urban settlements: Lyman and Soledar ATCs in Donetsk Oblast, Merefa ATC in Kharkiv Oblast and Pyriatyn ATC in Poltava Oblast
Selected rural settlements: Zvanivka and Oleksandrivka in Donetsk Oblast, Chmyrivka and Bilovodsk in Luhansk Oblast.



Workshop in Rubizhne with local authorities in the framework of Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls UN Women initiative
Photo: Vitalii Shuvaev

corrective criteria for towns and for the smallest municipalities; and, the fixed minimum number of functionaries envisaged by law.

The programme is also working to increase the organizational skills of local stakeholders to effectively improve their administrative structures, systems and processes after amalgamation. Throughout May-July 2019, the programme has delivered trainings to more than 200 representatives from the local authorities of the targeted communities on methods of effective coordination and organizational management. The participants engaged with theoretical and practical aspects of organizational management and received comprehensive information on efficient human resources management. The trainings also included practical sessions and working groups in elaborating quality job descriptions for various types of personnel and have also resulted in improving communication between the staff and departments.

Extensive support was also provided by the programme towards strengthening accountability of local authorities towards the integration of gender equality provisions into

local planning and budgeting. To this end, the programme has rolled out capacity assessment of local officials in 20 targeted communities in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. In total, 265 local government representatives - 244 women and 21 men (city/settlements, village heads and deputies, starostas of local councils, financial managers and economists, managers of sectoral departments) participated in the assessment and contributed to the recommendations on gender mainstreaming at the local level.

The capacity assessment revealed that the overall level of gender awareness and application of gender equality and women's empowerment approaches in daily work by the civil servants is low. Through a self-assessment, public officials often evaluated their level of awareness and knowledge of gender equality principals as "sufficient" and "high", however, their skills in gender-responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming in governance and services were marked as "insufficient" (Annex 5- Capacity assessment of local authorities). At the same time, the assessment also identified that the local officials are very open to new learning opportunities and willing to enhance their capacities in gender equality and women's

empowerment. Building on the results of the assessment, the new methodology “Gender-Responsive Budgeting: From integration of gender equality in the budget process to gender-responsive policies” was developed with technical support of the programme. The methodology is grounded on key human rights and gender equality principles and will guide the local officials through the new budget development cycle which will be finalized by November 2019 (Annex 6 - Draft methodology).

Building on the results from Phase I of the programme, during which the manual on Gender-Responsive Budgeting methodology was developed and successfully used by local authorities, the programme facilitated the process of developing a new manual “Modelling of efficient financial activity of local authorities in decentralised context.” The manual includes updated principles of gender-responsive planning and budgeting processes and suggests practical tools for gender-responsive budgeting at the local level to be used by the local authorities and CSOs activists. In March 2019 Luhansk Oblast Administration selected the city of Rubizhne as a pilot city to launch the “Safe Cities

and Safe Public Spaces” methodology as part of the UN Women Global Flagship Initiative. The main objective of this initiative is to prevent and respond to sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces. Piloting of the Safe City initiative is also integrated into Component 3 through community mobilization and transformative initiatives to prevent violence. To prevent and respond to sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces, the city of Rubizhne launched the initiative “Rubizhne is a Safe City” under the leadership of the Mayor of Rubizhne in February 2019. With the technical support of the programme, the Deputy Governor of Luhansk region was exposed to the international experience and best practices including the safety of women and girls in public spaces in local city programmes through her participation in the Global Safe City event in Edmonton, Canada in November 2018. Over 80 Mayors and Deputy Mayors from all over the globe shared their knowledge and best practices of the Global Safe City programmes on safety of women and girls in public and urban spaces which are being implemented under the Global Safe Cities initiatives with technical guidance by the programme.

Activity 1.1.2 Capacity development support and technical assistance in managing the territorial amalgamation process and support the establishment of new amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs)

The programme is working in close collaboration with all the targeted communities on matters of territorial amalgamation, which is fundamental to the success of the decentralisation reform efforts in Ukraine. Regular advisory support and recommendations are provided to the communities to facilitate and foster an amalgamation process that aims at uniting smaller communities into large ATCs with new revenues, greater control over local land use, local fees and charges as well as new possibilities to inter-communal cooperation to jointly solve contemporary development challenges.

The support to the amalgamation process in the first year was primarily marked by developing the capacity of 200 local partners (senior management, legal advisors, finance officers and other key personnel) to effectively and timely implement the amalgamation process. The trainings

took place on April 2nd to 13th and on August 12th to 23rd 2019 in Sviatohirsk and were all highlighted by the participation of representatives from already successfully amalgamated communities, who have shared their best practices and extensive knowledge on different aspects of amalgamation. In-depth sessions were dedicated to discussing legislative, practical, and technical issues related to the amalgamation process.

In further fostering the process of amalgamation, emphasis was placed on facilitating study tours to enable key staff and activists from the targeted communities to be acquainted with practical experience and successful models of improved territorial organization in other regions of Ukraine. To this end, on June 10th to 14th 2019, study tours were organized to ATCs of the Poltava Oblast and served as a first-hand opportunity to learn best practic-

es of the amalgamation process, management of local funds and resources, provision of administrative, and social services and mechanism for citizens' engagement in the decision-making processes. Additional study visits were also planned in Zaporizhzhia Oblast for a group of 20 representatives from the local authorities of the selected communities, who extended their knowledge on the issues of territorial organization, preparation of standard forms and a package of documents regulating the entire amalgamation process, strategic planning, as well as matters related to gender-responsive planning and budgeting. Throughout August 2019, a group of 22 participants visited Kharkiv, Poltava, Cherkasy and Kyiv to learn about land-related clauses and practices of successful amalgamation.

Increasing the public's awareness about the benefits of the decentralisation and amalgamation processes remains a priority focus for the programme's interventions. Through its systemic partnership with local communities, the programme has formed an informal network of opinion leaders and activists in the fields, actively advocating and promoting amalgamation. The programme has disseminated more than 1,000 copies of the survey on the assessment of the knowledge of local counterparts on various aspects of the decentralisation process. The booklet also contains detailed information on the benefits of the amalgamation, decentralisation improving conflict-affected person's socio-economic well-being, access to quality services, participation in the formulation of local policies, oversight of their implementation and other essential topics.

To further increase public's access to information and foster accountability of the local authorities, 80 representatives of the targeted communities have learned mecha-

nisms and practical skills to present to the public in-depth information on public expenditures. The type of information to be provided to the public will be user-friendly, accompanied by easy to understand statistical data on types of expenditures, graphic design, data visualization tools and others.

Twenty one representatives of local authorities, civil society and women activists from 7 communities (Ochertyne, Soledar, Zvanivka, Dobropillia in Donetsk Oblast, Kreminna, Bilovodsk, Popasna in Luhansk Oblast) have increased their knowledge on human rights and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security through accomplishing training in two courses on Human Rights and on localizing NAP 1325 (Annex 7a, 7b - Training reports on WPS).

The local authorities of Rubizhne city are applying the knowledge on Women, Peace and Security received through the programme's capacity building initiatives, through the Safe City Initiative to ensure budget allocations and investments in safety and economic viability of public spaces, including prevention of gender-based violence. The programme has advocated with local authorities for the establishment of a Working Group under the leadership of the Deputy Mayor of Rubizhne that will take a lead in developing a city plan - "City Programme 2020." The Programme will include human rights and gender equality provisions, gender-responsive planning and budgeting, based on the findings and evidence from the Gender Capacity Assessments⁹ of the local authorities, carried out within the first year of joint programme implementation. The Group is comprised of 45 members including representatives of the city administration, patrol police, centre for social services for family, children and youth, civil society, and community activists.

⁹ Gender Capacity Assessment on GRB, by Gender Bureau.

Activity 1.1.3 Assistance to local authorities and communities from cities and towns as well as to the administrative centres of the newly amalgamated communities in various fields, including: financial management and transparent budget and procurement, gender-responsive budgeting, key general administration functions

The targeted communities are systemically confronted with multiple challenges related to financial management, efficient, transparent as well as inclusive public budgeting and procurement processes. Therefore, communities require comprehensive support. The following models on public finance management have been elaborated to help communities effectively manage local finances:

- Concept of financial management of local self-government bodies in ATCs and its evaluation (Annex 8);
- Efficient use and distribution of financial resources in the ATCs (Annex 9);
- Effective income policy of local self-government bodies of ATCs (Annex 10)
- Attraction of additional financial resources and investments to implement development projects in the ATCs (Annex 11);
- Transparent and accountable financial management systems and municipal property management in the ATCs (Annex 12);
- Gender-Responsive Budgeting: From integration of gender equality in the budget process to gender-responsive policies (refer to Annex 6)

The elaboration of the models was preceded by a thorough study and analysis of the budgetary law, regulating the decentralisation reform in Ukraine, a study of the international and national best practices on community level financial management as well as conduct of an in-depth situational analysis in the targeted locations. The situational analysis has showcased that communities are mainly dependent on the subsidies coming from the regional and national levels and urgently need to apply their own financial management models that look at the community's individual characteristics. In this regard, the developed models offer a generic solution and a vision to the targeted communities to adopt and implement the most relevant financial management system that is transparent, inclusive and gender-responsive. Moreover, a unified practical guide is also available for local authorities and includes a detailed step-by-step approach to implement the models.

Expert support was provided for the development of a special methodology, that allows communities to carry out self-evaluation of their financial management and budgetary systems. Through the application of the methodology, the communities can analyse the situation with regards to budget formation and its implementation, investment opportunities and policies, attraction of additional resources, efficiency in budget expenditures and other essential matters. Moreover, on the 11th and 18th of June 2019, the models were presented at roundtables in Kramatorsk and Sievierodonetsk respectively bringing forward lively discussions, comments, and recommendations that were taken into account by expert working groups in drafting the final versions of the models.

In addition, throughout February-July 2019, 144 public finance officers have undergone extensive trainings on the standards and models of financial management, fiscal decentralisation, budget formation and implementation in the context of the decentralisation reform emphasizing the aspects of accountability and inclusiveness. The participants have also established practical skills on gender-responsive budgeting, passport of budgetary programme as well as evaluation of budgetary expenditures.

The programme has also continued building the capacity of local authorities to integrate gender-responsive planning and budgeting. This ensures vulnerable groups such as women with disabilities, IDPs, older women, female-headed households, women living with HIV who are often left behind are considered in the process of policy making. A total of 110 government officials (99 women, 11 men) including the managers of sectoral units, financial managers and economists, representatives of local councils on gender analysis from 10 communities in Donetsk and 10 communities in Luhansk oblasts improved their knowledge and skills on gender equality, gender-responsive planning and budgeting issues through training courses facilitated by the programme in June 2019 (Annex 13 - Training report on

GRB). Each participant developed an on-the-job coaching plan, which includes specific steps regarding the implementation of a gender approach in planning and budgeting. The plans include the identified steps on integrating a gender approach in the social and political fields, engagement of women and men in planning processes, engagement of NGOs, collection of sex-disaggregated data, based on the community needs and context. The on-the-job coaching plans include monitoring of the on-going initiatives on capacity development and accountability of local authorities towards the implementation of gender equality commitments in recovery, and local development initiatives in the conflict-affected areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

To institutionalize the participation of excluded groups in local decision-making processes, mobilized women established LGCCs in seven target communities (Bilo-

vodsk, Kreminna, Popasna, Rubizhne in Luhansk Oblast; Dobropillia, Toretsk, Soledar – in Donetsk Oblast). In total, 76 members (58 women, 18 men) became members of the LGCCs and increased their capacities to provide direct access to women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination to local decision making and demand accountability on gender equality commitments from the local authorities. The LGCCs include local authorities, CSOs, community women groups and gender activists who will receive technical support and tools for GRBP to collect data for gender analysis in their communities. This will help to ensure gender-specific priorities of vulnerable groups are included in local plans and budgets. This will be done by the programme in cooperation with the Bureau for Gender Strategies and Budgeting, a national institution specialized in gender-responsive budgeting and planning.

Activity 1.1.4 Identification of opportunities of interaction with other oblasts which have already registered some successes and support the provision of policy relevant feedback, methodologies and good practices which can be used nationally.

The programme is staying at the forefront of collecting and promoting best practices with regards to the decentralisation process involving all the targeted communities. From the 9th-12th of September 2019, a study visit was organized for a group of 20 representatives from the local authorities of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The participants visited successful ATCs of Chernivtsi Oblast to learn best practices in territorial organization, budget formation and implementation, resource mobilization, citizens' engagement in the decision-making processes and other issues. Notably, the programme's study visits, workshops, and trainings are all delivered in line with the single Capacity Building Plan that was developed conforming to the Decree of the Cabinet of

Ministers of Ukraine "on Approval of the Methodology for the Formation of Capable of Territorial Communities". The Decree has determined organizational (capability of self-management, understanding of decentralisation processes etc.), administrative (ability to meet the needs of the population, provide the quality services, provide wide communication etc.), planning (ability to develop the territory and its infrastructure), financial management to be crucial skills for effective authorities at the local level. The programme is also applying Donald Kirkpatrick's model to evaluate the effectiveness of the delivered trainings.



Administrative Service Centre (ASC) in Sloviansk, Donetsk Oblast (2 photos)
Photo: UNDP Ukraine / Artem Hetman

RESULT 1.2 ACCESS TO QUALITY ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIAL SERVICES IS IMPROVED

Notable results have included the elaboration of an integrated model for the provision of social services in line with the case management approach. The model will ensure the delivery of services in a unified manner and has paved a way for the launch of social service centres that will render a wide range of services to conflict-affected populations in one location.

The procurement process of 2 trucks and 2 vans is currently ongoing to ensure mobile delivery of services to the most vulnerable groups, including IDPs, persons with disabilities, who are forced to regularly cross the contact line to access various services and wait in long lines in a highly fragile environment. The programme has also continued building capacity of the ASC staff from its targeted locations to deliver high quality administrative and social services to conflict-affected persons. Extensive support is also being provided to ASCs in improving the system of electronic document flow that will substantially speed up the process of service delivery and will also ensure more effective collaboration between various ASC units.

Organizational development plans were elaborated for 8 targeted communities following their in-depth comprehensive functional analysis. The plans are accompanied by concrete mechanisms to improve institutional and functional capacities of the communities with regards to more efficient budget management and staffing needs.

The programme has provided support to the implementation of a total of 26 community-based initiatives, 7 of which primarily address issues related to fostering citizens' engagement in the decision-making processes as well as improvement of the quality of local services provided. The grants scheme will play an essential role in mobilizing conflict-affected communities for action by giving them an opportunity to identify and tackle existing community-based challenges. Moreover, a total of 296 women and men in Donetsk Oblast and 331 in Luhansk Oblast were mobilized into 86 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to ensure their meaningful participation in local decision-making processes. Using the Community Mobilization for Empowerment (CME) methodology the SHGs

drafted the gender equality community profiles (for details refer to Output 3.1.). In this regard, the programme is continuously applying the CME methodology since its Phase 1 to identify needs of women and men, including the most vulnerable ones, who are left behind and whose priorities are rarely included into the policy agenda.

The CME methodology proved to be an effective tool for identifying, mobilizing, and empowering diverse groups of women and men as demonstrated by an internal evaluation of CME approach conducted by the programme at the end of 2018. The advantage of this instrument is that it reaches the most disadvantaged, marginalized and socially excluded women and men and is instrumental for the implementation of the SDG Leaving No One

Behind principle in the UN RPP. The evaluation showed that the CME is highly relevant and timely for strengthening local governance and improving the accessibility of services to vulnerable groups, including those living near the contact line (Annex 14 – CME evaluation report). The evaluation also revealed that in order to be effective, the CME must be adopted to local contexts and take into consideration local differences in terms of demands, motivations, interests, and needs. Based on the recommendations of evaluation, in partnership with the NGO “Ukrainian Women’s Fund”, the programme has amended the CME methodology to ensure its alignment with the specific needs and safety concerns of women and men living near the contact line.

Activity 1.2.1 Capacity assessment, capacity building and technical assistance for improvement of local public service provision (administrative, social, education, health and communal services) and support to IDPs by local authorities and communities from cities and towns as well as administrative centres of the newly amalgamated communities.

The armed conflict has negatively affected the ability of the local authorities to provide administrative and social services to the population in need, especially the most vulnerable groups, including IDPs and women. In this regard, increasing the capacity of public service providers, and improving the provision of technical aid to local authorities to deliver such services has been established as a top priority in the programme’s agenda. Notable developments include the elaboration of an integrated model for the provision of social services, based on the case management approach. The model is planned to be implemented in the communities of Bilokurakhyne and Bilovodsk in Luhansk Oblast, and in the communities of Soledar and Volnovakha in Donetsk Oblast – with the potential for its replication in other target communities. The model is aimed at ensuring a unified practice in the provision of quality services to the conflict-affected population. Its development was preceded by focus group interviews involving 120 respondents to assess the quality of the social services provided and receive citizens’ feedback. Moreover, an integrated model has also formed a basis in piloting the establishment of social service centres in the targeted locations to provide

a wide range of social services to persons in need in one location.

To further extend the provision of services to conflict-affected persons and to also complement the work of the [Fourteen administrative service centres \(ASCs\)](#), the programme is working on ensuring mobile service delivery. The procurement process is currently underway to purchase and equip 2 trucks and 2 vans to make services available to the most vulnerable citizens, IDPs, persons with disabilities. These groups of people are regularly forced to cross the contact line to access pensions, hospitals, markets, social services or simply visit friends and family. They usually wait in long lines for several hours at checkpoints, and sometimes stay overnight in highly volatile environments. To address this situation, the vehicles will circulate near the check points, serving the population from the non-government-controlled areas (NGCAs) and will also address the needs of residents of remote areas along the contact line. The vehicles will provide a service package, including administrative, legal, and information services with primary focus on social protection, pension, issuance of biometric passports

as well as registration of personal and official transport. A key emphasis is placed on promoting inclusive service delivery that is gender-responsive and human-rights based, considering the differentiating needs of women and men.

Moreover, close engagement with the national level stakeholders is also expected to have the necessary legal and regulatory provisions in place to institutionalize this innovative approach in service delivery. Notably, the programme has also purchased 53 remote workstations (21 in the communities of Luhansk Oblast, 32 in Donetsk Oblast) to enhance conflict-affected persons' access to quality administrative and social services. The workstations are placed in the Starosta's office.

Over 200 workers from the ASCs of the targeted communities have enhanced their capacity to deliver quality services to customers in need. The trainings have explored theoretical as well as practical issues in organizing and delivering administrative and social services at the community level. The participants have also strengthened their communication skills and worked out techniques to deliver citizen-oriented high-quality services. The courses have namely focused and addressed the following major work directions:

- Administrative services and activities of ASCs: the general organizational work of ASCs and a review of normative acts, best practices and innovative approaches in the work of ASCs;

- Tasks and functions of ASCs: the organization and timely provision of administrative services with the minimum number of visits, simplifying procedures in administrative services and improving the quality of their provision, and providing information to applicants about requirements and procedures for receiving the services;
- The main problems in the work of ASCs and their solutions: simplifying complex procedures of administrative services, reducing terms, changing inconvenient and limited operating times of administrative agencies and reducing large queues;
- Best experiences in the provision of administrative social services by other communities of Ukraine;
- Development of communication skills and psychological resilience of ASC personnel.

To further support the ASCs, initiatives are currently underway to purchase software for electronic document flow. The software will allow quick information sharing, registers citizens' appeals, and will most importantly ensure that they are all processed on time to meet the demands of residents. It will also facilitate better collaboration between various departments, increase document security, control knowledge management and search capabilities. The software is planned to be installed in Sievierodonetsk, Kreminna, Popasna, Bilovodsk and Stanytsia Luhanska ASCs in Luhansk Oblast and in Lyman and Volnovakha ASCs in Donetsk Oblast.

Activity 1.2.2 Design of organizational development plans, provision of small grants for local service delivery improvement and exchange programmes for strengthening the institutional capacities of the city/town/community local authorities.

The programme has carried out a comprehensive and functional analysis of the work of 8 targeted communities¹⁰ (see Annex 15 for sample analysis). The study analysed the general administration, budgeting and financial management, provision of administrative and social services in the locations. The analysis was presented in the form of evaluation surveys for all the 8 targeted communities and encompassed the following major components:

- Description and analysis of the management structure;
- Analysis of the decision-making and implementation processes;
- Review of the financial management system, including data on expenditures, needs and opportunities for resource mobilization;

¹⁰ Druzhkivka, Soledar, Siversk and Zvanivka of Donetsk Oblast; Krasnorichenske, Bilokurakynne, Sievierodonetsk and Bilovodsk of Luhansk Oblast.

- Accessibility and provision of administrative and social services.

The findings of the analysis have served as a basis in the elaboration of organizational development plans. The plans go beyond mere analysis of the existing situation and include concrete mechanisms to ensure improvements in institutional arrangements and measures to satisfy staffing needs. Importantly, the plans also include recommendations to improve the financial management system, raise revenues, and ensure effectiveness of the expenditures.

To foster civil society's engagement in the local decision-making processes, the programme has set up a small grants programme. The programme aims at supporting local civil society initiatives in 4 areas¹¹ that contribute to openness and accountability of local authorities, improve access and provision of quality public services, support implementation of the Local strategic plans in the area of local economic development and address anticorruption at the local level among other areas. It also enables the communities to identify and prioritize their needs. Notably this provides a venue for those needs to be both communicated and responded to. The period was primarily marked by the technical and official set up of the grants programme, that has included intensive work in the area

of preparing easy to understand application documents, forms, templates, capacity assessment checklist, call for proposals, selection criteria as well as evaluation procedure that is based on openness, transparency and integrity of the entire procedure.

The grants selection committee has reviewed a total of 46 proposals through a five-step process that included determination of eligibility, technical review of the proposals, scoring and ranking of the proposals based on the assessment criteria, round of clarification with the grantees, if necessary. As a result, the programme has provided support to the implementation of a total of 26 community-based initiatives, 7 of which primarily address issues related to fostering citizens' engagement in the decision-making processes as well as improvement of the quality of local services provided.

Furthermore, 20 draft community profiles reflecting gender-specific needs and priorities have been produced by the members of the SHGs (Annex 16 – Draft gender profiles). At present, members of the 86 SHGs with the support of community mobilizers and the programme's partner NGO "Ukrainian Women's Fund" are facilitating the focus groups discussions aimed at prioritizing the initiatives to be subject to advocacy with the authorities for their integration into local programmes and budgets.

Activity 1.2.3 Pioneering innovative approaches and technologies through an assessment of applicability, identification, and development of e-tools for improving local services and increasing transparency

The programme has progressed in the promotion and implementation of an e-governance system in its targeted locations. The reporting period was primarily highlighted by the launch of four roundtables in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts dedicated to the joint discussion of opportunities and challenges with regards to fostering e-governance technologies. The new technologies are aimed at areas of day to day operation of public authorities, delivery of administrative and social services, and improvement of the public's access to information. The discussions were highlighted by partici-

pation of local authorities, representatives of ASCs, civic activists as well as IT specialists, who have all expressed their interest to implement the system of e-governance. Moreover, given the limited knowledge of the local counterparts on e-governance opportunities, there is a need to accelerate the delivery of targeted capacity building activities. This has been planned for the 2nd year of implementation.

Work is currently underway to launch a system for the electronic provision of services at ASCs. Once fully op-

¹¹ Krasnorichenske, Bilokurakynne, Sievierodonetsk and Bilovodsk of Luhansk Oblast.

erational, the portal will make wide range of services available online, including but not limited to receiving a certification from the urban planning cadastre, permission to conduct promotional campaigns, place various commercial banners, certification on land ownership, and re-registration of property. Moreover, the procurement of an electronic document management system in the selected local administrations is underway. The software will allow quick information sharing, register citizens' appeals and will most importantly ensure that they are all processed on time to meet the demands of residents. The new system will facilitate better collaboration between various departments, increase document security and improve knowledge management and search capabilities. The software is planned to be installed in Sievierodonetsk and Bilovodsk ASCs in Lu-

hansk Oblast.

A study visit to local counterparts from the communities of both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts were organized to Estonia on June 29th -July 06th. Estonia has a comprehensive and advanced 24/7 online digital public service system. The study tour exposed the participants to Estonia's experience in building a digital society, at national and local levels. The programme of the visit has included a series of meetings with state institutions, including the Ministry of Finance of Estonia, Estonian Association of Municipalities, Social Service Centres and others. A working meeting was also organized with an IT service management company "Andmevara", that has presented its latest e-governance products.

RESULT 1.3 GOVERNMENT CAPACITY FOR PARTICIPATORY STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSPARENT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IS ENHANCED

Local socio-economic development strategies are being expanded for 8 targeted communities. The strategies have incorporated gender equality provisions following consultative and participatory process facilitated by the programme. Empowered through the CME methodology, local women-mobilizers advocated for the inclusion of priorities of vulnerable groups and provided recommendations on gender-specific needs. The needs included access to public services, public safety, and the creation of economic opportunities for women IDPs, persons with disabilities and single mothers to the local strategies and plans of Shyrokyi, Ocheretyne and Toretsk communities. The city authorities of Rubizhne demonstrated commitment to validate the needs and priorities of the vulnerable

groups by bringing the community members into the process of developing a city plan for 2020. This was achieved through the Safety audit walks which is a part of the UN Women Safe City methodology applied by the city with the programme's technical and expert facilitation. Notable progress was reached with regards to tackling corruption at the local level. In this regard, the programme has successfully applied internationally recognized anticorruption methodology, the "Islands of Integrity" in Novopskov ATC, Luhansk Oblast. The "Islands of Integrity" is a practical tool for Public Leaders and Managers to identify and change public policies and organizational systems prone to corruption through a strategic and participatory processes.

Activity 1.3.1 Undertake data analysis for Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts to serve as a baseline, disaggregating data by gender and other criteria wherever relevant; identify potential business development opportunities and values chains to be supported.

The programme is providing continuous expert support to the elaboration of Donetsk Oblast Regional Development Strategy 2021-2027 (see Annex 17 for draft strategy). The strategy will evolve into a foundational docu-

ment that will set out mechanisms for diversification of the regional economy, improvement of the quality of social services, reform of the local governance structures, enhancement of the rule of law and access to justice, es-

pecially for the most vulnerable. Notably, the strategy is being developed in an inclusive and participatory manner with the engagement of civil society and expert groups. Following the strategy elaboration, further expert support will be provided in the development of an action plan to ensure its practical implementation. The action plan will include concrete steps to be taken, deadlines to be met, and identify responsible parties and budgetary sources needed for practical realization of the strategy.

To enhance community-level strategic planning and development, the programme is supporting the expansion of local socio-economic development strategies for its 8 targeted locations, 4 in Donetsk Oblast and 4 in Luhansk Oblast, to be finalized in November 2019.¹² The development of the strategies is preceded by an-depth situational analysis of the communities, with comprehensive information on their infrastructure, population, natural resources, labor market, economy, culture and tourism.

Activity 1.3.2 Build local government capacity to plan local economic development and investment based on participatory, inclusive and transparent processes.

The programme has supported 6 local civil society-driven initiatives to improve the implementation of the local socio-economic development plans and strategies, in an inclusive manner. The grants are also aimed at demonstrating the benefits of a human rights-based approach and gender-responsive local economic development.

A comprehensive capacity assessment of local authorities was conducted to assess the gaps in participatory local planning and budgeting. The assessment also identified entry points for inclusive and gender-equal programme planning and budgeting (see more at Activity 1.1.1). The assessment resulted in strengthening the capacities of local officials as reported in Activity 1.1.3. At the same time, women and men from 20 target communities identified their priorities and needs, especially those from vulnerable groups, and are drafting the profiles of their settlements demonstrating the challenges they face in accessing economic opportunities, adequate public services and proper infrastructure. Women from 7 communities near the con-

The strategies aim at facilitating medium-term strategic planning to ensure the community's comprehensive development. Efforts have also been focused on making the strategies gender-responsive, in order to address existing gender inequalities in local policymaking and implementation. The programme envisages the provision of additional expert support in advocating the adoption of the strategies by the local councils of the respective communities.

The workstream on strategic planning and local development has also included workshops for 111 local counterparts, including civil society groups, local authorities to raise their capacity for project management, project proposal writing, resource mobilization as well as fundraising. The skills gained during the workshops will be applied in the application process for the small grants programme to support locally-driven initiatives.

tract line reported increased exposure to domestic violence as the result of the conflict. Additional concerns of safety and insecurity were raised, due to the increased presence of military personnel and damaged infrastructure.

As part of its efforts to strengthen participatory and inclusive local planning and decision-making processes, the programme supported the efforts of the city of Rubizhne, Luhansk region in developing its city plan for 2020. In total, 15 (9 women, 6 men) representatives of CSOs, local officials, the police, community members enhanced their knowledge and capacity on the issues of safety in their communities and conducted the first-ever safety audit walk in Rubizhne where they assessed the safety of public spaces for women and girls. The Safety audit walk is part of the UN Women Safe City methodology, which includes the assessment of the public spaces' safety from sexual harassment and gender-based violence. Based on the Safety Audit walks, an interactive map of Rubizhne was produced¹³ (Annex 18 - Map of Rubizhne).

¹² Toretsk, Ocheretyne, Olhynka and Volnovakha in Donetsk Oblast, Hirske, Novoaidar, Shyrokyi and Krasna Talivka in Luhansk Oblast

Activity 1.3.3 Ease legal, regulatory, and tax frameworks to encourage business start-ups, employment, and easy bankruptcy proceedings.

The programme is addressing issues related to creating favourable business conditions in the targeted locations to foster prospects for economic development. In this regard, the programme plans to carry out analysis of the regulatory framework, identify its strengths and weaknesses as well as elaborate recommendations for further improvement that will encourage new business investors. Regular discussions are held with local counterparts on these important aspects and a study visit was organized for 20 representatives of the local authorities to Lviv

Oblast on the 13th -17th of May 2019. The visit resulted in building the capacity of its participants on the usage of variety of tools and approaches to create a favourable environment for the development of small and medium size enterprises. The participants have visited Drohobych and Lviv city councils, local development institutions, and Lviv Regulatory Hub to acquire first-hand experience and recommendations in reducing existing administrative burdens and red tape on business development at local levels.

Activity 1.3.4 Technical support to the Regional Development Agencies of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts for capacity development and implementation of procurement for public infrastructure projects using the ProZorro e-procurement system.

In its previous phase, the programme supported the establishment of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) for both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to perform a wide range of tasks related to ensuring comprehensive development of the regions. Expert support was provided in the expansion of institutional development plans for RDAs, including operational principles and policy guidelines. To increase operational capacity of RDA personnel, the programme is currently involved in the design and delivery of workshops in anticorruption,

e-procurement, ProZorro and procurement. On the 25th -27th of July 2019, the programme launched a training-seminar in Sviatohirsk, Donetsk Oblast on the implementation of innovative instruments to boost regional development. A total of 26 participants, including representatives from the local authorities as well as RDA personnel have advanced their skills in marketing, attraction of investments, introduction of e-governance instruments in the public services and other innovative tools.

Activity 1.3.5 Support to the development of strengthened anticorruption measures by local government in relation to public procurement at the regional level, as well as the promotion of government transparency, and support civil society monitoring of government decision-making processes and implementation of public policies.

Efforts are undertaken to systemically address corruption at the regional and local levels. Corruption continues to pose a major challenge and undermines public trust towards the work of the governmental structures. In tackling corruption, strong emphasis is placed on engaging the civil society sector to serve as watchdogs to oversee the performance of authorities in addressing corruption. In this regard, through its small grants programme, the support is being provided to the implementation of 6 local initiatives in the area of local civil society initiatives aimed at monitoring the work of

the state structures in addressing corruption at different levels. The monitoring will go beyond merely analysing existing problems and challenges but will also include recommendations to local authorities.

The anticorruption workstream was also marked by successful application of the internationally recognized anticorruption methodology, the "Islands of Integrity" in Novopskov ATC, Luhansk Oblast. The Islands of Integrity is a practical tool for Public Leaders and Managers to identify and change public policies and organizational

¹³ Interactive map of Rubizhne with unsafe public spaces: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1LYTSwUTmmBWZLARdMkTBzRk8y9huEgmF&ll=49.017412261471776%2C38.38081834849322&z=14>

systems prone to corruption through a strategic and participatory processes. 'Strategic' means that Islands of Integrity focuses on changing corrupt organizational systems, not (only) corrupt individuals; identifies and prioritizes the most dangerous forms of corruption; and goes through strategic planning process steps, from diagnosis to solutions. 'Participatory' means that managers and staff, leaders and outside stakeholders, work together to analyse the vulnerability to corruption of their organization and elaborate solutions (Annex 19 – Report on the methodology).

As a result, Novopskov ATC has developed and adopted its own anticorruption strategy 2019-2021, which will form a key part of the overall socio-economic development strategy of the settlement until 2025 (Annex 20 - Anticorruption strategy). The anticorruption strategy identifies and offers concrete steps to be taken to tackle corruption in wide range of areas, including but not limited to disposal of communal property, road maintenance, issuance of various certificates and others.

In combatting corruption, the programme is also work-

ing to form the public's negative attitude and zero tolerance to it. On 3-7 December 2018, jointly with the students and the staff of the Luhansk State University of Internal Affairs, the programme has implemented series of activities to dedicated to the International Anticorruption Day, commemorated each year on December 9. The activities have included winners award ceremony in various categories, including "the best anticorruption slogan", "corruption free police", technical and forensic fixation of corruption offences" and others. The students have also participated in a quiz to check their knowledge of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

On 29-30 May 2019, a study visit to Kyiv was also organized for the students of the Luhansk Oblast Universities to familiarize them with the work of the anti-corruption services, including National Anticorruption Bureau of Ukraine, Transparency International Ukraine and other institutions. The visit has served as an opportunity to learn about the methods and means in practically addressing corruption in different spheres of public life.

Activity 1.3.6 Capacity building for local government authorities to coordinate and support different institutional and non-governmental actors involved in recovery interventions; support to local NGOs and civil society.

The inclusion of civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of local policies is key to raising the quality of life, reducing poverty and social inclusion, and better access to basic services. The fundamental objective lies in improving citizen's capacity and facilitate real participation of citizens and their organizations in local government. To this end, the programme is undertaking various efforts, incorporating technical and expert support to civil society institutions. This includes the launch of systemic dialogue platforms between the civil society sector and authorities to raise and tackle a wide range of issues of public concern. The programme is also supporting implementation of 7 initiatives with its grants support scheme aimed at making the work of local authorities more open and transparent.

To introduce representatives of local administrations and NGOs, as part of their cooperation, to the concept of participatory policy making and to build skills to analyse efficiency of citizen involvement processes, 2 trainings were launched for 80 participants throughout August 2019. The participants have also enhanced their knowledge on citizen participation tools, functions of public councils as well as on fundamentals of lobbying and coalition building.

Moreover, the members of the working groups from 7 communities (Hirske, Novoaidar, Ocheretyne, Olhynka, Shyrokyi, Toretsk and Volnovakha) which are in the process of developing their local development strategies,

strengthened their capacities on programme cycle development through the training conducted on 5-6 September 2019. A specific session was delivered on gender mainstreaming in the programming cycle, followed by a session on strategic planning.

Women mobilizers and members of self-help groups advocated with the local authorities and members of the working groups for the development of the strategies to consider gender-related issues which disproportionately affect women and vulnerable groups and are related to reconciliation and recovery of their communities. For understanding the relevance of women's participation in peacebuilding and recovery, the programme, in coopera-

tion with the Global Women Peacebuilding Network and the local CSO partner "Unity for the future," delivered training sessions on UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. In total, 195 representatives from local authorities, social workers, professionals from law enforcement and state emergency services, representatives of CSOs and women mobilizers, members of SHGs have strengthened their capacities on human rights and international and national commitments to human rights and gender equality, four pillars of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the priorities identified in the Ukrainian National Action Plan on UN SCR 1325.



Component 2: Economic Recovery and MSMEs development



Grain sorting plant "Aeromekh" in Kreminna, Luhansk Oblast.
Photo: UNDP Ukraine / Vitalii Shevelev.

The main objective of the component is to foster economic revitalisation in eastern Ukraine and, specifically, stimulate employment and economic growth by providing assistance to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSMEs) development. This is achieved through demand-driven business development services and professional skills training as well as restoration and strengthening institutional and educational infrastructure needed for effective functioning of agriculture and non-agriculture sectors of the regional economy.

The MSMEs in Donetsk, Luhansk and Azov sea-coast areas of Zaporizhzhia Oblasts are at risk of losing market share because of erosions to market competitiveness due to the lack of active networks and associations aimed at advocacy, lobbying business interests and facilitating joint procurement practices and products shipment. These avenues are all available to competitors in other regions of Ukraine and to competitors in external markets. Historically, the region has been dominated by the heavy industry and big enterprises which had been lobbying their interests on the national and international level. Therefore, MSMEs sector does not have experience of coordinating joint efforts or implementing common projects. The sector requires technical and expert support provided systemically by the programme.

The conflict in eastern Ukraine has further weakened links between MSMEs due to the loss of the consumer market in the Russian Federation and decreased economic and operational capabilities of the companies relocated from the non-government-controlled areas. In this regard, the programme is continuously undertaking efforts to improve the capacity and potential of local MSMEs to access new markets and opportunities by establishing networks and partnerships. Effective coordination between MSME associations is needed to strengthen their role in the region's business community and to moderate the process of developing their work plans and implementing pilot initiatives.

The programme is continuously striving to establish an effective and widely accessible network of advisory, machinery and other service providers as well as improvement of market access for MSMEs in agriculture, business and manufacturing. Its interventions are also targeted at improving access and increase in flexibil-

ity of credit and financing for self-employment and MSMEs' development in the region. The support is also provided to reforming the vocational education system in the region, that should deliver its services and activities in line with contemporary realities of the labour market.

RESULT 2.1 NETWORK OF SERVICE PROVIDERS IS ESTABLISHED, AND MARKET ACCESS IMPROVED

An assessment and mapping of agricultural and non-agricultural value chains is available for both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The assessment provides necessary data for the programme to design interventions to best contribute to economic revitalization of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Seven chains were prioritized based on the volume of their influence on the target region's or community's economy, potential for growth, technological and logistical capability, sustainability, availability of stock, internal and inter-regional market potential, export potential, human capital as well as risks related to interventions for their development.

Moreover, the programme is working closely with the Donetsk State Agricultural Research Station and providing operational support to enhance its capacity to provide consultancy services to local farmers on wide range of issues including crop cultivation and seed production, soil fertility, optimization of agricultural land and other no less important areas. A mapping of existing laboratory service providers was conducted in close cooperation with the State Service of Ukraine on

Food Safety and Consumer Protection Service. Its findings are serving basis in ensuring targeted assistance to regional laboratory services and sanitary inspections. The procurement process of equipment for Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) diagnostics of infectious animal diseases is ongoing that will mitigate the risks of animal diseases and enhance the potential of animal protein value chains.

An entrepreneurship promotion campaign within the existing brand of "Big Stories of Small Businesses" has been launched to showcase 12 success stories of people who have managed to start and maintain a business, provide employment to others, and contribute to the development of their communities. This campaign highlights the success stories of the regional businesses from target oblasts through motivational videos, in order to inspire and motivate others to set up their own businesses and create new or expand existing partnerships between MSMEs from the target regions and the rest of Ukraine.

Activity 2.1.1 Local service providers from various organisations (Chamber of Commerce, NGOs, State and private extension service, machinery service providers, social service providers) are trained and provide practical advice and tailored training to MSMEs, including farms and agro-businesses and IDPs.

Emphasis could be on legal and tax requirements, preparation of business plans, energy efficiency, innovation and women in business. Skills assessment would be undertaken, including for the target value chains to ensure training meets requirements. Provision of quality technical and expert assistance to MSMEs on

business development lies at the core of programme's interventions and forms a basis to drive recovery and economic growth in the region. The ongoing situation in eastern Ukraine with regards to the provision of such services is far from meeting the actual demands of the local enterprises, forcing them to risk and act on their

own to identify new markets and expertise to ensure further business growth. To evaluate the existing situation, the programme has carried out a thorough mapping of business service providers for both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Over 30 business service providers, working in wide range of areas including provision of trainings and consultancy services, agricultural advisory services, legal assistance, marketing and business communications, advertising, logistics and others were identified to undergo further in-depth capacity assessment. The assessment has resulted in an in-depth analysis of their structures, capacities, strategies, competitiveness, sustainability, potential for growth and more importantly development constraints.

The findings of the capacity assessment have served as a basis in the follow up elaboration of a capacity development programme and a practical roadmap for extension of services, targeting at least 17 of the local business service providers. Moreover, the capacity building programme is planned to be implemented through a call for proposals to be announced in October 2019. The expected result of capacity building interventions lies in creating a network of professional, high qualified business service providers capable of rendering support to MSMEs and farmers to access new opportunities, develop business and marketing skills, refine their products and services to generate better and large revenue streams.

In Donetsk Oblast, the Programme identified the Donetsk State Agricultural Research Station (here and after referred as Field Station) as potential Light Advisory Agricultural Service (LAAS) actor. It currently provides

consultancy services in the following areas: 1) crop cultivation and seed production; 2) crop monitoring; 3) development and implementation of resource-saving, environmentally friendly technologies in agriculture; 4) soil fertility, optimization of fertilizers, optimization of the structure of agricultural land and acreage. The Programme supported the registration of the Field Station as an NGO called "Eastern Ukrainian Agricultural Department of the Services" (EUADS), including the development of its statute and the definition of the list of offered services (Annex 21 - statute). A tailored training programme was designed to increase the capacity of Field Station's members to provide extension and advisory services on available funding sources, marketing and business management to the local farmers. In Luhansk Oblast, the Luhansk National Agrarian University (LNAU), has been identified as having sufficient human resources and scientific capacities to evolve into a LAAS actor. However, due to the relocation, they currently do not have enough resources to create a separate entity for the provision of these services. During the second year, the Field Station will pilot joint service provision through the creation of a consortium with LNAU that will allow to cover both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

The Programme also analysed existing websites which provide information for farmers and came to the conclusion that none of them could evolve in a single platform for information and advisory services. Further research is needed to find a way to organize information exchange between the different actors in the LAAS system, which will result in practical elaboration of a single knowledge platform for local farmers and entrepreneurs in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Activity 2.1.2 In target value chains, co-operation between MSMEs, farmers and other stakeholders is improved through the establishment of cooperation/service contracting schemes (incl. for machinery services) and when feasible assist the establishment and strengthening of producers' associations / groups / cooperatives to ensure their empowerment and participation in rural clusters. Focus would also be on women groups, women-owned business.

The reporting period was highlighted by mapping and assessment of agricultural and non-agricultural value chains in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts as part of programme's activities aimed at stimulating econom-

ic growth and employment opportunities. Through in-depth desk review and analysis, focus group interviews with regional and local stakeholders were conducted. Additionally, surveys with more than 100

employers, 25 value chains were assessed for high growth potential and opportunities for rapid recovery, along with their supporting systems and infrastructures, which are crucial for overall economic revitalization in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (Annex 22 - mapping and assessment). As part of this analysis, the capacity, governance and effectiveness of 22 agricultural cooperatives in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts were assessed. The study revealed that most

groups of farmers register as cooperatives to obtain financial support from national and international organizations rather than to improve their cooperation and market opportunities.

The chains were prioritized based on the volume of their influence on the target region's or community's economy, potential for growth, technological and logistical capability, sustainability, availability of stock, internal

Comparing the results of the assessment with respect to the seven core cooperative principles¹⁴ the following patterns were identified:

60%

of the cooperatives surveyed had a business plan

45%

stated that they have plans to raise further capital from their members

50%

of the cooperatives surveyed had an elected Board of Directors

There is a general lack of understanding of what a cooperative means and of a true cooperative spirit.

In order to rebuild confidence in the core values of the cooperative model and the seven principles that drive it, the programme is designing a standard for cooperative development in the region according to the international norms and best practices that will be presented to all relevant stakeholders (local authorities, UN agencies, NGOs, communities, etc.) in the fall of 2019.

The needs assessment has identified the following 7 value chains as prominent and recommended for further support by the programme:



Ceramic products



Textile products



Hospitality Sector



Food processing



Milk products and Beef



Poultry



Grain and oilseeds

¹⁴ Seven core cooperative principles include: (1) Everyone is welcomed; (2) Democratically controlled by the members; (3) No free riders; (4) Self-control; (5) Cooperatives help farmers to share knowledge and grow value; (6) Working together to achieve more; (7) Building stronger communities.

and inter-regional market potential, export potential, human capital as well as risks related to interventions for their development. Moreover, the study helped to identify the abovementioned priority sectors, as well as provide a set of practical recommendations for their future development, including: a) promotion of creation of associations of small commodity producers on the principles of cooperation; b) creation of voluntary industry standards for products and raw materials; c) provision of information and advisory support; d) construction of small workshops for the processing of raw materials. To implement the following recommendations, the UN RPP started developing a roadmap of appropriate agricultural interventions aimed at addressing bottlenecks of the selected value chains. These interventions will include sub-projects, which will provide technical assistance to agricultural production in the region.

The study also revealed that one of the limiting factors for the value chains development is the inability

of farmers to meet sanitary requirements and safety standards. To mitigate the possible risks and improve farmer's production technologies, programme will develop a training programme for local farmers. The training sessions will cover eight locations in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts for both primary agricultural producers and processors in all prioritized value chains and will be implemented during the second year of the programme's implementation.

Importantly, a key issue identified for all the assessed value chains relate to the lack of appropriate knowledge and skills of the workforce. This is also thoroughly tackled by the programme that is undertaking systemic efforts in bringing positive changes and improvements to the Vocational Educational System of both oblasts that should adapt to the contemporary market environment by revising its curricula, modernising educational processes and infrastructure. The study was also presented to the donors and the targeted communities on 30th May 2019.

Activity 2.1.3 Support the quality of locally produced products through investments (storage and packing), technical assistance and innovations. Support the marketing and promotion of local products through branding and potentially GI registration (if appropriate).

Due to the loss of traditional consumer markets (primarily the Russian Federation and CIS countries), there is an urgent need for MSMEs of conflict-affected oblasts to diversify and target other international markets. To accomplish this, MSMEs must increase their competitiveness through ensuring safety of the production of goods or the services provided as well as through marketing and promotion. In addressing this issue, in December 2019, the programme will deliver four 1-day training sessions for MSMEs in food processing and hospitality sectors on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). The HACCP is an approach that aims to ensure safety of food and other products from different types of biological, chemical or physical hazards and designs relevant measures to reduce such risks. A total of 75 owners of MSMEs have enhanced their skills and knowledge on the practical application of the HACCP approach throughout all

stages of food production and up until its final distribution to the market.

One of the major bottlenecks identified for the MSMEs development in Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts is low product marketability. Only occasional businesses from the target regions are recognized by the customer. Such absence of a clear branding strategy leads to poor marketability of the locally produced goods and provided services. This creates general disbelief in ability of some sectors of the regional economy to develop. An entrepreneurship promotion campaign within the existing brand of "Big Stories of Small Businesses" has been launched to showcase 12 success stories of people who have managed to start and maintain a business, provide employment to others, and contribute to the development of their communities. This campaign highlights the success stories

of the regional businesses from target oblasts through motivational videos, in order to inspire and motivate others to set up their own businesses and create new or expand existing partnerships between MSMEs from

the target regions and the rest of Ukraine. All video stories will be widely disseminated through national and regional media, UN online platforms, intercity speedy trains, national retail stores and cinemas.

Activity 2.1.4 Investigate the needs for laboratory support, including the relationship between public and private actors, make recommendations for the re-establishment of functioning food laboratory services (shared between the two oblasts), strengthen local capacity through extensive training and the provision of equipment.

The UN RPP worked closely with the State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection Service (SSUFSCP), which is the responsible body for laboratory services provision, to complete a mapping of existing laboratory service providers in the region and assess their capacity and technical needs. The study revealed that a network of laboratory centres is available in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. More specifically, in Donetsk oblast there is one regional state laboratory, five inter-district state laboratories and 72 Sanitary Inspection at markets, which are structural subdivisions of regional and inter-district laboratories. In Luhansk oblast, there is one regional state laboratory and six inter-district state laboratories

During the meetings and consultations with SSUFSCP, it was revealed that there is an urgent need to address

the risks of infectious diseases, such as African Swine Fever, catching nodular dermatitis, pearl disease, aphtha of all types, flu, Newcastle disease, etc. The UN RPP assessed the needs and prepared technical specifications of equipment for Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) diagnostics of infectious animal diseases. This equipment will mitigate the risks of animal diseases in real time and thus contribute to strengthening the animal protein value chains. It is expected that this equipment will be delivered to Donetsk Oblast by December 2019. At the same time, the introduction of PCR diagnostics and auxiliary equipment in Luhansk Oblast will be only possible after the renovation of the building of a regional laboratory. The Programme will complement technical assistance with capacity building of relevant staff on the use of new equipment.

Activity 2.1.5 Support the development of trade links between Donetsk and Luhansk-based businesses and businesses in other regions of Ukraine through the organisation and participation in business and investment fairs in eastern and other regions of Ukraine.

The economic situation in eastern Ukraine remains difficult due to the armed conflict and long-lasting transformation of the economic structure of the region which has been traditionally dominated by the heavy industry. However, the business activity in the region remains high with entrepreneurs in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts creating successful enterprises in both traditional and innovative areas: from clothing and cheese production to 3D printers assembling, from asphalt repair services and agro-machinery production

to manufacturing of tourism equipment. To promote such successful MSMEs from Donetsk, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts and in order to facilitate inter-regional trade and commercial links, the programme is at the preparation stage for the launch of "East Expo 2019". The Expo will take place in Kyiv on the 8th and 9th of November 2019 and will serve as an open platform to feature products and services produced and delivered by nearly 200 MSMEs from eastern Ukraine. Other activities will also include high level panel discussions on busi-

ness development, presentations and learning events focused on entrepreneurship, export opportunities as well as fostering of inter-regional economic cooperation. In this regard, the Expo will result in strengthening the links between businesses from Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts with the other regions of Ukraine, EU and other countries, creating new connections, business networking as well as beneficial partnerships.

It is expected that the event will also draw large scale public interest and visibility. Some 3,000 visitors will learn about business success stories, innovative technologies, and business infrastructure development. Visitors will also learn about opportunities for market expansion in the ceramic and textile products, food processing, milk products, poultry, as well as grain and oil seeds.

To further strengthen business and trade links, the programme has supported the participation of MSMEs working in the hospitality sector from both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to take part in the Ukraine International Travel Market (Uttm) exhibition. The Uttm is an exhibition conducted annually and has proved itself to be an effective international platform for the consolidation and communication of travel industry professionals from Ukraine and abroad. The exhibition has brought together hundreds of companies, hotels delegates, re-

sorts, airlines and airports as well as representatives of international and national tourism organizations, government ministries and agencies. This has allowed different organizations to present their work and products, enhance bilateral and multilateral business ties and discuss joint issues and challenges related to hospitality and tourism sectors.

To reconnect the farmers from Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts with their counterparts from other oblasts of Ukraine, the Programme supported the participation of 13 farmers and 4 representatives of local authorities from Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts in the agricultural exhibition "Agroport", which was held in Lviv on the 19th -23rd of March 2019. The trip was organized to support farmers from this region in establishing business links with farmers from Lviv Oblast. The participants learned about the practical aspects of state programmes for farmers' support, met with the acting Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food, as well as increased their knowledge on HACCP standards and legal issues. During the trip, local farmers established business contacts not only with producers from Lviv Oblast, but also among each other, which is the most valuable take-out from the trip. Thus, the next event will be held at the local level, to give an opportunity for local farmers to cooperate and partner with each other.

RESULT 2.2 ACCESS TO CREDIT AND FINANCING IS IMPROVED AND MORE FLEXIBLE IN COMPLEMENT TO KFW

The programme has launched its 2nd Crowdfunding Academy for 53 entrepreneurs, who have developed a total of 12 business ideas and projects. The crowdfunding campaign for these projects is currently ongoing having already generated good results. For example, an entrepreneur from Luhansk Oblast has raised over 6,000 USD to build a family mini leisure park, with a sports ground and cinema and which will also offer English classes.

Over 800 entrepreneurs have strengthened their business and marketing skills and received in-depth practical information on brand promotion, building of

networks and new partnerships, sales improvement as well as communication skills. To reach a wider audience, the programme has also developed an e-learning online platform and created series of learning video materials. Moreover, a total of 140 persons from the targeted locations have increased their knowledge in management, accounting, finance, human resources management, design and optimization of business processes as practical aspects of entrepreneurial activity. The capacity building interventions were followed by the launch of the small business grants programme that will provide support to the implementation of approximately 150 local business initiatives.



Crowdfunding Academy in Sviatohirsk, Donetsk Oblast.
Photo: UNDP Ukraine / Artem Hetman

Activity 2.2.1 Identify and assess opportunities and needs for further investments by MSMEs, including in the target value chains and establish eligibility criteria for different investment projects and beneficiaries.

The MSMEs in eastern oblasts of Ukraine continue to systemically suffer from the lack of financial resources to ensure sustainable business growth. As previous assessments have shown, this is mainly due to the status of the conflict-affected territories and the limited number of loan tools which could be used by the MSMEs to fund development activities without highly liquid pledge. In increasing access to additional finances, the programme has launched its 2nd Crowdfunding Academy (first one was organized in 2017) for 53 entrepreneurs (28 women, 25 men) from the programme's targeted communities to increase their capacity on the crowdfunding methodology –as a transparent and innovative tool to attract public funding and potential investors to support business ideas. As a follow-up to the

academy, its participants developed 12 business projects and received practical guidance on registering and presenting them on existing crowdfunding platforms. Notably, the academy also included a study visit to Kyiv for participants to obtain first-hand knowledge about successful crowdfunding campaigns that have raised hundreds of thousand dollars via the [kickstarter.com](https://www.kickstarter.com) platform. All 12 business projects were provided with online consulting support and professional promotional videos to start their crowdfunding campaigns. Throughout July-August 2019, all 12 businesses have successfully launched their crowdfunding campaigns to run up until the end of November. The business ideas vary from private innovative schools to public urban spaces and production of cosmetics. For example, entrepreneurs

from Sviatohirsk, Donetsk Oblast, have launched a camp for Innovative Educators, where schoolchildren, parents and teachers shared their ideas about how to take contemporary education in Ukraine to a new level. An entrepreneur from Sievierodonetsk, Luhansk Oblast, raised more than 6,000 USD to build a family mini leisure park, with a sports ground and cinema and which will also offer English lessons. An entrepreneur from Rubizhne,

Luhansk Oblast, has raised money to co-fund the expansion of her recently launched innovative private school for kids.

The Programme also completed list of financing and investment opportunities available in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts that will be further disseminated among local agricultural MSMEs.

Activity 2.2.4 Establish a grant scheme for seasonal trade finance (inputs), small investments in machinery, equipment and infrastructure through potential investment channels (grants, project co-financing etc.), based on pre-defined criteria.

The programme aims at developing viable mechanisms to support the creation of jobs and livelihoods for conflict-affected persons. The efforts are taken regularly to promote self-employment and income generating opportunities via the programme's grants support scheme that have already resulted in the implementation of numerous business ideas and have generated business/entrepreneurship culture among the local population. Prior to the establishment of a grants scheme, the programme is working extensively to enhance business skills of local entrepreneurs and agricultural producers through delivery of trainings. Notably, given the high demands to participate in the trainings, its participants are chosen on a competitive basis through an online application process that is designed in a user-friendly and easy to understand manner.

Throughout August-October 2019, a total of 40 training courses were delivered for over 800 participants from the programme's target communities in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The participants have strengthened their business and marketing skills and have also received in-depth practical information on brand promotion, building of networks and new partnerships, sales improvement as well as communication skills. Addressing the high demand for such type of training (over 2300 people registered for training in total) ten additional training sessions on business ideas origination and start-up will be delivered in October-November 2019 covering the areas of Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts along the Azov sea coast-

line. A specific training module has been developed to allow agricultural producers from conflict-affected oblasts to enhance their knowledge and skills in business planning.

Moreover, the programme has also launched a series of seven 3-day training courses on practical aspects of entrepreneurial activity and four 1-day training sessions on strategic business development. The trainings are being conducted in Kramatorsk, Mariupol, Pokrovsk, Kreminna, Sievierodonetsk, Melitopol and Berdiansk, involving the participation of 140 people. The participants have increased their knowledge in management accounting, finance, human resources management, design and optimization of business processes as practical aspects of entrepreneurial activity. Additionally, notable upcoming activities include the completion of a training programme on marketing, branding, business communication and exhibition activities for MSMEs. A total of 14 training courses will be completed by the of November 2019 for over 420 participants from the programme's target communities in Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts. The aim of the courses is to enhance participants' business skills. Participants will be provided with information on how to align marketing and sales, how to build a brand, how to strategically use to improve the performance of a business and how to use business exhibitions to promote a company and boost sales.

To further support the practical implementation of busi-

ness start-ups, renewal or expansion of MSMEs within the prioritized sectors of economy, the programme has launched its small business grants programme. A total of approximately 150 MSMEs selected on a competitive basis will be provided with grants up to EUR 6,500 in November 2019. In line with clearly established procedures, the applicants are invited to develop, submit, and present their business plans. The plans are expected to demonstrate long-term prospects for profit, relevant market indicators and potential positive influence for the prioritized value chains in the region. The grant funds will be used for the procurement of equipment and tools necessary to start production activities, hiring additional personnel to expand the business and initial procurement of feedstock and materials for production/services provision. An experienced grant programme administrator is involved to facilitate the efficient, transparent and equal selection process and to ensure a unified approach and cumulative effect from current and previous rounds of the grants support programme.

To ensure that the small business grants programme effectively responds to the needs of all businesses, the UN RPP established clear eligibility criteria for agricultural businesses that will be used by the evaluation committees to assess the feasibility of business plans submitted by the local farmers.

To ensure high quality in the implementation of the awarded grants, the programme supports the grantees with consulting services in: accounting, marketing and business development areas including the issues related to registration, re-registration, obtaining permits, certificates, hiring employees, national tax and legal regulations, bookkeeping, auditing, reporting, sales, product and services promotion, outreach and business expansion. Monthly digests of frequently asked questions and legislative and regulatory amendments are issued. Additionally, six in-person sessions will be delivered by the consulting company in 2020-2021 in the target areas to analyse and help resolving practical business cases of the grants programme beneficiaries.

RESULT 2.3 PROVISION OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING IS OF INCREASING QUALITY

In-depth analysis of the VET systems of both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts is now available providing comprehensive information on the quality of the educational processes, infrastructural development of VET institutions as well as their compliance to contemporary market developments. The analysis also includes a set of recommendations and immediate actions to be undertaken both at the local and national levels. Moreover, the programme conducted a comprehensive analysis of the labor markets in both conflict-affected oblasts that have revealed existing trends and have also provided

forecasts. Its findings will serve as a basis in revising the training curricula of the VET institutions to align them with the needs of employers. Sixty-one managers from local VET institutions have undergone 3-day training sessions on effective management and have strengthened their skills and knowledge on modern approaches of strategic and operational administration. In country study tours are scheduled to take place to exchange best practices in VET management, organization of the curricula, and educational processes at large.

Activity 2.3.1 Conduct and analysis of the VET system, state employment service and local business stakeholders in terms of enhancing employability, disaggregating data by gender wherever relevant.

The conflict in eastern Ukraine has significantly reshaped the region's socio-economic development. In

just the first year of the armed conflict, the physical volume of the gross regional product of Donetsk Oblast

alone dropped by 33%, leading to increasing unemployment rates and a great shift in demand for workforce. These developments in labour market have substantially affected the VET system in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, leading to their significant decrease, outdated curricula and as a result inability to properly respond to the needs of employers and the market at large. To get an in-depth understanding of the context and ensure effective planning for its activities, the programme has conducted an analysis of the VET system in both oblasts with a focus on the following major aspects:

- In-depth study and analysis of the impact of the changing socio-economic developments in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts on the VET system;
- Status of cooperation between VET institutions and employers in both regions;
- Institutional management of the VET system with a focus on personnel, existing legislative and normative framework, capacity needs;
- Analysis of the curricula in VET institutions and the degree of their compliance to market demands.

The analysis has revealed ongoing developments in the VET system. For example, Donetsk Oblast is mainly characterized by the presence of an extensive network of state-owned technical and vocational institutions. The formation of such a network was mainly influenced by the structure of the economy, the population size, urbanization, demographic as well as migration processes. The numbers speak for themselves, between 100 and 140 VET institutions have been active in Donetsk Oblast at various times, this equate to 11% to 12.5% of the total number of such educational institutions across the entire country. The situation changed dramatically with the outbreak of the armed conflict, showcased by the fact that the number of VET institutions and students in them almost halved, namely from 111 in 2013, to only 44 institutions in 2014. Moreover, the analysis has also informed significant duplication of trainings for the same occupation in different VET institutions of the Oblast. For example, the cooks or the pastry chefs in Mariupol alone are trained by the state-owned “Mariupol Centre for Vocational Education”, “Mariupol Vocational Lyceum of Construction” as well as by “Mariupol Vocational Lyceum of Servic-

es and Trade”. The same situation can be observed in other major cities of the Oblast, which raises serious concerns on the cost effectiveness of maintaining such a high number of institutions that provide the same specialization.

The study has also showcased that the material and technical base of the VET institutions in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts are far from meeting the modern standards and market requirements. According to the survey results, almost one-third of the teachers of VET institutions gave 5 points out of 10 to the state of their infrastructural development. This calls for a need to renovate most of the institutions to ensure decent provision of educational services to students. Currently, the VET institutions are financed from the regional and local budgets, but their property is still under the ownership of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The process of transferring the ownership is constrained by unresolved issues in the regulatory and legislative framework. According to the survey results, only 11.6% of teachers and 15.9% of managers of VET institutions are fully satisfied with the existing funding system.

The analysis also includes set of recommendations and immediate actions to be undertaken both at the local and national levels. At the state level, there is a need to accelerate, adopt and ensure implementation of the Law of Ukraine “On Vocational and Technical Education” to pave the way for a modernization and follow up improvement of the educational processes. Major recommendations at the regional level include the expansion of methodical recommendations to improve the curricula to align to the labor market needs, improvement of cooperation of the VET institutions with local employers to ensure guaranteed employment to graduates, and concrete proposals for optimization of the work processes (Annex 23a – analysis of Donetsk Oblast VET system and 23b – Luhansk Oblast).

The reporting period was also highlighted by a comprehensive analysis of the labor markets in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to substantiate evidence-based support to VET institutions. The studies have revealed existing trends in the labor markets and have also provided fore-

casts. Notably, the highest demand for workforce in Luhansk Oblast is in the agricultural sector that is currently in deep shortage of motor vehicle and tractor drivers (almost in need of 2,000 employees). In general, the labor markets in both oblasts are marked by the outflow of young people and skilled workers to other regions of Ukraine or abroad, where employers can offer better working conditions and competitive salaries. Another acute problem relates to “shadow” employment, that according to the National Bank of Ukraine could account for more than 70% of the able-bodied population of the region. These findings in the labor markets are of interest to the state employment service, its regional and local branches that shall provide quality services targeting both the needs of employers and potential jobseekers (Annex 24a – labour market analysis for Donetsk Oblast and 24b – Luhansk Oblast).

The programme has also launched a public presentation and follow up discussion of all the analysis results in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. In Donetsk Oblast, the discussion took place in Kramatorsk on July 3rd, 2019, involving more than 80 participants representing the Oblast Administration, VET institutions, trade and industry sectors, State Employment Service, and business associations. The analysis results were also publicly presented and discussed in Sievierodonetsk, Luhansk Oblast on July 4th, 2019. Each of the discussions were accompanied by

lively discussions and recommendations from the participants that were all duly included in the final study results.

Jointly with regional and local stakeholders, the programme is also undertaking measures to tackle the problem of youth migration to other regions of Ukraine and abroad in search for better employment opportunities. To this end, the programme plans to launch two regional Forums “Live and Work in Ukraine” (October 16, 2019 in Sievierodonetsk, October 24, 2019 in Mariupol) in close cooperation with Regional Employment Services of both Donetsk and Luhansk oblast and Departments for Education and Science. The forums will include sessions and expert panel discussions on the work of VET institutions, and developments in the labor market.

The meetings will be also be accompanied by the launch of career fairs, where employers, recruiters and educational institutions provide in-depth information about their work to participants. In this regard, job seekers will have a first-hand opportunity to speak to local enterprises, network, and acquire information about employment opportunities. Moreover, students will also receive thorough information on existing educational programmes, facilities at VET institutions, and application procedures.

Activity 2.3.2 Based on the outcome of activities 1.3.1 and 2.3.1, design curricula and capacitate staff to deliver revised education standards and corresponding VET courses in skills and competencies to local labor demands.

The programme plans to deliver expert support to agricultural and non-agricultural VET institutions in revising their curricula and educational standards to meet existing market demands. For example, at present, there is a surplus of workforce in the service sector and lack of qualified graduates to work in the mining or the electrical power industry. The work is planned to be carried out in the second year of programme’s implementation, prior to the adoption of curricula by the VET institutions, and in line with the findings of the analysis. In updating the curricula, key emphasis will be placed on equipping the students with practical knowledge that will significantly improve the quality of the learning

process and acquisition of appropriate occupational competencies by students. To foster self-employment opportunities among VET, the revised curricula shall also include courses on entrepreneurial and business skills.

The reporting period was also marked by the launch of six 3-day training sessions throughout April-June 2019 on effective management of VET institutions. Participants of the sessions include, senior management of institutions (22 representatives from Luhansk Oblast and 39 from Donetsk Oblast) who have enhanced their knowledge and skills on the application of modern ap-

proaches to strategic and operational administration. The trainings have also included in-depth sessions on the developments in the labor market, the demands of employers for a skilled workforce and introduction of relevant changes to the existing curricula. Joint discussions were also held on enhancing cooperation of VET

institutions with local employers and state employment service to function in a cohesive way and meet each other's needs. A special guideline was also elaborated and available for use on effective management of VET institutions (Annex 25 – Guideline)

Activity 2.3.3 Capacity building for state employment service at national and local level to increase the quality of service provision to jobseekers.

Increasing the capacity of state employment service, its regional and local branches to provide high quality services both for employers and potential jobseekers lies at the core of programme's activities. The conducted analysis of regional labor markets in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts have identified key challenges and needs of regional employment services. The following are major areas of concern:

- Lack of capacity and technical basis to provide quality and client-oriented services to both employers and jobseekers;
- Difficulties in implementing e-services, that can simplify and accelerate contacts between jobseekers and potential employers;
- Need to upgrade technical and material basis to organize various career fairs, educational events for potential employers to establish contacts with jobseekers;
- Lack of systemic interaction between employment services at various levels and employers, especially medium and small-sized enterprises (MSMEs) that hinders their ability to provide quality services and forecast real developments in the labor market;
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation system and indicators to clearly assess the work of the state employment service, its regional and local branches. The focus needs to be made on developing these criteria and on improving business and management processes.

The programme is currently conducting an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the work of state employment service at national, regional, and local levels, that will form yet another evidence-based ground

for programme's activities. This has been agreed and discussed during the meeting of the programme management with head of the state employment service of Ukraine Olha Makogon, that took place in Kyiv on 26 June 2019. The meeting has also served as an opportunity to present the programme, its objectives and receive feedback from the senior management of the employment service on potential areas of future cooperation.

The main objectives of the analysis include a detailed functional assessment of the state employment service with an emphasis on the number of staff, their qualifications, access to training programmes, exposure to international best practices as well as its interaction with its regional and local branches. The study will also assess existing employment programmes and services and will include recommendations on their improvement to best meet the needs of jobseekers and employers. Importantly, the ongoing analysis will form a basis in elaborating targeted capacity development programme for the state employment service at different levels.

To increase understanding and knowledge of employment services of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts on the application of modern client-oriented services, the programme has supported series of in-country study tours. The study tours exposed a total of 105 participants from both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to effective management of human resources, establishment of partnership with potential employers, development and application of e-services, and capacity building programme for jobseekers.

Activity 2.3.4 Conduct a survey of existing VET institutions in the region and propose a development and investment plan aligned to the recommendations of activity 1.3.1.

Following the results of the comprehensive analysis of the VET system in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the programme plans to develop regional VET development strategies. The strategies will aim at addressing weaknesses and challenges identified as a result of the analysis and will also include action plans, outlin-

ing concrete activities, responsible parties, deadlines as well as budgets to ensure timely and practical implementation of the strategies. Expert support will be provided by the programme in accompanying the process of adopting the action plans by the Regional Councils of both oblasts.

Activity 2.3.5 Develop links between public institutions and the private sector to enhance employability.

Establishment of links between VET institutions, employers, and the state employment service at different levels (national, regional and local) remains one of the key priorities to be addressed by the programme. The VET institutions shall be able to provide quality education to the future workforce to meet the demands of employers. The role of the employment services lies in establishing

the links between jobseekers and employers. In this regard, the programme is currently holding consultations with VET regional councils to activate their work to serve as institutional advisory platforms to discuss developments in the labor market, identify challenges and needs of various stakeholders and take respective measures.

Activity 2.3.6 Rehabilitate accommodation facilities for selected VET institutions (both agricultural and non-agricultural)

A comprehensive analysis of the VET system showed that educational facilities of the VET institutions are indeed far from meeting modern standards and requirements to provide quality educational services to their students. Moreover, most of the institutions lack proper conditions for students' comfortable accommodation and enjoyment of recreational activities.

The buildings are in urgent need of renovation, roofs are in poor shape, windows need to be replaced and heating system needs to be improved in most of the institutions. The programme is at this stage involved in selecting the institutions to be rehabilitated in the second implementation year.



Component 3: Community Security and Social Cohesion



Participants of the event for fathers with children in Sviatohirsk
UNFPA Ukraine

The primary objective of the component is to increase social cohesion, which has been significantly reduced as a result of the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine. In this regard, advocacy and investment is a narrative that gives the local population hope and identifies ways towards a brighter future. This is essential to mobilize the public, and to ensure the support of affected communities for reforms. The programme's interventions are centred around strengthening civic activism and volunteering to improve social cohesion. Traditionally, fragmented relationships between groups in society and between people and institutions originates from low citizen engagement and activism, as well as poorly developed dialogue platforms for citizens to voice their needs to the authorities. Actions are also targeted at improving the capacity of local media to play a meaningful role in promoting social cohesion, tolerance, and respect for diversity in the conflict-affected communities.

Increasing personal and community security to make the enjoyment of human rights tangible and relevant at the individual level is also at the forefront of activities under Component 3. In conflict-affected communities, law enforcement agencies, security services, and justice institutions lack the capacity and means to ensure protection and restoration of rights, to uphold rule of law, to mitigate disputes and tensions, and to address violence and crime. Ongoing hostilities, related community-level violence, and misinformation contribute to prejudice, polarization, and deepening divisions. In tackling these issues, the programme is aiming at establishing and operationalizing community-based reference groups or networks to provide and avenue for positive and meaningful interactions between the law enforcement bodies and the members of the conflict-affected communities.

Given the public's low level of trust to public authorities (including law enforcement as well as judiciary institutions), interventions are targeted at providing systemic support to local civil

society activists and institutions to meaningfully engage in the development, implementation, and monitoring of local policies and programmes. Extensive support is also provided to youth populations to empower them to actively participate in the governance processes at various stages, be politically literate, and able to make sound judgment and understanding of public issues.

The advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment is impeded by a patriarchal culture, discriminatory attitudes and gender norms, which impede accepting women as legitimate and effective leaders. The needs and priorities of women and men, especially from vulnerable groups are perceived as being neglected in decision making processes related to community security and social cohesion. In this regard, the programme's interventions are targeted at enhancing the capacity

of regional and local decision makers to design and implement policies and programmes that are inclusive and promote the rights and interests of women. Gender-based violence (including sexual harassment and violence in public space) and conflict-related sexual violence represent serious community security concerns that are still prevalent in targeted locations. In this regard, the programme's activities are targeted at raising the public's awareness of these issues and at equipping law enforcement bodies with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively respond to SGBV cases.

Moreover, programming under this component addresses issues of scarcity of universally available and widely accessible security and justice services that reflect people's actual needs, especially those of vulnerable groups of women and men.

RESULT 3.1. A NETWORK OF CITIZEN GROUPS IS ESTABLISHED TO PROMOTE SOCIAL COHESION AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The programme has carried out its activities to enhance community security and social cohesion in 15 communities of Luhansk and 15 communities of Donetsk oblasts, that were chosen in line with clearly established selection criteria. The communities have developed the so-called "community profiles", comprehensive documents to mobilize conflict-affected communities for action. The profiles include detailed information on the opportunities and advantages the community possesses to respond to existing economic, environmental, or security challenges. Notably, the documents are used by the CSWGs to initiate discussions and find solutions to identified security challenges.

In the reporting period, the programme has established and provided operational support to 8 new CSWGs to serve as platforms for interaction between the police and the community members. The groups will play a lead role in identifying community-security related issues and in finding concrete action plans and mechanisms to address them through the application of an inclusive and participatory approach. The programme has also delivered a series of trainings to increase the capacity of the CSWG members. This included a study visit to

Georgia to learn and exchange best practices in community mobilization and empowerment, community policing, as well as development and implementation of community-driven local initiatives. The programme has trained an additional 100 police officers from the targeted locations on the theories and practical application of community policing approach. The programme has also increased the capacity of more than 100 youth leaders and activists to develop and implement youth led civic initiatives and has developed and applied ProSkills innovative curriculum. Furthermore, the programme has organized a large-scale Youth, Peace and Security Forum, involving 200 activists to discuss and exchange visions on peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Through its grants support scheme, support was provided to the ongoing implementation of 24 local community-driven initiatives to enhance community security and social cohesion, gender equality as well as ensure conflict-affected person's access to justice. The access to justice workstream also included an in-depth update of the "Your Rights" mobile application, a timely response to help protect the rights of internally displaced persons and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The

updated version of the app is an important contribution to addressing the existing information gap concerning rights of the conflict-affected population. Moreover, the programme continued providing technical and expert support through the work of Legal Aid Centres to provide quality legal aid to conflict-affected residents.

The programme is also applying innovative methods in tackling community-based conflicts. It is currently implementing a project “Geoinformation system to monitor, analyse and evaluate conflicts” in the communities of Luhansk Oblast. The system represents an online platform, which will receive information from the ordinary residents and activists on existing community-based conflicts and is currently working in a test mode.

In the 20 target communities, 86 Self-Help Groups (SHG) have been established to advocate for gender equality, inclusivity (inclusion) and intersectional approach to socio-economic development. By applying 5 of the 10 Steps to CME, the SHGs with the support from their community mobilizers have managed to improve their knowledge on human rights-based approach and gender equality approach to community development. They have engaged in generating gender equality profiles of the settlements in the amalgamated communities and identified small scale initiatives to advocate for with the local authorities. The new SHGs and community mobilizers have benefited from the ex-

perience of the Ukrainian Women’s Fund from the first phase as well as from the peer support of mobilizers and SHGs members from the first wave (during 2017-2018) in communities applying CME. The on-going CME process has identified similar challenges affecting security and social cohesion in all the communities but has also determined differences deriving from the proximity to the contact line. The first draft of the community profiles is demonstrating that all communities face a lack of nurseries for children under 3 years old and limited access and availability for children (including with disabilities) of 3-6 years, insufficient administrative services, lack of social services and high-level stigma in reporting gender-based violence. However, the communities near the contact line face additional and more complex challenges related to increased exposure to gender-based violence, sense of insecurity and feeling of unsafety of women and girls in public spaces. The situation is further exacerbated by limited access to schools and kindergartens caused by lack of public transportation, especially in winter, limited mobility of all people but in particular persons with disabilities, elderly, single parents (mothers prevalently). The programme with its partner NGO “Ukrainian Women’s Fund” supports networking of the SHGs through CME forums (the first one planned for October – November 2019), so as the common challenges, priorities and needs of SHGs are discussed and series of interventions are identified and supported.

Activity 3.1.1 Identify target voluntary communities

Prior to undertaking activities, the programme has carried out intensive work in identifying target communities. As a result, 30 communities were selected, 15 from Donetsk Oblast and 15 from Luhansk Oblast¹⁵. The communities were preselected in line with clearly established criteria, that have included the following major aspects:

- A community’s previous experience of cooperation and engagement with the programme in enhancing community security and social cohesion, achieved results and lessons learned. The experience of communities with positive experience will

be disseminated and shared with newly selected ones;

- Geographical location and travel logistics;
- Readiness and motivation of the local authorities, civil society institutions and other stakeholders to work with the programme;
- Communities situated close to the contact line that are characterized by complex problems, lack of civil society institutions, low level of civic engagement, social cohesion and numerous challenges undermining community security.

¹⁵ 15 communities in Donetsk Oblast: Dobropillia, Druzhkivka, Krasnogorivka, Manhush, Mariinka, Myrnohrad, Novhorodske, Pokrovsk, Sartana, Siversk, Sloviansk, Svitlodarsk, Velykonovosilkivskiyi raion, Volnovakha, Vuhledar.

15 communities in Luhansk Oblast: Bilovodsk, Katerynivka, Krasnorichenske, Kreminna, Lozno-Oleksandrivka, Lysychansk, Milove, Novoaidar, Nyzhnia Duvanka, Popasna, Pryvillia, Sievierodonetsk, Stanytsia Luhanska, Troitske, Zolote

Following the preselection process, the programme has conducted a series of meetings with the authorities and civil society representatives of the communities to give an in-depth presentation of the programme, its planned interventions and to receive feedback on cooperation and

joint implementation of activities. The local authorities of the targeted communities have also expressed their willingness and readiness to assist and work together with local civil society organizations to implement programme supported community-based initiatives.

Activity 3.1.2 Support target (amalgamated or non-amalgamated) communities in establishing community organisations, which will be legally registered, organized in networks, trained and mentored in determining and prioritizing local needs to be addressed by local budgets, including the regional development budget.

The programme is staying at the forefront of mobilizing conflict-affected communities to be active and meaningfully engage in the design, implementation and monitoring of local policies and programmes. In doing so, the programme is applying a special community mobilization methodology. The methodology was developed in project's previous phase and has emerged as a guideline, providing step-by-step instructions on mobilizing communities around common goals related to local development planning, budgeting, strengthening social cohesion and community security, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Moreover, the methodology is an important instrument of engaging communities to identify their priorities, resources, needs and solutions that employ a human rights-based approach at the forefront of the agenda.

The practical application of the methodology has led to the process of creating 24 community profiles as a result of inclusive and participatory processes. The profiles are comprehensive documents aimed at mobilizing conflict-affected communities for action. They contain a detailed look at the opportunities and advantages the community possesses to respond to existing economic, environmental, or security challenges. Importantly, the profiles are actively used by Community Security Working Groups (CSWGs) as an advocacy tool to initiate discussions and find solutions to security issues that have been identified. For example, the Soledar community of Donetsk Oblast, in line with the findings of the community profiles, has developed and adopted a local programme on controlling of the stray dog population in the area (Annex 26- Druzhkivka community profile). The development of the profiles was a lengthy process and included

the mobilization of 120 participants (4 from each target community), who have undergone a series of extensive trainings to mobilize their fellow community members to actively engage in the joint development of the profiles. On November 17th -22nd 2019, intensive trainings were conducted in Donetsk Oblast on the launch of community profiling. The participants of the trainings have included 54 activists from the targeted communities, who have built their capacity on methods and techniques of participatory research, focus groups, surveys, offline and online community mapping, SWOT analysis and have also familiarized themselves with best practices of community mobilization. Further capacity building activities have also included trainings for community activists from the targeted communities on practical and standardized steps of creating community profiles, including data gathering, its analysis as well as visualization. The trainings have also included sessions for individual consultations of the community members with the trainers to get their feedback on various peculiarities related to the launch of the profiles.

First and foremost, the profiles have addressed issues related to community security and social cohesion. Their launch through inclusive and participatory process was an opportunity to mobilize the communities, reveal their problems and assess available resources to resolve them. Moreover, the community members involved in the launch of the profiles started to understand and pay a closer attention to societal dynamics that are characterized by multiple demographic, security, gender inequality challenges. Members also realized the lack of systemic venues for local populations to engage in the formulation and implementation of the programme and policies.

The surveys have showcased that the general problems surrounding targeted communities relate to poor road conditions, low quality of the medical and social services, unemployment, prevailing corruption, stray dogs, drug and alcohol abuse, and problems with street lighting (according to community residents shall be given first-hand priority). The evidence highlights a clear trend, 51% of the survey respondents of the city of Druzhkivka, Donetsk Oblast perceive the provision of medical services to be “poor”, with 17% having rated them as “very poor”. This also underlines the need to accelerate the support to the ongoing medical reform in Ukraine, especially at the local level.

In its interventions, the programme places a key emphasis on developing tools for efficient planning, monitoring and evaluation that are vital for addressing development needs by establishing clear links between past, present, and future initiatives. The quality of the undertaken measures, their design, how well the resources are planned and whether they truly reflect the real situation are crucial factors behind the programme’s successful implementation. From this perspective, the profiles are also crucially important in receiving data and assessment of the situation by the community members themselves in order to design actions reflecting the needs of local counterparts, ranging from local authorities to civil society institutions but most importantly, to ordinary conflict-affected persons and vulnerable groups who continue to suffer the most from the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine. Notably, the findings of the profiles will also serve as an evidence-based ground for community members in developing and implementing various community-driven project proposals.

A key priority of the programme’s interventions is facilitating the engagement between regional and local governments, civil society, communities and youth, to improve community-level responses based on human rights and gender analysis to issues related to community security and social cohesion. In responding to community-based security and development challenges, the programme is continuing to place significant importance on fostering the concept of “community policing”, an approach that was developed to help security providers to address crimes in an alternative manner rather than initiating repressive or responsive tactics. This type of approach considers the

role of prevention mechanisms to improve relationships with the population and to work more closely with the community in dealing with various types of security and development challenges.

To date, a total of 30 CSWGs are functioning in programme’s targeted communities to provide space for discussions, information sharing and for raising security and development concerns among local authorities, security providers and communities at the grass-roots level. They have played and are continuing to play a lead role in identifying community-security related issues and in finding concrete ways and mechanisms to address them through the application of an inclusive and participatory approach. The range of issues raised and addressed by CSWGs include the following actions:

- Design and implement local security programmes (including safe cities, safe bus stops, smart schools);
- Conduct public awareness campaigns on community security and social cohesion challenges, access to justice and others;
- Creation of fire brigades involving local volunteers in various conflict-affected remote areas;
- Conducting safety audits in line with the designed methodology (e.g. fire protection audit, safety audit for schools and kindergartens, traffic safety audit for road signs and marking);
- Improving partnerships and communication among existing shelters for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflict-affected areas;
- Installation of street lighting in public spaces to enhance safety of community residents.

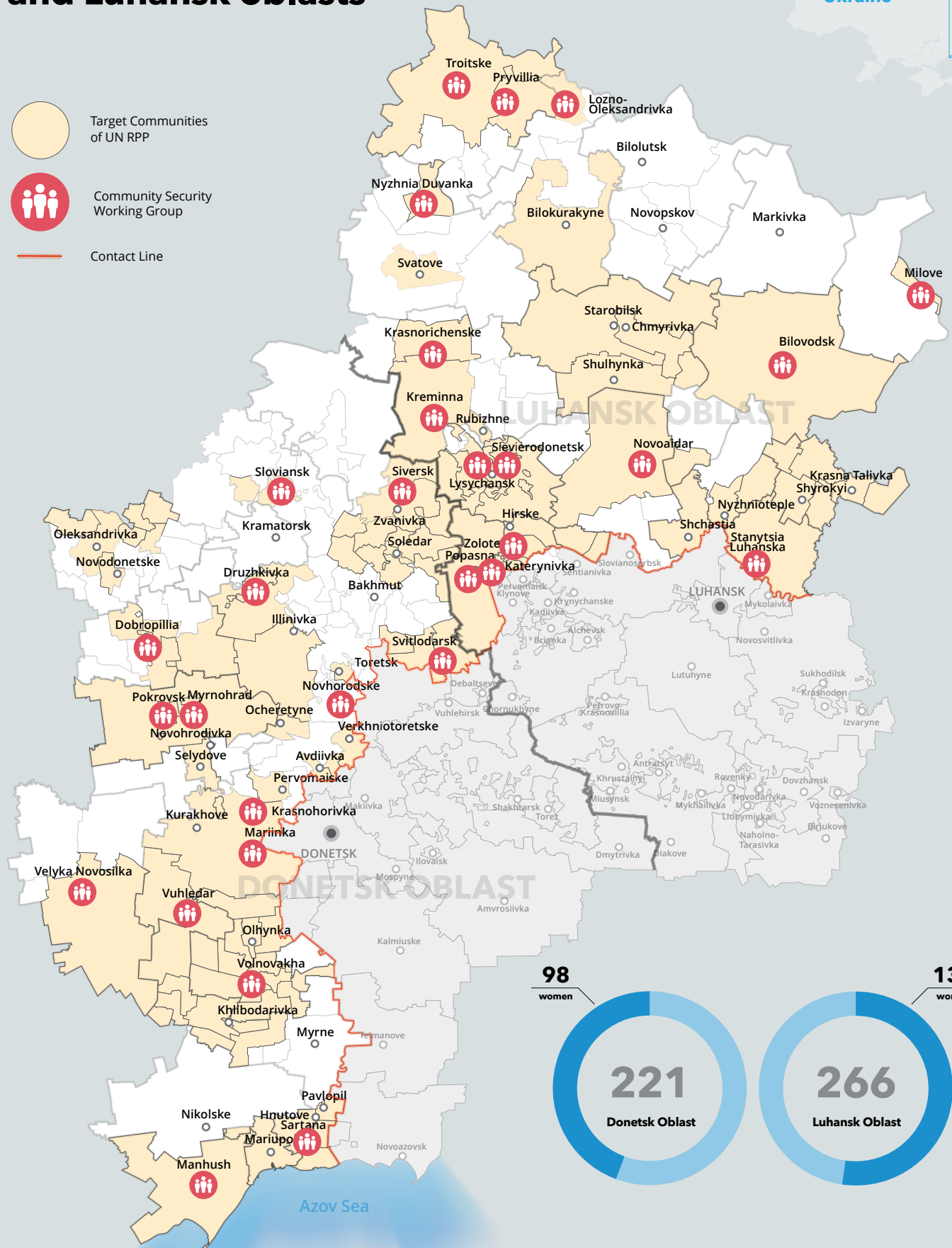
Following the establishment of the CSWGs, the programme worked actively to provide capacity building trainings to its members, community activists and civil society representatives from the targeted communities. Throughout December 2018, trainings on civic engagement were delivered for 99 activists (50 from Donetsk Oblast and 49 from Luhansk Oblast), who have expanded their knowledge on civic activism and empowerment, the place and role of civil society organizations in the formulation and implementation of local policies, opportunities for building constructive partnership with the local authorities and others. The trainings have also included practical sessions on identification of commu-

Map of Community Security Working Groups in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts

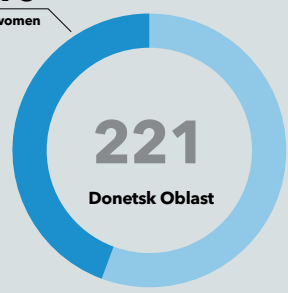
Ukraine



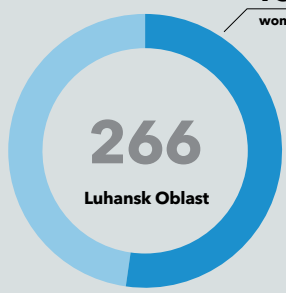
-  Target Communities of UN RPP
-  Community Security Working Group
-  Contact Line



98 women



139 women



Azov Sea

nity-based problems and challenges, mobilization of available resources as well as concrete steps for opening non-governmental organizations.

Additional trainings were also delivered to 117 activists and representatives from the local authorities of the targeted communities on the basics of project management (February-March 2019). The trainings have deepened the knowledge and skills of its participants on a wide range of issues related to project management, including but not limited to project development, cycle, performance indicators as well as mechanisms to ensure sustainability of the undertaken activities. Notably, participants have enhanced their basic skills and knowledge on resource mobilization, financial and administrative management, and have worked in groups to develop and present sample project proposals related to enhancing community security and social cohesion. Furthermore, with the programme's support, 54 activists, members of CSWGs have also underwent trainings on advanced project management.

The programme is also supporting exchange of experiences between the CSWGs in the targeted locations on matters of community mobilization to tackle numerous challenges related to community security, social cohesion, project development and implementation, launch and facilitation of dialogue platforms between differing groups and communities of both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. To this end, the programme has created a network among CSWGs that is comprised of 30 activists, 1 member per each targeted community, who are meeting on a regular basis to share information, developments, and best practices. The first meeting of the network took place on June 20th -22nd in Sviatohirsk, Donetsk Oblast and served as useful platform for CSWGs to discuss ongoing work, developments in the targeted communities, degree of cooperation with the local security providers and authorities and other issues of important concern. The newly established working groups were able to meet their counterparts from other communities with vast experience in fostering community security and have also received in-depth information on their theories and practical application of the community policing approach. First and foremost, the meeting has strengthened contacts between the

CSWGs at an institutional as well as interpersonal levels and contributed to increasing safety and well-being of the conflict-affected communities.

On June 2nd-4th, the programme organized a study tour to Georgia to promote the exchange of best practices in fostering community security and social cohesion. The visit was commemorated by participation of 22 members of CSWGs of the targeted locations, who have exposed themselves to Georgia's experience in community mobilization, civil society's engagement in the development, implementation as well as monitoring of the work of national and local authorities. Notably, the participants have also met with Georgian non-governmental organizations working in the area of restoration and protection of the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) as well as gender equality. During the visit, participants have particularly acquainted themselves with Georgia's experience as well as its progress in the implementation of the UN SCR on Women, Peace and Security at the local level.

To foster community policing approach as an effective tool in preventing and addressing community crimes, the programme has trained 100 police officers (mid and senior management level) from the territorial units of both oblasts, that took place on June 14th-21st in Sviatohirsk, Donetsk Oblast. The participants have received in-depth theoretical as well as practical information on the principles of community policing, its legislative framework, basic elements, techniques for joint identification of security challenges and solution mechanisms. Importantly, the training has also provided detailed insight into the best practices of community policing projects throughout Ukraine and other countries that could potentially be replicated in the programme's targeted communities.

Institutional support was also provided to CSWGs to systematize their work in improving community security, social cohesion and dialogue of the civil society sector with the authorities. In this regard, expert support was provided to the working groups in elaborating regulations and standing orders. In line with their regulations, the CSWGs were set up to provide space for police-community discussions, information sharing, raising security

issues and concerns among local authorities, security providers and communities at grass-roots level. It must also be mentioned that recommendations developed by the CSWGs as local initiatives are subject to mandatory consideration by local executive authorities in accordance with the Paragraph 3 of Article 9 of the Law of Ukraine “On local government”.

The newly selected targeted communities are also marked by a complete lack of formally registered and operational civil society institutions that can voice and address public needs. In this regard, the reporting period was highlighted by the official establishment of four non-governmental organisations (2 in Donetsk Oblast and 2 in Luhansk Oblast). The newly registered organisations in Donetsk Oblast are based in Sartana and Novhorodske and plan to mainly work in the area of fostering gender equality and inclusive policies and are eager to further engage with the programme and receive the needed mentoring and training on a wide range of issues, including project management, the launch and implementation of advocacy campaigns, participation in the development and monitoring of local policies and programmes and other matters. The organisations of Luhansk Oblast are based in the Nyzhnia Duvanka settlement and the city of Zolote and will mainly address issues related to protection and restoration of IDP rights, gender equality as well as community security. Importantly, the programme has provided comprehensive expert and legal support in the registration process, consulted the relevant staff on financial and human resources to ensure smooth operation of the organizations and arranged technical assistance in the form of furniture as well as purchase of computers.

To enhance community security, the programme is also systemically addressing issues related to juvenile delinquency. This is a significant problem throughout Ukraine and is especially acute for conflict-affected eastern regions. To foster joint efforts of all the stakeholders in tackling juvenile delinquency, the programme has supported the launch of an inter-regional forum entitled “New approaches to prevent crimes in school: the creation and work of the school reconciliation services”. The forum was highlighted by participation of 60 juvenile police officers, Donetsk and Luhansk oblast depart-

ments for education and children affairs as well as civil society representatives. The forum was mainly dedicated to the joint discussion and reflection on the implementation of the “Regional programme for the prevention of delinquency among children of Donetsk Oblast for 2019-2022”. In-depth sessions and working groups were also organized to discuss the latest changes in the legislation on combatting bullying and participants have also shared their best practices with regards to addressing this phenomenon. The working groups provided a useful platform in strengthening interaction and coordination of efforts between the different stakeholders in preventing crimes among minors.

on August 13th -16th, 2019, a training was organized in Kreminna, Luhansk Oblast for 24 juvenile police officers with a focus on the basic of mediation skills and alternative methods of dispute resolution. The knowledge and practical skills received during the training will help police officers to form children’s conflict resolution skills through mediation techniques, provide primary intervention services and assessments of the needs of families in which children exhibit deviant behaviour, redirecting such cases to special “Support Centres” to receive qualified socio-psychological, legal and other required assistance.

In its activities, the programme is also actively engaging, working and providing the needed support to young leaders to be socially active and contribute to solving challenges of their communities. This area of work also includes ongoing support to children living in conflict-affected areas, who are disproportionately affected by its consequences and continue to face grave threats from shelling, landmines and unexploded ordnance. Their lives are also threatened by destruction of vital civilian infrastructure – health centres, schools, water supplies and others. To help children overcome conflict-related grievances, on 19 April 2019, the programme has organized a study visit to Sievierodonetsk, Luhansk Oblast for 20 patients of the Ly-sychansk centre for socio-psychological rehabilitation of children. The participants of the study tour have visited the UN House in Sievierodonetsk, got acquainted with the work of the programme in eastern Ukraine, have learned about Sustainable Development Goals and most importantly received socio-psychological assistance.

Moreover, to promote youth engagement in identifying

and tackling community-based security and development challenges, an additional study visit was organized for 20 young leaders from the town of Shchastia to Sievierodonetsk, 20-21 January 2019. The visit has served as an opportunity to receive first-hand information on the work of the programme in mobilizing conflict-affected communities and has also enabled exchange of best practices and peer-to-peer learning in developing and implementing community projects to promote civic activism, social cohesion, community security and others. As a follow up to the study visit, 3 participants have joined the CSWG of their community, are actively participating in its meetings and contributing to tackling numerous challenges that Shchastia town is confronted with.

In close cooperation with Mariupol Youth Council and the League of Future Police Officers, 3 study visits were organized to Mariupol for 60 leaders from the targeted communities of both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The agenda of the visit included series of meetings with Mariupol youth organizations, which have shared their experiences in the development and implementation of youth led civic initiatives as well as their cooperation with the local authorities. Special sessions were also dedicated to the discussion of the issues raised by the participants, including bullying in schools, lack of public safety in their communities and have also learned best practices of Mariupol youth activists in developing relevant projects to tackle such issues. Moreover, to foster regular exchange of contacts, participants have also agreed to launch an inter-regional youth movement.

The programme's youth workstream was also highlighted by the development of the ProSkills innovative curriculum, aimed at providing young women and men with knowledge and skills necessary to make informed decisions and actively participate in community life. ProSkills is a training for young people from vulnerable families and marginalized groups on essential life skills to increase their opportunities, potential and competitiveness. The training curriculum is based on the "21st Century Skills", which will help to face the challenges of the future: being resilient, confident in their future and in order to collaborate efficiently and peacefully with other citizens, reducing risks of conflicts. Equally important that the program develops the network of youth opinion leaders in both Luhansk and

Donetsk oblasts able to facilitate the intercommunal and intergenerational dialogue. In this regard, it also contributes to sustainable development of the society and leads to the safety and security.

The curriculum was successfully applied at a ToT workshop in Odesa (May 18-22, 2019) for 31 teachers and leaders of 10 state summer recreation camps in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The trainers have already piloted the curriculum reaching a total of more than 350 young girls and boys, most of them IDPs, teenagers with disabilities and from low-income families, orphans who were motivated to be active and take part in the development of their communities and schools.

Introduction and further promotion of information and communication technologies to foster citizens' participation in the decision-making processes is yet another priority focus for the programme. Despite much progress made at the national level to foster e-participation of the citizens, the regions, especially Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts are lacking behind in progress. The situation is especially evident in the programme's targeted communities that need substantial support in introducing ICT solutions in public administration to better serve the needs of the conflict-affected persons. In this regard, the reporting period was mainly highlighted by conduct of a research on the level of e-development/e-participation in the communities. Expert support was provided in carrying out an in-depth analysis of the websites of 16 targeted communities on the availability of the following major e-features: e-Information, e-Consultation, e-Cooperation and e-Decision-making tools.

The results of the analysis have served as a basis in conducting workshops on e-participation. The workshops took place on 27-31 June and 60 representatives from local authorities and civic activists from the communities of both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Beyond discussing the results of the analysis and recommendations, participants have created draft action plans on implementing ICT solutions to foster citizens' inclusion in the decision-making processes as well as their access to quality public services. The draft action plans will serve as a basis in elaborating detailed ICT roadmaps for all the targeted communities, whose further practical implementation will be also supported by the programme to foster

more openness, accountability and transparency of the authorities.

To establish partnerships between the state institutions, private IT companies as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to foster e-governance at the local level, “E-Contact” dialogue platform was launched in Sviatohirsk on 17-18 July 2019. The meeting has served as a first-hand opportunity to learn and discuss best practices with regards to e-platforms, applications and services that improve operation of public authorities, improve the quality of the local services provision, information sharing, knowledge management systems and other aspects.

The programme is also systemically addressing issues related to prioritizing the needs and interests of women that are largely neglected in the decisions over community security and social cohesion. Women have limited access to economic resources, social services, information and are subject to discrimination. The gender-specific and conflict-related needs and priorities of women are not adequately reflected in the regional and local budgets. The situation is further exacerbated by stereotypes placed on women as housekeepers, rather than community members with equal chances, opportunities and venues for individual and professional development. In addressing these deep-rooted stereotypical roles, the programme is engaging men as advocates for gender equality and against gender-based violence. To this end, an innovative workshop was conducted for 25 community leaders from both oblasts on the promotion of responsible fatherhood, that calls on fathers to have an equally important parenting role. The workshop participants have also learned basics of project development and management, enhanced

their communication skills and are eager to elaborate and implement community-driven initiatives to promote gender-equality. Following the workshop, the programme has organized a thematic event for over 70 participants dedicated to Father’s Day on September 14. It was aimed to illustrate the event for men engagement in the local communities and increase understanding of the need and benefits of equal sharing of family responsibilities and equal rights for women and men. Moreover, it served as a practical example for the workshop participants in terms of how to conduct a public event that could be further replicated in their communities.

Eight organizations from Kramatorsk, Mykolaivka, Popasna, Ievsug, Kreminna, Chmyrivka, Bilokurakyne, Malynka, registered as NGOs working on human rights and gender equality, have been selected for grants allocation through the grant’s second cycle. The chosen organizations are registered as NGOs from the previously established SHGs that were supported by the programme and the Ukrainian Women’s Fund.

Importantly, the newly established 86 SHGs are exposed to continuous capacity development on human rights-based approach and gender equality in programming, skills development in dialogue and advocacy with local authorities, as well as in understanding local processes of planning and budgeting and project development and monitoring. Such an approach to capacity development will ensure that SHGs members have the necessary skills to transform their groups to organizations with specific mandates and organizations officially registered in their communities..

Activity 3.1.3 Provide technical support to effective coordination and dialogue between law enforcement bodies and local authorities and communities, support and build capacities and practices of local justice institutions to be more accessible and adoptable to the needs of the different groups, including more vulnerable (IDPs, women, survivors of SGBV, LGBTIQ, Roma, PWDs, elderly)

Support to the establishment of effective coordination and dialogue between law enforcement bodies, local authorities and community members in jointly identifying and reacting to numerous challenges remains vital in addressing conflict-related grievances. In this respect,

the restoration of community security, social cohesion, rule of law and access to justice requires inclusive security interventions with strong governmental and community buy-in. To reach this objective, the programme is continuously applying community mobilization and

empowerment approach that are built on the spirit of activism, social inclusion and dialogue between all the stakeholders.

Besides the establishment and operational support to the work of the CSWGs, the programme has established a small grant fund (SGF) to mobilize conflict-affected communities to identify and tackle community-based challenges. The SGF aims at supporting civil society initiatives that facilitate interventions to respond to community security concerns at the community level on a cost-share basis with the local authorities of the targeted communities. The fund also enables the communities to themselves identify and prioritize their needs and most importantly provides venue for those needs to be both communicated and responded to. The reporting period was primarily marked by the technical and official set up of the grants scheme, that has included intensive works in the area of preparing easy to understand application documents, forms, templates, capacity assessment checklist, call for proposals, selection criteria as well as evaluation procedure that is based on openness, transparency and integrity of the entire procedure.

The call for project proposals had to cover the following thematic areas:

Community security

The main objective of these project proposals lies in increasing personal and community security to make the enjoyment of human rights tangible and relevant at the community and most importantly individual level.

Access to justice

Support to the implementation of project proposals aimed at enhancing conflict-affected persons access to justice through improving the provision of primary free legal counselling, legal, socio-psychological support, public outreach activities to popularize the rule of law and others;

Social cohesion

Initiatives that promote dialogue, reconciliation between different groups as well as conflicting sides to enhance social cohesion, respect for diversity and tolerance in the conflict-affected communities.

Community policing

Support to local civil society initiatives that promote community policing approach at the local level, as an ef-

fective mechanism to enhance communities' interaction with the security providers in tackling security related challenges.

The grants selection committee has reviewed numerous proposals through a five-step process that included determination of eligibility, technical review of the proposals, scoring and ranking of the proposals based on the assessment criteria, round of clarification with the grantees, if necessary. As a result, the programme has provided support to the implementation of 65 community-based initiatives, 24 of which are directly funded by the EU.

The programme is also working extensively in increasing the potential and capacities of local law enforcement bodies to provide quality security services to the conflict-affected population. The period was highlighted by the conduct of two trainings for police call centres on effective communication and stress management, that took place in Sievierodonetsk, Luhansk Oblast and in Mariupol city of Donetsk Oblast.¹⁶ A total of 98 participants have increased their competencies and skills to prevent and effectively address burnouts at work. Special theoretical and practical sessions were dedicated to learning and applying the methods of increasing self-confidence, self-management of psycho-emotional state to overcome various conflictual situations and to control emotions. Notably, due to the nature of their work, participants have also enhanced and mastered their communication skills.

Further capacity building interventions to security providers at the local level included trainings on the provision of first aid. Throughout May-June 2019, the programme has trained 49 rescuers from the Security Service Centres (SSC) of both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to provide quality medical assistance and are also in a position to transmit that knowledge to their fellow colleagues.

In strengthening community security in its targeted locations, the programme is applying modern information and communication technologies. The mobile application "Rescue Service 101" is being currently developed to provide emergency support to conflict-affected population and is specifically tailored to the needs of vulner-

able groups, including women, persons with disabilities, children and others. Importantly, the app will be available in for both Android and iOS and will the following major functions available to its users, among others:

- Receive customized notifications in line with the emergency in place;
- Text recommendations as well as direct instructions from the rescue call centre operator to properly react to emergency;
- Submission of direct emergency requests to the rescue service;
- Submission of photos of suspicious items and unexploded ordnances with automatically identifiable geolocation;
- Possibility for persons with disabilities to report emergency via voice-activated systems and other means.

Expanding public's, especially vulnerable group's access to justice to address conflict grievances is at the core of the programme's interventions. The reporting period was highlighted by in-depth update of the "Your Rights" mobile application, a timely response to help protect the rights of internally displaced persons and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The updated version of the app is yet another important contribution to addressing the existing information gap concerning rights of the conflict-affected population. It goes beyond mere provision of information but also includes step-by-step practical guidance to its users on the protection and restoration of the rights, along with contact details of the Free Legal Aid Centres and hotline service to get immediate legal consultancy. To increase its visibility, the programme is planning to conduct public awareness campaign on the availability of the application as an effective tool to protect and restore one's rights.

The programme is also actively supporting the work of the primary and secondary legal aid centres in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to expand conflict affected population's access to justice. In this regard, an assessment of the quality of the free legal aid provision is available for conflict-affected oblasts that through desk review, face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions with the staff of the centres as well as service recipients

provided data on the following major topics:

- Efficiency and the range of services provided by the legal aid centres of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts;
- Capacity assessment of the staff of the centres (lawyers, consultants) to provide quality services to the persons in need, especially internally displaced persons in constant need of services related to accessing social benefits, restoration of property rights, counselling on land disputes and others;
- Availability/quality of e-services provided by the centres;
- Assessment of public's awareness on the availability of free legal aid services;
- Other aspects

The assessment also includes concrete set of recommendations to improve the functioning of the Free Legal Aid Centres as well as the quality of the services provided. The programme's upcoming support will be based on these recommendations (Annex 27 – draft report on the assessment of the free legal aid provision).

Within its grants fund, the programme is currently supporting implementation of 6 community-based initiatives that are aimed at extending the provision of free legal aid counselling to remote areas, to persons with disabilities, internally-displaced persons, whose range of priority needs include restoration of legal documents, access to social services and employment opportunities, support to ongoing legal proceedings and financial obligations and other matters. Two projects are tackling issues related to raising public's legal culture and awareness on the work of the courts. The projects are being implemented in two pilot courts of Luhansk Oblast and 3 pilot courts of Donetsk Oblast, whose visitors can now receive comprehensive information regarding their procedural rights, obligations, standards and rules to submit a court case as well as availability of free legal aid counselling. Support to these initiatives stems from the results of the 2017 Security and Justice Survey¹⁷, that amongst others has revealed public's low level of knowledge on the availability of the free legal aid services. This has been showcased by the fact that most of the respondents who even knew about secondary legal aid believed that they would be required to pay the government lawyer and did not have much

¹⁶ 13-18 May 2019, Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast, 3-6 September, Sievierodonetsk, Luhansk Oblast

confidence that their interests would be represented as well as by a private lawyer. Importantly, respondents have also expressed concern about whether they would understand court procedures, and in some oblasts felt they would not know how to start a case. This has underscored a clear need for improved education and awareness-raising to help conflict-affected persons understand the judicial process to seek justice resorting to available legal means. In this regard, the projects mentioned above come as a timely and needed response and will also include clients' feedback to further improve the functioning of the pilot courts with possible replication to other entities.

Thirty-seven short video clips on the work of both Donetsk and Luhansk courts are available and provide an overview of the premises, working hours, standards and procedures to approach a court and are also accompanied by relevant comments from the courts' staff. The videos are uploaded on the websites of the courts and contribute to enhancing their openness and transparency to the public.¹⁸

To promote access to justice at the local level, the programme is also enhancing the capacity of the judiciary to provide high quality and responsive justice services. To this end, throughout August 2019, trainings were delivered to 40 judges of local, regional and national courts on the theories and practical application of the mediation techniques as alternative methods for dispute resolution. These capacity building activities are in line with the novelties introduced to the Civil Procedure Code of Ukraine in 2017 that contain articles and stress the importance of alternative dispute resolution. As a result, the participants have strengthened their skills and knowledge on the fundamental principles of mediation and methods for alternative dispute resolution. The judges were familiarized with the values, principles and practical tools for applying mediation in conflict resolution that is based on dialogue, compromise and inclusiveness of the interests of all parties involved.

Increasing accountability of police structures to the

communities is one of the programme's priority areas of work. Besides establishing and operationalizing the work of the CSWGs as interactive platforms for police-community relations to raise and jointly tackle security challenges, the programme is continuously working to improve the reporting system of the police departments to the local population. To this end, within the framework of its "Rule of Law and Community Justice for Conflict-Affected Areas in Ukraine", supported by the Government of the Netherlands, the programme has previously developed a special public reporting form of the police to the communities. The form was approved by the police management of the targeted oblasts and sets out new reporting frameworks, rules and standards of interaction with the residents. The type of information that is now provided to the public is user-friendly, accompanied by easy to understand statistical data on types of crimes committed and actions taken by security providers. Notably, it also includes special sections on the upcoming plans of the police in tackling existing community security challenges. During the reporting period, the programme launched a series of training courses for 94 managers and press officers (28 women and 66 men) of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts police departments on the practical application of the newly developed public reporting template, working with media channels, formulating communication messages, mastering public speaking skills and others.

Notable developments were also achieved in enhancing the capacity of the local stakeholders to adequately respond to gender-based and conflict-related sexual violence. The Regional Forum "GBV multi-sectoral response in Donetsk oblast': Strengthening coordination and effectiveness of services" was organised under the strong leadership of the Donetsk oblast' Administration (Department for Family and Youth Affairs), in coordination with the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and in partnership with Mariupol City Council. As a result of the broadened partnership and support of local authorities, the Forum far exceeded the initial expectations and gathered almost 180 par-

¹⁷ Security and Justice in Ukraine. Perspectives from Communities in Three Oblasts is available at: http://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/library/democratic_governance/security_justice_perspectiv.html

¹⁸ Novouaidar district court video of Luhansk Oblast is available at: https://na.lg.court.gov.ua/sud1218/pro_sud/info_sud/773507/

ticipants, including deputy mayors and respective representatives of line divisions on family affairs from all cities, districts and amalgamated communities, directors of centres of social services and heads of all local departments of National Police in Donetsk Oblast. The programme and other UN agencies participated in the event and facilitated work of small groups together with representatives of relevant government institutions. The Forum significantly contributed to the promotion of coordinated mechanisms of multi-sectoral response to GBV at the local level, in line with recent novelties in GBV national legislation. During the Forum, Representatives of Mariupol city shared their practices on local effective multisectoral response, institutionalization of GBV mobile teams and shelter for GBV survivors, and small regional groups searched for solutions for development of sustainable system of GBV services in Donetsk Oblast.

In addition to be a capacity development and advocacy activity, the Forum generated solid recommendations which became part of the official decision of the Donetsk Regional Collegium issued on 20.06.2019. The Decision included a number of recommendations to strengthen the GBV response in Oblast', both in terms of multi-sectoral coordination of GBV response, GBV prevention and protection of GBV survivors by allocating resources from local budgets. For example, according to this decision, mayors and heads of all cities, districts and amalgamated communities of Donetsk Oblast are recommended to allocate resources from local budgets to fund the specialized services for GBV survivors, such as mobile teams of psychosocial support, shelters and day care centres for survivors (Annex 28 – Collegium decision). As of September 2019, one mobile team of psychosocial support for GBV/DV survivors in Lyman ATC is already funded from the local budget and funding of three mobile teams in Velyka Novosilka, Selydove and Kostiantynivka is already included in the costed-action plans of these administrative units in 2020. More than 10 other cities, districts and communities have expressed their keen interest in funding for GBV mobile teams and other services.

Additional efforts were also undertaken to tackle the domestic violence (DV), a highly prevalent problem in

eastern Ukraine that has further exacerbated due to the ongoing conflict. From 11-13 September 2019, the workshop "Strengthening the capacity of the comprehensive support system for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence at the local level: the role of duty bearers" has been organized in Sviatohirsk. It was initiated by the line regional departments of Donetsk and Luhansk oblast' administration, in cooperation with Ministry of Social Policy in Ukraine. More than 60 heads and chief specialists of the structural departments on family affairs of cities, districts as well as ATCs of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts discussed novelties in GBV/DV legislation in Ukraine, issues in institutionalization of the specialized services for GBV/DV survivors and implementation of programs for aggressors in their communities. By being key focal points for coordination of GBV/DV cases at the local level, participants actively shared and searched for innovative ways of cooperation with media, NGOs and local activists in order to strengthen early detection and referral of GBV cases in their communities. As a next stage, the participants of the workshop are expected to lead training and coordination of local activists in their communities for effective early detection of GBV/DV cases, referral and overall GBV prevention among various target groups.

These events are of crucial importance to increase awareness, skills and knowledge of local authorities to respond to GBV, especially in line with new Ukrainian legislation on GBV response. Effective coordination and dialogue between local authorities, service providers and communities ensure them to be more accessible and adaptable to the needs of GBV/DV survivors. Due to those activities together with efforts of other projects and partners in terms of capacity building, advocacy, service providing and coordination, new Ukrainian legislation in GBV is being more effectively implemented at the local level in line with international standards of GBV response.

To further prevent and tackle GBV in conflict-affected communities, the programme has trained 28 senior law enforcement officials from Donetsk Oblast (2 women and 25 men Heads of Territorial Units of National Police, 3 Patrol Officers and 4 representatives of the Main Directorate of the Police) on human rights,

gender equality and intersectionalities leading to multiple forms of discrimination and gender-based violence (Annex 29 – Report on the Police Training). The training, held in July 2019 in Mariupol, represents the first attempt towards applying the human rights-based approach in prevention and response to gender-based discrimination and violence, as required in the Recommendation 2 of the National Action Plan on CEDAW Recommendations to Ukraine. The latter resulted in a full 5-day training programme on prevention and protection from gender-based discrimination, developed and endorsed by the National Police, to be institutionalised and delivered as systematic training, starting from Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

The programme has established cooperation with the National Police and the CSO “Ukrainian Foundation for Public Health” to enhance the capacities of law enforcement officials on human rights and gender equality and foster dialogue with women and men, including the most vulnerable, on issues subject to high-level stigma in communities (such as gender-based violence, sexual harassment and safety in public spaces and gen-

der-based discrimination). Moreover, GBV in private and public spaces has been discussed at the community level (see more in Activity 3.1.7) with the participation of law enforcement officials, local authorities, social and medical workers, media, school representatives, women and men in communities, in order to improve prevention. In Rubizhne, 21 representatives of the police, local authorities, professional workers, gender equality advocates and CSOs members took part in the first ever conducted Scoping Study and Safety Audit Walk aimed at identifying the unsafe spaces and assessing the potential risks of sexual harassment and violence towards women and girls in public spaces.

To sustain the results, achieved in Phase I of the programme implementation and promote the rights of persons living with disabilities, as well as encourage regional knowledge exchange, the programme has been closely working with the National Association of People with Disabilities to conduct the Gender Accessibility Audit in Luhansk Oblast, targeting to mobilize group of women and men living with disabilities.

Activity 3.1.4 Advocacy and promotion of civic voice and accountability initiatives, focusing on needs and rights of at-risk, vulnerable groups, including IDPs, especially

Enhancing the capacity and potential of the civil society sector to fulfil its role of becoming agents of change is high in the programme’s agenda. Systemic support shall be provided to civil society institutions at the local as well as regional levels to become active agents of change, participate in the development and implementation of policies, advocate for the rights and needs of the most vulnerable groups and constructively engage with the authorities. Moreover, the situation in eastern Ukraine with regards to civic activism is far from meeting the demands of building a democratic society. According to the findings of the UN SCORE, levels of active citizenship and civic engagement are low in both oblasts, with an average score of 3.7 in Donetsk Oblast and 4.1 in Luhansk Oblast (10-point scale). It was also revealed that persons over 60 years of age are significantly less engaged in socially related activities than those below 40 years of age (with scores ranging

from 2.6 to 4.5 respectively). In general, these could be explained by a common prevailing view among the residents that authorities neither seek to include citizens in decision-making processes nor are particularly responsive to their demands. The situation is further exacerbated by a limited knowledge of community residents about the issues on the agenda of local councils and by their overall perception of civic engagement to be time-consuming.

To better understand the context and ensure effective planning for its interventions, the programme is conducting a research of organizational and institutional development of civil society organizations in all the 30 targeted communities. To date, the research is completed in Luhansk Oblast and is on its way in Donetsk Oblast. According to its findings, there are 567 registered organizations in 15 communities of Luhansk

Oblast, 195 of which are functional to varying degrees and were present in the local media in the past 3 years. Notably, 90 organizations have agreed to participate in further in-depth evaluation process, that will form further evidence-based ground to programme's activities aimed at strengthening civil society sector.

In line with the initial research findings above, throughout May 2019, the programme has delivered trainings to 93 local activists, members of civil society institutions, associations, members of CSWGs on advocacy, promotion of human rights, gender equality, development and implementation of community-driven projects, community security and social cohesion.¹⁹ The knowledge and information received during these trainings have greatly contributed to development of projects by the participants, several of which were supported within the programme's grant fund.

Further capacity building activities have also included a training in Kreminna, Luhansk Oblast for 67 civil society representatives on access to justice, human rights as well as participation in local planning and decision-making processes. Participants have received in-depth information on the work and functions of the local executive authorities, mechanisms and legislative framework of citizens' engagement with the authorities, rules and regulations governing public's access to information and other important thematic areas to enhance civic activism.

Moreover, 20 women-mobilizers from the target communities increased their knowledge and skills on using Community Mobilization for Empowerment (CME) approach to advocate for the rights and needs of women and men in communities, including the most vulnerable ones. Community mobilizers are providing support

to women and men from the 86 SHGs to transform their identified needs and priorities into community initiatives to be advocated for with the local authorities and enhance their participation in reconciliation and recovery processes (Annex 30 – Success story of community mobilizer).

In June 2019, a total of 15 community mobilizers and SHGs members (including women IDPs and women with disabilities) from 20 target communities increased their awareness and knowledge of gender equality and women's empowerment through their participation in the Third Regional Women's Congress. The Congress brought together 107 participants, including parliamentarians and government representatives from Ukraine and abroad, CSO representatives, women in security and defence sector, women veterans, members of SGHs, female and male gender equality advocates and media representatives. Five sets of imminent Recommendations were issued for: (a) increased participation of women in decision making at national-regional-local level; (b) enhanced economic opportunities for women through increase of public services for care and reduced discrimination at the labour market; (c) repealing of any discrimination of women in security and defence; (d) more effective prevention, protection and prosecution of GBV by means of ratification of the Istanbul Convention; and (e) integration of gender-responsive budgeting at central-regional-local level budget planning and execution. The Regional Congress provided a platform for the representatives from Western, Central and Eastern Ukraine to exchange best practices and lessons learned in implementing regional level policies responsive to gender equality, including implementation of NAP 1325, and building networks of advocates and local leaders (Annex 31 – Report on the 3rd Regional Ukrainian Women's Congress).

¹⁹ 12-14, 20-22 May 2019 in Sviatohirsk and Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast, 20-22, 23-25 May 2019 in Sievierodonetsk, Luhansk Oblast



Community Mobilization for Empowerment (CME) methodology training.
Photo: Anna Korbut

Activity 3.1.5. Support to initiatives on intra and inter-communal dialogue on peacebuilding and reconciliation, IDP reintegration, local governance and the development of local media through a conflict-sensitive approach.

Facilitation of intra and inter-communal dialogue processes, with focus on advancing community security, social cohesion, IDP reintegration, local and regional development remain essential in addressing and overcoming conflict grievances. Special Advisory Groups on Social Cohesion were established earlier to ensure a space for in-depth engagement of and collaboration between civil society institutions, local authorities and law enforcement bodies to promote peacebuilding and social cohesion in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The members of the groups include local activists, community leaders, representatives of civil society institutions who were extensively capacitated by the programme and are reg-

ularly developing recommendations to boost social cohesion in conflict-affected communities that range from conducting awareness campaigns on tolerance, civil society's engagement in the decision-making processes to raising legal culture of the population among others.

The groups are also active in the promotion of tools such as mediation, negotiation as well as advocacy to tackle community-based conflicts in eastern Ukraine. Following the capacity assessment of the members of Advisory Groups on Social Cohesion, the programme has supported its 12 members from both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to undergo 96 hours specialized practical course

on mediation at the “Kharkiv Mediation School” and have received official certification to mediate various community-based conflict situations. The need for such professional mediators stems from the fact that communities in eastern Ukraine are regularly confronted with various conflicts related to socio-political, economic developments in the targeted communities, public reform processes, lack of inclusion of vulnerable groups in the decision-making processes, lack of access to justice and other issues of public concern. Notably, in its previous phase, the UN RPP has also trained community leaders from the targeted locations on conflict mediation, resolution and negotiation techniques and has recently formed a network of professional mediators to tackle conflicts in a non-violent manner. The members of the network, comprising 20 members were chosen as a result of a competitive selection process and are regularly providing mediation services to community-based conflicts. Moreover, the network is also equipped with a detailed Code of Ethics to help the network of mediators to tackle the conflicts with impartiality and integrity. Herewith, the mediators cannot defend any opposing interests of two or more parties and must in the provision of mediation services remain always tactical, sensitive and highly professional.

In line with the recommendations of the advisory groups and the network of mediators, the programme is currently implementing an innovative project “Geoinformation system to monitor, analyse and evaluate conflicts” in the communities of Luhansk Oblast. The system represents an online platform, which will receive information from the ordinary residents and activists on existing community-based conflicts. The reporters can visit the web-platform²⁰, select a conflict category (business related, transport and communication, public property management, architecture, security, social services, socio-economic issues, human rights, access to information and others) and fill out a detailed form on the nature of the conflict in place. The form includes series of questions pertaining the theme of the conflict, its causes, sides, conflicting positions and other essential aspects to receive an-depth information for further analysis and preparation of detailed reports by the programme’s consultant (1 report is prepared every two month). The reports are further

submitted to detailed discussion and scrutiny by members of the Advisory Groups on Social Cohesion, who, in close cooperation with the network of mediators will rate and select the conflict to tackle in line with an elaborated action plan.

Moreover, on March 25 and on April 11, 2019, the pilot project was also presented at roundtables in Luhansk Oblast Administration with participation of representatives from the regional and local authorities, civil society institutions, activists as well as expert circles. The project has generated a great interest from all the participants, who have outlined its importance and timeliness in systematically and comprehensively tackling conflicts through its regular monitoring, analysis and resolution.

On July 22-24, 2019, the programme has also delivered a workshop for 36 members of Advisory Groups on Social Cohesion on further promotion and practical application of the platform as well as their role and day to day responsibilities. The workshop has also further enhanced the knowledge of its participants on conflict prevention, mediation, analysis, dialogue facilitation. A special session was also dedicated to in-depth discussion of legal and ethical standards in conflict mediation. Additional capacity building activity was organized for 27 analytics of the pilot project on August 13-16, 2019 and has contributed to raising practical skills of its participants on the means and methods of conflict analysis as well as its prognosis. Moreover, the participants have discussed the content of the web platform and elaborated joint recommendations for its improvement. In this regard, the platform is still functioning in a test mode and undergoing regular updates to best meet its objectives and tasks.

Moreover, in further addressing conflicts at the community level, the programme is engaging social workers from the Centres of Social Services for Children, Youth and Families to serve as dialogue facilitators between different groups in the communities. To this end, the programme has delivered an intensive training for 18 social workers on the basics of mediation, practical methods and tools for holding and facilitating dialogue between different

²⁰ The platform in a test mode is available at: www.dialog-ua.org



Youth of ProSkills camps are studying soft skills for peacebuilding. "Poshuk" camp

community groups with opposing views. The training was held in Sviatohirsk, Donetsk Oblast on 22-27 June 2019 and was also marked by the development of dialogue facilitation plans to be implemented further with the programme's expert assistance. Moreover, additional support is also being provided with equipping the centres with special mediation rooms to create a more favorable environment to hold various dialogue on community issues.

As mentioned earlier, the programme is also working with the youth to become agents of change in their communities and play a lead role in rebuilding social ties and tolerance. The youth must be also well placed to participate in local planning and development processes and lead local community consultations on issues of public concern. In this regard, on July 1-10, 2019 the programme has launched a summer camp in Sviatohirsk, Donetsk Oblast for sixty youth representatives from fifteen targeted communities. The programme of the camp was based on the ProSkills innovative curriculum developed by UNFPA that aims at equipping young people with necessary skills and

knowledge for critical thinking, analysis, conflict management, teamwork, self-discipline, and is an important mechanism for enhancing intercommunal and intergenerational dialogue.

The programme has also organized Youth, Peace and Security Forum "Myropolis" based on the principles of UN Security Council Resolution (UN SCR) 2250 – Youth, Peace and Security. The goal of the event was to facilitate a dialogue on peacebuilding and reconciliation between young people, local communities and opinion leaders. The Forum aimed to establish a network of young women and men united in citizen groups to promote social cohesion and sustainable development. The vision of the Forum has been elaborated along the principles of the UN SCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security to promote a culture of peace and discourage youth from acts of violence.

The Forum aimed at promoting reconciliation and sustainable development through capacity building of local youth-oriented and youth-led groups. With these new ideas and skills taken from the YPS Forum, young people



Myropolis, youth forum for peacebuilding and skills.
UNFPA Ukraine

got inspired and motivated to replicate and adopt new initiatives that will foster community dialogue processes. The meeting was highlighted by participation of more than 200 participants, including 135 young people (15-24 y.o.) representing Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The Forum prioritized the needs of young people from IDPs, young key populations and other most marginalized youth:

- youth mobilizers from communities of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts, who have a capacity to replicate ideas and initiatives when they come back to their communities;
- young people from the areas along and near the contact line);
- students from NGCA who entered universities at GCA (IDPs);
- youth from orphanages;
- young people from Youth League of Future Policemen.

Besides this, the Forum was marked by participation of celebrities, opinion leaders, local and national NGOs, in-

novative and social entrepreneurs, volunteers who have shared their views on peaceful co-existence, security, gender equality, development and human rights. Overall up to 25 local, national and international partners were co-organizers of the sessions and dialogues. Within the Forum, two panel discussions took place as professional exchange of experience and peer feedback. The core of the event was organized by the communities/organizations/leaders themselves in an interactive format (master class, game, quest, teamwork, movie fest, theatre, music set etc.) as the tools for establishing and supporting the dialogue processes.

Young local participants were given a push for cascading the Forum to the community level, choosing the most relevant ideas, scale and appropriate formats. Young women and youth leaders from community organizations developed skills to be effective agents of change in the five areas of the UNSCR 2250. The active young citizen groups initiatives are supposed to develop their ideas into project proposals which may be supported within the programme's small grants fund.²¹



WPS Localization training.
Photo: Artem Hetman

Additional capacity building interventions were delivered to 33 (30 women) representatives of regional administrations and targeted communities as well as representatives from NGO Coalitions on Women, Peace and Security in Luhansk and women mobilizers and gender advocates in Donetsk on localization and implementation of Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Participants attending the workshops have discussed the most pressing issues affecting the safety and security of women and men in communities, in particular along the contact line, analysed the nexus between

women, peace and security agenda in all its pillars, the concept of human security and good governance at local level in the context of NAP 1325 (Annex 7a, 7b Training reports on WPS). The Workshops were delivered in cooperation with Global Women Peace Building Network and the programme's CSO partner "Unity for the Future," based on the initial Mapping of the Women, Peace and Security commitments at local level in Donetsk and Luhansk, carried out by the NGO "Unity for the Future" (Annex 32 - Mapping of existing commitments on WPS).

Activity 3.1.6 Increase awareness on gender equality and women's rights and build capacities on gender-responsive planning, budgeting and community security. Strengthen capacity of women's groups to meaningfully participate in local recovery planning, development and community security decision-making/coordination, including in line with UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security

The programme has established partnership with a newly created NGO Coalition on UNSCR 1325 in Luhansk region, the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), as

well as local partner Democracy Development Centres and NGO "Ukrainian Women's Fund" to identify common approaches towards localization of Women, Peace and Secu-

²¹ Video of the Forum is available at: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=443500983188633>

city agenda in all regions. The representatives of the CSO Coalitions on UN SCR 1325, members of SHGs, community mobilizers and representatives of regional and local authorities increased their awareness and knowledge on WPS localization at the global and national levels (Kherson and Lviv oblasts) in the frame of the Localization workshop held in July 2019.

Furthermore, to facilitate international knowledge exchange, the programme has also supported the participation of 5 high-level officials (Mayors and Deputy Mayors) from the target communities in the International Conference on localization of NAP 1325 and implementation of WPS agenda, held in Georgia during 13-14 May 2019 (Annex 33 - Georgia International Conference Report).

In total, 195 participants (188 women and 7 men) representatives of local authorities, deputies and council members strengthened their knowledge on human rights, gender equality and Women, Peace and Security agenda at the round of training sessions organized in partnership with the "Unity for the Future" (Annex 7a, 7b - Training reports on WPS).

Over 40 participants, including representatives of Luhansk Oblast Administration, Mayor of Rubizhne, heads of departments of the city council, representatives of the local

authorities and the police increased awareness on Safety in Public Spaces through the Safe City Launch event which took place on 20 February 2019. The Scoping Study was conducted by the programme in March 2019 and its major findings are to be integrated into the city plan and its budget for 2020. The programme also provided technical support on evidence-based local planning and budgeting, ensuring that the gender-responsive approach was integrated into urban planning and budgeting. Additional support was provided in identifying the gender-responsive, locally-relevant and -owned interventions that would change the attitudes and behaviours of the communities to promote women's and girls' rights and to have public spaces free from violence. In collaboration with the regional and local authorities, the programme has selected the city of Rubizhne for piloting the 'Safe City and Safe Public Spaces' initiative, aimed at preventing and responding to sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces through consultations with the regional and local authorities. The Mayor of Rubizhne and Deputy Governor of Luhansk Oblast expressed their commitments in implementing the Safe City pilot in Rubizhne and acknowledged the need to. These processes will lead towards the establishment of confidence-building mechanisms at the local level for gender-responsive community security and peacebuilding.

Activity 3.1.7 Promote an inclusive approach towards minorities and marginalised groups. Strengthen capacities of civil society organisations advocating for these groups to meaningfully participate in local recovery planning, development and community security decision-making/coordination.

To promote advocacy efforts at the local level, works are ongoing with community-based organizations and leaders to launch additional 10 SHGs in Donetsk and 10 SHGs in Luhansk oblasts. The groups are aimed at mobilizing community members, representing various segments of the population (internally-displaced persons, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, ex-combatants, persons with disabilities) to provide needed assistance to each other and engage with the local authorities to advocate for the inclusion of their rights and needs in the local policies. Importantly, the launch of such groups is especially relevant due to the

high pressure and lack of resources that social service centres at the community level are confronted with. Throughout September-October 2019, the programme has delivered trainings to potential SHG members that have resulted in increasing their knowledge on the work of such groups in the area of provision of socio-psychological assistance, the human rights-based approach and evidence-based advocacy. Special sessions were dedicated to facilitating consultative meetings with authorities related to issues of local budgeting and planning and others.



Tetiana Bobrovska, an activist, woman with disability, in Kramatorsk.
Photo: Artem Hetman

Moreover, the period was marked by the fact that 386 members (328 women and 58 men) of existing SHGs, local activists, decision-makers, healthcare, social protection and education professionals, police officers, representatives of the specialized services for GBV, local activists in 20 target communities of Donetsk and Luhansk regions voiced their needs and discussed priorities through the 17 community-based consultations organized by the programme. The consultations were focused on specific safety issues in the communities, for identifying the gender-responsive concept for prevention of violence at the community level, based on the issue-based inputs coming from women and men in communities, especially from the vulnerable groups. During the meetings, different security concerns of women and men in the communities including vulnerable ones have been identified and will be further advocated with the local authorities.

Structured in line with the implementation of NAP 1325 of WPS agenda on prevention and participation pillars, the working meetings have gained attention of the decision-makers and communities' representatives

to the GBV and peace and security issues, provided interactive platform to consolidate the efforts of local authorities, police, service providers, as well as women-led organizations on the issues of violence against women and girls and identified emerging needs to advise local security planning, development and coordination in line with NAP 1325 and Women, Peace and Security agenda.

From Phase I of the programme, twenty-one CSOs have been established by women activists, to further sustain the results and continue supporting women in the communities, eight CSOs have received small grants to implement their initiatives supported by UNDP and UN Women. The small grants initiatives aim at promotion of gender equality, prevention of GBV and support of livelihoods initiatives in their communities. The CSOs representatives and activists take an active part in local processes including upcoming budget processes in October 2019. Within the ongoing programme, efforts are ongoing to establish new CSOs which will be supported through small grants initiatives and implemented throughout 2020.

Activity 3.1.8 Support the development and broadcasting of TV and radio quality programmes through local stations in order to relay reliable information in the region and in a particular along the line of contact (and preferably across).

The media community plays a key role in generating and shaping public opinion. Therefore, its ability to avoid being highly politicized and to report objectively, especially in a conflict setting, is essential to building public trust, social cohesion, harmony, mutual tolerance, and respect for diversity. In working with the media, the programme is placing a strong emphasis on increasing positive media coverage of the developments in eastern Ukraine. This is especially important given the fact that eastern Ukraine is oftentimes portrayed by the national and regional media sources mainly in the context of the ongoing conflict. The major activity highlights in this regard include an ongoing production of two travel blog videos, uncovering the lives of ordinary residents of the conflict-affected communities, who despite the challenges and odds implement interesting projects and positively contribute to their development.

Moreover, works are currently ongoing to launch a regional debate among youth of Luhansk Oblast to discuss stereotypical opinions about the developments in eastern Ukraine and ways of building inclusive and tolerance societies. The debate will mobilize active youth and is expected to be broadcasted in the regional television channel to reach a wider audience.

The programme is also implementing communication campaign to address the gender-based stereotypes, promote peace and inclusion in the conflict-affected communities. The campaign includes 21 awareness-raising and advocacy activities, targeted to reach over 1,500 direct and over 25,000 indirect beneficiaries, under the framework of the ongoing “Violence Has No Excuse” campaign. This will also address the issues, related to adverse attitudes and behaviours, gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights to enjoy public spaces free from sexual harassment and abuse, and the other GBV. It will also promote positive images, models, including women’s equal participation in decision making on peace and security in the communities of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The activities include, but are not limited to: (a) the art-based events (art-workshops, theatre performances and open-air cinema on the topics of feminism, gender equality and women’s rights); (b) sport-based events (football matches, family sports competitions to promote unacceptance of violence and gender stereotypes); and (c) educational events (workshops and training courses, educational quests). These activities will engage opinion leaders, men and boys, local media, CSOs, women’s and youth groups and vulnerable women and men (Annex 34 - Communication Plan).²¹

RESULT 3.2 CITIZEN GROUP INITIATIVES ARE FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED

Through the set up of Small Grants Fund (SGF), the programme rendered support to the ongoing implementation of 24 citizens’ initiatives to address community-based challenges. Capacity building interventions were organized for 63 grantees on project management, development of performance indicators, logical framework as well as communications to ensure public visibility of the initiatives and of the donor agencies.

Most importantly, the trainings have paved a way for effective implementation of the supported grants. The programme is also providing support to the CSOs of the targeted communities on resource mobilization techniques by raising their capacities to engage in advocacy campaigns, build constructive relationships with local authorities as well as private sector to jointly develop and implement initiatives for public good.



'Violence has no Excuse' awareness-raising and communications campaign on prevention of gender-based violence in hromadas of Luhansk and Donetsk oblast.
Photo: Volodymyr Malykhin

Activity 3.2.1 Establishment of small grant fund aimed at financially supporting citizen groups and citizen groups' initiatives, including for IDP integration.

As noted earlier, in enhancing personal and community security, strengthening social cohesion and access to justice, the programme is placing a key emphasis on mobilizing and empowering community members to themselves identify, develop and implement relevant initiatives. The programme has launched the SGF to support civil society initiatives that

facilitate interventions to respond to community security concerns at the community level on a cost-share basis with the local authorities of the targeted communities. The reporting period was primarily marked by the technical and official set up of the grants scheme, that has included intensive works in the area of preparing easy to understand applica-

tion documents, forms, templates, capacity assessment checklist, call for proposals, selection criteria as well as evaluation procedure that is based on openness, transparency and integrity of the entire procedure. As a result, the programme has provided support to the implementation of 65 community-based initiatives, 24 of which are directly funded by the EU.

²¹ More info on the activities conducted is available at:
https://www.facebook.com/unwomenukraine/posts/752880261795395?__tn__=-R
https://www.facebook.com/unwomenukraine/posts/750327378717350?__tn__=-R
https://www.facebook.com/unwomenukraine/posts/747923775624377?__tn__=-R
https://www.facebook.com/unwomenukraine/posts/746759789074109?__tn__=-R

Activity 3.2.2 Support the development of micro-project proposals and resource mobilization in the community, sources of public funding and private sector.


Community based and civil society organisations at the local level are heavily dependent on external or international donor funding to carry out their operations, undermining their institutional and organizations sustainability. As mentioned previously, the programme is investing essential resources in civil society development in the targeted locations by raising their capacities to engage in advocacy campaigns, build constructive relationships with local authorities, develop and implement various community-based initiatives targeting the needs of the vulnerable groups. To further diversify and explore new avenues for the development of the civil society sector, the programme is undertaking steps to involve the private sector. In this regard, extensive research on the private sector

engagement in the community development processes is available for targeted locations of both oblasts that had showcased the existing situation, trends, barriers as well as prospects to further foster social responsibility of the local enterprises. The results of the research were discussed at workshops held for CSOs and local authorities of both oblasts in October 2019. Besides joint discussion and reflection on the results of the research, participants have undergone capacity building sessions on ways and mechanisms to attract private as well as public sector support to their activities. Further support will be provided to targeted CSOs in elaborating relevant strategies, actions and advocacy plans to gain resources from local budgets, national foundations, business community and others.

Activity 3.2.3 Mentoring of micro-project implementation and monitoring of the use of small grants by beneficiary citizen groups.

The programme has also launched two workshops to enhance the potential of the grantees to effectively implement the supported community-based initiatives. The workshops took place in Sviatohirsk, Donetsk Oblast on 7-9 August 2019 and on August 20-22 and resulted in increasing the capacity of 63 participants on project management, development of performance indicators,

logical framework as well as communications to ensure public visibility of the initiatives and of the donor agencies. Special sessions were also dedicated to training the grantees on financial and human resources management as well as on preparation of relevant reports.



Component 4: Sectoral Reforms and Structural Adjustments (HEALTH)

The primary objective of the component is providing support to the work of the regional and local counterparts on matters of strategic planning and resource mobilization, as well as on transparency, integrity, anti-corruption and best procurement practices in the health sector. The programme is delivering series of capacity building activities to raise the knowledge and skills of the healthcare providers to deliver quality services to the community residents. As a result, all activities are directly targeted at improving quality of life and reducing mortality rates in the east of Ukraine. The programme

has adopted a bottom-up approach in developing and piloting the new models of work, referral system and good governance in healthcare at the local level, as well as to be a pilot site for the ongoing transitions and newly developed policies and procedures of work with healthcare services decentralisation. Close cooperation with the Ministry of Health and oblasts health authorities is taking place on a regular basis to discuss and ensure timely implementation of the healthcare reform at the regional and community levels.

RESULT 4.1 THE REGIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IS EFFECTIVELY FUNCTIONING AT THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS AND SPECIFIC NEEDS OF THE LOCAL POPULATION ARE ADDRESSED.

A developed situational analysis provides detailed information on existing resources, tools and partners of hospital districts and plays an important role in providing targeted and needs based assistance to the counterparts. Health Task Force Groups were launched for both targeted oblasts, providing technical and expert feedback to programme's activities and also proposing future interventions.

The programme has developed a special Guide to ensure integrity and transparency in the public procurement processes in the hospital district of both oblasts. The guide has also paved a way to elaborate strategic

plans for the hospital districts to ensure their comprehensive development, including issues related to more efficient institutional and financial management, resource mobilization and others. Modern equipment was purchased and transferred to 4 medical colleges of both oblasts to improve the educational process. The programme is also producing series of video materials to popularize the medical profession and education at the medical colleges. Moreover, forty family doctors and health care managers have undergone practical trainings on the provision of client-centred services to patients, that forms one of the key areas of the ongoing health sector reform.

Activity 4.1.1 Providing support to local authorities and communities to implement the healthcare system reform through informational, educational and capacity development activities for regional and local authorities, staff of the hospitals and population (i.e. patients).

Provision of expert and technical assistance to the implementation of the healthcare system reform lies at the core of the programme's interventions. The activities are tailored at building the capacity of the local counterparts, i.e. medical personnel and the public at large on key elements of the reform process, which is guided by the fundamental principle "money follows the patient" instead of an old approach that saw finances coming to the medical infrastructure mainly. Prior to undertaking concrete activities, the

programme has conducted a series of meetings with local authorities and medical service providers and has also launched an-depth situational analysis of existing resources, tools and partners for hospital districts in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (Annex 35 – Situational analysis).

The analysis has provided a thorough information on existing international and national assistance to implementing health care reform at the regional levels,

Hospital districts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts

Ukraine



Luhansk Oblast



Northern hospital district:
240,000 patients

Bilovodsk raion;
Bilokurakyne raion;
Starobilsk raion;
Markivka raion;
Milove raion;
Novopskov raion;
Svatove raion;
Troitske raion;



Lysychansk hospital district:
180,000 patients

Lysychansk;
Popasna raion;

Donetsk Oblast



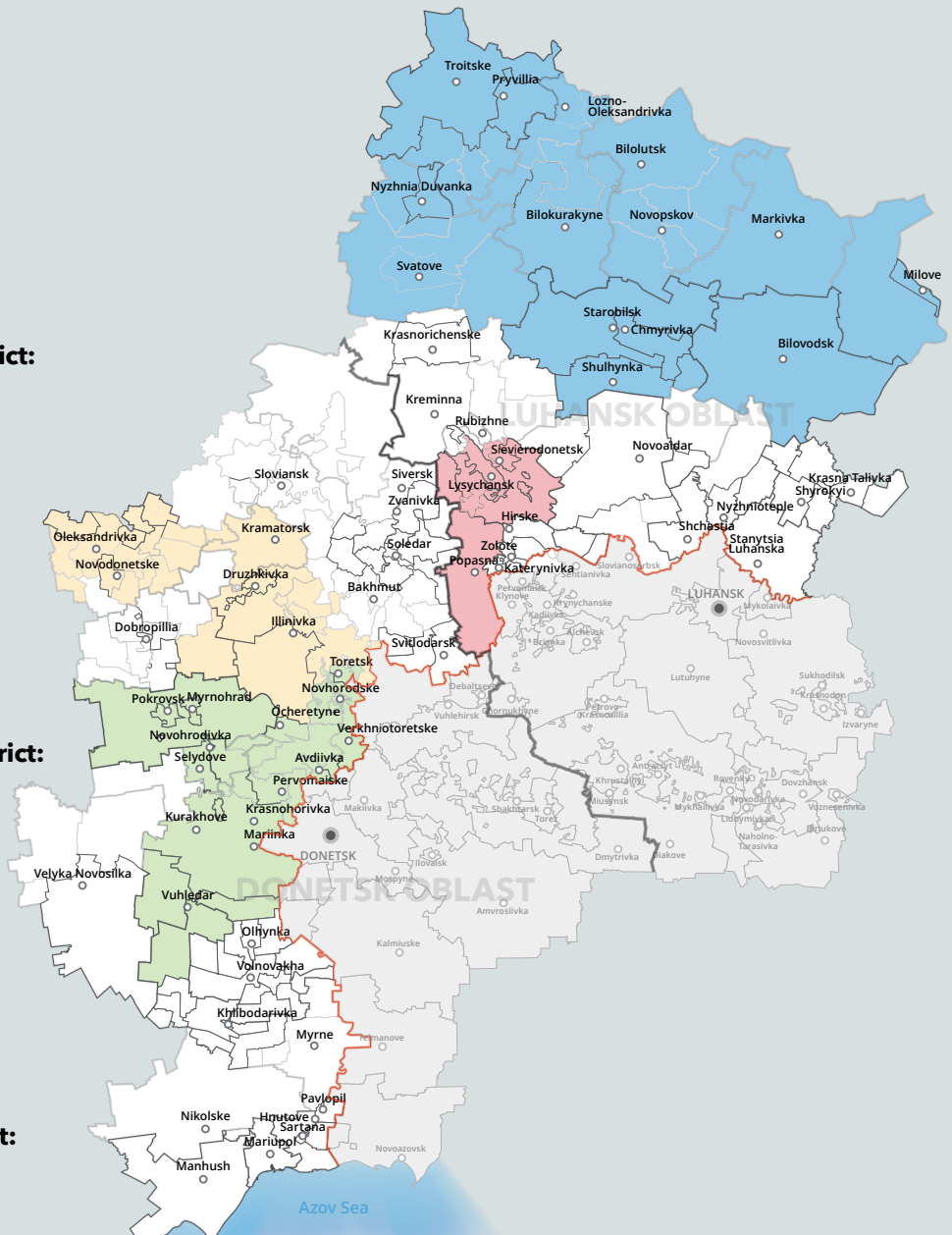
Kramatorsk hospital district:
450,000 patients

Kramatorsk;
Druzhkivka;
Toretsk;
Kostiantynivka;
Kostiantynivka raion;
Oleksandrivka raion;
Shakhove ATC;
Andriivka ATC;



Pokrovsk hospital district:
443,000 patients

Pokrovsk;
Myrnohrad;
Selydove;
Dobropillia;
Novohradivka;
Avdiivka;
Pokrovsk raion;
Mariinka raion;
Yasynuvata raion;
Dobropillia raion;



— Contact Line

ongoing donor supported expert and technical projects. The analysis has included desk review of available documents with regards to health sector reform as well as focus group interviews and discussions with all the interested stakeholders. The results have served an evidence-based ground in planning programme's activities as well as in the elaboration of development strategies for all the 4 hospitals districts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Importantly, the analysis has revealed numerous systemic problems that hospital districts are confronted with, mainly related to lack of personnel, outdated infrastructure and medical equipment to provide quality medical services.

The conduct of the analysis was followed by the establishment and further operational support to the work of the Health Task Force Groups for Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The group is an advisory body composed of local health managers, academicians, health economists as well as patients' representatives to provide support to the planning and implementation of programme's activities. The groups have organized series of meetings to discuss the ongoing health sector reform and challenges of its implementation at the regional levels and were also presented with the findings of the anal-

ysis conducted earlier by the programme.

In line with the feedback provided by the Groups, the programme has designed training modules for family doctors, health care managers as well as for nursing personnel to raise their capacity in their relevant field of expertise. To date a total of 40 family doctors and health care managers have undergone practical trainings on the provision of client-centred services to patients, forming one of the key areas of the ongoing health sector reform.

To tackle the problem related to the shortage of the medical personnel, the programme is developing series of video materials to promote the medical profession among school graduates. The videos are centred around telling a human story related to a certain medical professional, including managers, family doctors as well as nurses. The launch of the information campaign "Doctor for every Family" is being currently coordinated with health and press units of the oblast administrations, whose fundamental objective will lie in delivering the key innovations of the health sector reform to the public.

Activity 4.1.2 Capacity building of regional and local authorities in strategic planning, effective use of available resources and resource mobilization for health care.

The works are currently ongoing to develop a training module on strategic planning, efficient use of available resources as well as opportunities for mobilization of additional resources. To further support the hospital districts, works are also currently underway to elab-

orate their comprehensive development plans in line with the needs and realities as well as international best practices. The plans will be finalized by the end of the year and will also include conduct of roundtable discussions with interested stakeholders.

4.1.3 Capacity building of regional and local authorities and healthcare providers in terms of transparency, integrity, anticorruption and best procurement practices.

In the first year the programme has ensured the comprehensive capacity assessment of regional and local health authorities and institutions, which had been followed by the development of the Guide to ensure integrity and transparency in the public procurement processes in the hospital district of both oblasts.

The developed Guide is validated at a workshop in the end of September 2019 with hospital head doctors, decision makers and other relevant stakeholders. The finalization and publication of the Guide is foreseen for the 2nd year of the project.

Activity 4.1.4 Ensure the patients' oversight and monitoring of transparency utilising the public resources in the health sector, support their "watch dog" actions on defending the health rights.

Implementation of this activity will start from the 2nd year when oversight and participation from civil society will be crucial.

Activity 4.1.5. Training of health care providers at all levels (medical doctors, paramedics, nurses) to ensure their up-to-date professional knowledge and improved skills, as well as the development of new skills required to implement on-going medical and public health care reforms, in particular at the level of the pre-hospital and emergency health care, so well-functioning modern patient referral system is created, training on mental health and psychosocial factors for responding to special needs of people that took part in the armed conflict, etc.

The capacity building activities are scheduled to take place in the 2nd year. In the meantime, the programme has procured and transferred equipment to improve the educational processes in 4 medical colleges of both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts²³ and 1 Emergency Centre in Kramatorsk. The list of equipment was compiled based on the recommendations contained in the order of the Ministry of Public Health of Ukraine dated 29 March 2017, No.346, and was also agreed with the senior management and the personnel of the colleges at a roundtable discussion in Kramatorsk and includes the

following major set of equipment among others:

- Mannequin for cardiopulmonary resuscitation;
- Plastic medical stretchers or similar, bilateral, rigid, intended for strong immobilization and safe transportation of patients with injured spines, fractures and various diseases;
- Imitator of burns in order to assess the patient's condition for care and treatment;
- The simulator of a patient's arm for injections training.

4.1.6 Health promotion, awareness raising, and behavioural change stimulation (especially among the youth), addressing specific needs of the local population such as: personal and close environment stress, psychosocial support to the population to overcome consequences of post-traumatic disorder, healthy life style promotion and reduction of risk factors of non-communicable diseases, fight against negative coping mechanisms (alcoholism, transactional sex, ...), etc.

Activities will start during the 2nd year of implementation as it requires time to collect data and identify the targeted NCDs as well as targeted audiences for interventions.

²³ Bakhmut and Kostiantynivka of Donetsk Oblast, Lysychansk and Starobilsk of Luhansk Oblast

4.1.7. Continuation of support to the primary health care: reinforcement of the health referral system through mobile clinics, supplying medical equipment and capacity building of medical staff as well as reinforcing the patient referral system. Further support to epidemiological surveillance, early warning system, and psychosocial care.

Activities will start during the 2nd year of implementation with focus on the continued support to strengthening primary healthcare systems (in rural areas and in areas along and near the contact line) through scaling up effective referral systems between primary and secondary levels of healthcare and different non-public

institutions dealing with health care, improving access to services through mobile clinics, supplying medical equipment and providing continued and specialized capacity building of medical staff.

Lessons learned

- More emphasis needs to be placed on building the capacity of local authorities and civil society representatives, and activists from the project's new targeted communities, on issues related to raising the accountability of institutions, the key aspects and benefits of decentralisation reform, the role of the civil society sector, and other governance matters;
- More emphasis needs to be placed on integrating and mainstreaming gender across all the components and activities in order not to run the risk of having it as a separate component. The intention is, for example, to bring together LGCCs and CSWGs in the same trainings, activities, focus groups discussions to jointly resolve community-based challenges;
- Anticorruption needs to be mainstreamed across all the relevant activities since a standalone activity on anticorruption is not enough in addressing its deep-rooted systemic causes;
- The delivery of administrative and other crucial social and legal aid services needs to become more mobile and innovative and aimed at genuinely reaching out to women and men living along the "contact line" or crossing the line;
- The programme needs and will intensify its advisory support to IDPs willing to set up and run businesses. As the experience has shown, IDPs is the target group that needs such assistance the most due to the lack of skills and experience and the need to adapt to new living environment;
- The launch of community profiles has proven to be an effective mechanism in mobilizing communities for action. There is a need for the programme to produce joint profiles, instead of creating separate ones focusing on gender or other matters. This will create more synergies between the agencies;
- Despite the overall low level of understanding among authorities of Ukraine's national gender equality and women's rights commitments, there is a significant increase in political will when technical guidance and on-the-job coaching is offered to raise the awareness among authorities.

