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**UN JOINT PROGRAMME FOR GENDER EQUALITY
NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2020**

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Title: UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality MPTF Office Project Reference Number: <i>00097295</i> 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results¹</p> <p><i>Country/Region: Georgia</i></p>
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <p>UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA</p>	<p><i>SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 16; UNPSD Outcome 2 (focus area 1 - Democratic Governance) and Outcome 4 (focus area 2 - Jobs, Livelihood and Social Protection)</i></p> <p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <p>The programme is directly implemented by UN agencies UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA in partnership with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia (GEC) Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CGE)
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: <i>(SEK 84,611,000)</i></p> <p>MPTF/JP Contribution:² <i>USD 8,955,559</i> <i>Government of Sweden (pass-through)</i> <i>(amount transferred to PUNOs to date)</i></p> <p>Total Contributions <i>USD \$9,529,398</i> <i>Government of Sweden</i></p>	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration: <i>71.5 months</i> Start Date:³ <i>15 January 2016</i> Original End Date:⁴ <i>31 December 2020</i> Current End Date:⁵ <i>31 December 2021 (extended)</i></p>
<p align="center">Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p> <p>Final Evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>2020</i></p> <p>Mid-Term Evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>2018</i></p>	<p align="center">Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Benedikt Hosek Title: Project Manager, UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality Email address: benedikt.hosek@undp.org

¹ Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

² The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

³ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁴ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁵ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AoG	Administration of the Government of Georgia
ARDA	Agricultural and Rural Development Agency of Georgia
ATIPFund	LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking
AVNG	Anti-Violence Network of Georgia
AWF	Association of Women Farmers
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CEC	Central Election Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGE	Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
CI	Country Inquiry
COMBI	Communication for Behavioural Impact
CSB	Civil Service Bureau
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSRDG	Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia
DEVAW	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
DV	Domestic Violence
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBA	Georgian Bar Association
GBSS	Gender-Biased Sex Selection
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GEC	Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia
GEOSTAT	National Statistics Office of Georgia
GIA	Gender Impact Assessment
GOG	Government of Georgia
GRB Georgia	Gender Responsive Budgeting HRC Human Rights Inter-Agency Council of
HSOJ	High School of Justice
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development

IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMAGES	International Men and Gender Equality Survey
Istanbul Convention	Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
LEPL	Legal Entity of Public Law
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer
MESD	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia
MEPA	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia
MoES	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia
MOF	Ministry of Finance of Georgia
MoLHSA	Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
MRDI	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
NAP	National Action Plan
NHRAP	National Human Right's Action Plan
NCDC	National Center for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PDO	Public Defender's Office of Georgia
POG	Prosecution Service of Georgia
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SSA	Social Service Agency
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNJP	UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality
UNPSD	United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development (Framework Document 2016-2020)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAWG	Violence against Women and Girls
VAWG/DV NAP	National Action Plan on the Measures to be Implemented for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Protection of Survivors
VAWP	Violence against Women in Politics
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WHO	World Health Organization
WIGs	Women Initiative Groups
WISG	Women's Initiatives Supporting Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020, the UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality (UNJP) accomplished substantial results contributing to the achievement of the programme's planned outputs and outcomes.

During the reporting period, UNJP continued to strengthen synergies between the three outcomes of the programme, focusing on the following key areas: joint advocacy, capacity-building, research and awareness-raising. For that end four coordination meetings were convened by the UNJP Convening Agency- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

As a result of a joint effort, over the course of 2020 in the run-up to the October parliamentary election, the PUNOs put additional emphasis on the issue of women's participation in decision-making. First, the issue of violence against women in politics (VAWP) has been put on the agenda of the executive and legislative branches of the Government of Georgia on a high-level meeting under the aegis of the UN Gender Theme Group (UN GTG) with the support of the Government of Sweden and the participation of representatives from the legislative and executive branches, the Public Defender's Office (PDO), the diplomatic corps, political parties and civil society. At the meeting, members of political parties were encouraged to sign a statement on the prevention of VAWP and elections, recognizing the humiliating and excluding effects of such violence on women and encouraging parties to adopt a policy of zero tolerance to guarantee women's free and equal participation in political life. Two political parties – the European Democrats and United Georgia – signed the statement at the meeting.

In addition, UNJP secured agreement of government stakeholders to conduct the first ever study on VAWP in Georgia. The study, launched in 2020 and to be completed in the first quarter of 2021, consists of both qualitative and quantitative components, looking at the experiences of women in local and central elected bodies as well as on the executive positions.

The UNJP also spearheaded advocacy as co-chair of the UN GTG Task Force for Women's Political Participation for the institutionalization of the gender quota for the parliamentary and local self-government elections, achieving the adoption of a new electoral code including a 25 percent gender quota for parliamentary, and 50 percent for local self-government proportional party lists.

Moreover, under the umbrella of the UN GTG Task Force on Harmful Practices, the UNJP provided technical assistance (TA) to the thematic working group on Harmful Practices operating under the Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CGE). As a result of the TA, the section of the HR National Action Plan has been elaborated to implement multi-sectoral approach for combating harmful practices of Early/Child marriage. It has been agreed that the section will become an integral part of the HR Action Plan 2021-2023.

To ensure evidence-based and informed policymaking in the times of the pandemic, the UNJP jointly with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), advocated with the Administration of the Government of Georgia (AoG) for the need to carry out analyses of the impacts of COVID-19 on different vulnerable groups. As a result, as part of a holistic COVID-19 assessment coordinated by the AoG, UNJP led the work on a number

of studies assessing the gender dimensions of COVID-19 impact. UNJP contribution to the study included an assessment of accessibility of Violence against Women (VAWG) services and the labour conditions of women in the health-care sector – especially front-line responders to COVID-19; of the conditions of rural women; and of the specific impacts on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community. These thematic studies were complimented with a nation-wide quantitative survey, Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) of the COVID-19 situation¹. The contributing studies have been incorporated into a broader COVID-19 impact analysis coordinated by the AoG and implemented by the UNCT and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This process will enable the UNJP to further advocate for further strengthening gender mainstreaming in the pandemic response and relief efforts.

UNJP also directly responded to the impacts of COVID-19 on its beneficiaries by reprogramming a portion of the annual budget, upon agreement with the donor. UNJP supported rural women in mitigating COVID-19 impacts on their livelihoods by providing agricultural inputs and small entrepreneurship grants, as well as skills development in new rural business opportunities. UNJP recognized the specific and disproportionate impacts of the pandemic and related measures on the LGBTIQ. In response, UNJP launched a Rapid Response Mechanism to support the most vulnerable community members.

Moreover, in cooperation with the CGE, informational brochures were designed and disseminated, one on the impact of COVID-19 on the state of women and girls and the information on the state hotline services for the victims of domestic violence, and the other on the importance of men sharing household chores and family responsibilities specifically under pandemic situation. The posters were translated in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages and were distributed and posted in all the major pharmacies and the food chain-stores in the capital and the regions of Georgia. In cooperation with the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC), UNJP also ensured that young people received evidence-based information on COVID-19, infection prevention, and dissemination of information. Informational sessions were held online based on the training module prepared by a professional epidemiologist.

In its long-term effort to strengthen the national gender machinery, UNJP supported the AoG in developing an assessment of the implementation of the Gender Equality Chapter of the National Human Right's Action Plan (NHRAP). This assessment provides lessons learned invaluable for the formulation of the NHRAP for the upcoming period.

In order to assess progress of social attitudes towards Gender Equality and add to the limited evidence base, UNJP conducted a nationally representative survey of public perceptions and attitudes towards gender equality. Comparing to the baseline studies conducted under the first phase of the UNJP in 2013, the survey shows remarkable progress in many public attitudes, demonstrating the long-term impacts of the UNJP and other efforts, while pointing out the remaining gaps².

UNJP significantly contributed to the Labour Code reform initiated by the Government of Georgia (GOG).

¹ See at: <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/03/rapid-gender-assessment-of-covid-19-situation-in-georgia-2-wave>

² Men, Women and Gender Relations in Georgia: Public Perceptions and Attitudes;
<https://georgia.unfpa.org/en/publications/men-women-and-gender-relations-georgia-public-perceptions-and-attitudes>

To ensure elaboration of the gender-sensitive Family Policies, economic empowerment of women, and their involvement in the labour market, UNJP advocated for the introduction of the new regulation for maternity, paternity, and parental leaves in the country. Although falling short of some of the advocacy points put forward by the UNJP, the reformed labour code, adopted in September 2020, now entails a mechanism mandating fathers to take a leave for childcare and strengthens anti-discrimination and equal pay provisions.

I. Purpose

The overall goal of the programme is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment by strengthening capacities in the Government, civil society and communities. Achievement of the overall goal is being realized via the following outcomes:

1. Enhanced women's political and economic empowerment (led by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP))
2. Creation of an enabling environment to eliminate violence against women, especially sexual and domestic violence (led by UN Women)
3. Advanced gender equality and reproductive rights, including for the most vulnerable women, adolescents and youth (led by UNFPA)

The joint programme directly supports the further realization of the commitments to women's rights and gender equality undertaken by Georgia at both the international and national levels. As such, the UNJP scales up the results achieved by Georgia with the support of the international community, including UN agencies, in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment through innovative initiatives.

The UNJP is fully aligned with national priorities in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment and the stated goals and priority areas of the 2016-2020 UN Partnership for Sustainable Development (UNPSD Outcome 2: focus area 1 - Democratic Governance; and Outcome 4: focus area 2 - Jobs, Livelihood and Social Protection), as well as the Results Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey (2014-2020). The UNJP is further in line with Georgia's commitments under the nationalized Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 1 (target 1.4), Goal 3 (targets 3.1 and 3.7), Goal 4 (targets 4.3.a and 4.7), Goal 5 (targets 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6 and 5.c) and Goal 16 (targets 16.1, 16.3, 16.7 and 16.b).

II. Assessment of Programme Results

OUTCOME 1 – Enhanced women's political and economic empowerment

Within the UNJP, UNDP has been leading the women's political and economic empowerment component and has been responsible for the implementation of activities and achievement of results under Outcome 1 and its respective outputs. Throughout the implementation process, UNDP has ensured coordination and collaboration among PUNOs to achieve the best attainable results under this Outcome.

To stimulate policy change and establish gender-sensitive service delivery at the central and local levels, the UNJP has been enhancing capacity and providing support to public institutions across the executive, legislative and judicial branches and the regional and local governments, as well as local implementing agencies and direct beneficiaries. Within the legislative branch, in 2020, UNJP spearheaded advocacy as co-chair of the GTG Task Force for Women's Political Participation for the institutionalization of the gender quota for the parliamentary and local self-government elections, achieving the adoption of a new electoral code including a 25 percent gender quota for parliamentary, and 50 percent for local self-government proportional party lists. In addition, following long-term support to the labour reform, in September 2020, the amended labour code and labour inspection law have been adopted, advancing protection against discrimination and strengthening equal pay provisions for women and men.

Throughout 2020, UNJP's interventions have also supported the national gender equality machinery. In continuation of long-term priorities regarding the development of gender equality policies, UNJP supported AoG in developing an assessment of the implementation of the NHRAP gender equality chapters, thus ensuring a transfer of key lessons learned for the development of the action plans for the upcoming period.

As part of an intensification of promotion of women's political participation during a parliamentary election year, UNJP took a three-pronged approach, working with political parties to promote gender-sensitive party programming; providing capacity development for over 40 women candidates to raise their profile; and sensitize society at large and in particular first-time voters. The resulting intervention led to the implementation of several local awareness-raising projects aiming to increase public endorsement for women's role in politics, as well as a CSO-led pilot initiative monitoring gender bias on social media during elections.

UNJP presented the flagship gender perception study initiated in 2019, demonstrating progress and revealing gaps in public attitudes towards gender roles and values of equality. Additionally, throughout 2020, UNJP promoted a gender-sensitive response to the socio-economic impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Having conducted several assessments and contributing to AoG's analytical work identifying the gender gaps in pandemic impacts and government response, UNJP has also spearheaded an urgent response to the COVID-19 pandemic. First, to aid the most vulnerable members of the LGBTIQ minority, UNJP instituted a Rapid Response Mechanism in coordination with AoG responding to the most urgent needs throughout the period of lockdown. In addition, UNJP adapted its grassroots support to women's economic empowerment to offer business development microgrants for 31 women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, UNJP provided a range of trainings to rural women, enabling them to explore new rural entrepreneurship opportunities in farming and agro-tourism. This, in turn, allowed economic recovery for the most vulnerable.

Through partner organizations, UNJP continued its work to strengthen women's empowerment in the target regions. UNJP-supported Women Initiative Groups (WIGs) implemented community-centered activities involving more than 11,000 rural residents. In issue-based advocacy, WIGs identified local development problems, raising over USD 2 MM in municipal budget allocations.

Output 1.1. Duty bearers and rights holders are better able to advance gender equality

Throughout 2020, UNJP focused on finalizing gender mainstreaming initiatives commenced in 2019 with the legislative and executive branches of the national government, on targeted advocacy regarding key legislative issues, and, given the pandemic situation, promoting a gender-responsive approach to mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

Nearing the end of the term of the NHRAP, UNJP supported the AoG in reviewing the implementation of the GE chapter. The resulting assessment document and lessons learned revealed remaining gaps in mainstreaming of the NHRAP in national institutions' processes. The outcome document will serve as evidence for the elaboration of the upcoming period of the NHRAP, thus improving the implementation processes and institutional setup of the national human rights and gender equality machinery.

A key area of cooperation with national authorities in 2020 related to the assessment of impacts and management of the COVID-19 pandemic. The AoG initiated a large-scale study to assess the impacts of and response to the pandemic, with international partners contributing to its constituent parts. UNJP led the development of the assessment's gender chapter, consisting of a quantitative RGA³ as well as several qualitative studies. The RGA, conducted in October-November 2020, built on a similar previous study conducted by UN Women and it revealed key dimensions of gender impacts of the pandemic and related restrictions in the domains of livelihoods, employment, domestic and care work, as well as its psychological impacts. The study will serve as a key resource to further inform programmatic efforts to lessen the unequal impact. A complementary qualitative component assessing the specific impacts on rural women was conducted. In addition, UNJP contributed to the AoG assessment with a baseline study documenting the dimensions of the vulnerability of the LGBTIQ community.

In the direction of support to gender mainstreaming of legislation, UNJP finalized seven Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) of legislation and, together with the Parliamentary Committee on Sports and Youth Affairs and the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia (GEC) held a public presentation of the GIA results of the Draft Law on Physical Education and Sport on October 22. In an effort to further strengthen the parliament's institutional capacity, UNJP held a capacity-development training for the Parliamentary Research Centre in conducting GIA.

In a seminal achievement in promoting gender equality on the labour market, the UNJP-supported Labour Code reform was adopted by the Parliament in September 2020. The reform which UNJP supported with the long-term public outreach and social media campaign and through a long-term consultant to GEC to support the process, strengthened workers' protection, introduced clear anti-discrimination articles, and established equal pay principles. In the run-up to the adoption of the reform, UNJP also engaged in high-level advocacy on the Equal Pay Day⁴, marked in Georgia for the first time.

With parliamentary elections taking place in 2020, UNJP put an additional focus on the effort of promoting women's participation in politics, further enabled with top-up funding to the programme from the Government

³ https://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/library/democratic_governance/covid-gender-assessment.html

⁴ <https://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/equal-pay-day.html>

of Sweden. Following the adoption of amendments to the election code in June 2020 which included gender quotas for both local government and parliamentary elections, UNJP engaged in raising the profile of women politicians in the public view and on sensitizing the public on the importance of women's role in politics.

First, UNJP engaged an international consultant to provide political parties with the opportunity to undergo a critical gender review of political party programmes. Seven political parties received consultations on gender policymaking and a review of party programmes, enabling them to better gender-mainstream their policy proposals. In addition, UNJP, in partnership with IRI Georgia, offered women candidates from across the political spectrum trainings in effective media communication, messaging, and work with the camera to strengthen their skills and enable better visibility of women decision-makers. 42 women from across the political spectrum attended the training sessions. The series of trainings was concluded with a media roundtable uniting women candidates and representatives of main media channels. This event enabled a constructive discussion regarding the barriers women candidates face to voice their agendas and facilitated networking.

As part of a public outreach strategy to promote the role of women in decision-making, UNJP focused on first-time voters through a series of workshops and awareness-raising activities aimed at sensitizing young men and women to the importance of equal representation in politics.⁵ First, a national-wide public outreach campaign was held to raise young persons' interest in engaging on the questions of equality in politics. Through a series of workshops for selected applicants, 45 young people from the UNJP target regions of Samegrelo and Kakheti learned and discussed the electoral system and explored how to use participatory approaches to break down the barriers women and other underrepresented groups face in entering politics. The programme was concluded with a mini-grant competition awarded to 10 local advocacy micro-projects sensitizing local populations with the importance of equal representation.

To support the role of civil society in creating public demand for equal representation in politics, UNJP awarded two local CSOs a grant to conduct a social media monitoring project to identify, categorize and address gender bias in the political campaign. The CSOs first elaborated a detailed and nuanced set of categories for identifying gender bias in language. These categories were in turn used as indicators during a pre-election online social media monitoring identifying over 200 cases where women politicians were targeted with sexist and abusive language, and as an advocacy tool in discussion with civil society and political representatives to fight gender bias in politics. The resulting campaign raised the issue of bias in language to national attention and revealed the deep-rooted bias against women in electoral discussions. As part of the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, UNJP held a public presentation of the final results of the campaign and launched a campaign against gender bias and hate speech under the umbrella "Words can hurt".⁶

In an effort to strengthen the evidence base regarding gender inequalities, and to prepare for future programming, UNJP in cooperation with the UNFPA finalized and launched the landmark public perception study "Men, Women and Gender Relations in Georgia: Public Perceptions and Attitudes".⁷ The nationally representative survey provides perspective in comparison to the 2013 inception surveys conducted under the

⁵ <https://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/first-time-voters.html>

⁶ <https://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/gender-sensitive-language.html>

⁷ https://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/library/democratic_governance/gender-survey-report.html

first phase of UNJP. It highlights the positive evolution of public attitudes towards gender equality and identifies the remaining gaps where continued effort is needed to shift social norms. Based on the study, UNJP has issued three Gender Policy Briefs regarding the key determinants of egalitarian attitudes, women's employment, and citizens' public engagement.

To further promote the findings of the survey among diverse audiences and to facilitate awareness-raising on the remaining gender inequalities, UNJP developed a board game simulating the life path of women in Georgia. The stereotypes used in the game scenario are derived from the results of the survey of the public perceptions. Exploring the intersectionality of disadvantage, the game puts the players in the shoes of women characters who face different challenges in life.

In continuation to direct work with the LGBTIQ community organizations, UNJP held regular confidence-building workshops aiming to bridge the divides within the community, all the while striving to uphold the "do no harm" principle. Shifting to online platforms due to the pandemic restrictions enabled to hold open discussions and thematic workshops and engage community representatives in constructive dialogue. Three thematic workshops were held to discuss topics raised by the community: i) challenges and opportunities CSOs face in adapting to the pandemic; ii) the role of homophobia in political discourse; and iii) engagement of the private sector on LGBTIQ issues. The online format and pandemic situation enabled the participation of inspiring international speakers and served as a uniting element for the community.

In its advocacy efforts, UNJP, on behalf of the UN in Georgia, led the preparation of a joint statement of the international community to mark IDAHOBIT. Signed by 25 representatives of international partners, the statement marked 30 years since WHO officially recognized that homosexuality is not a disease and rallied a call for action in solidarity with the LGBTIQ community, recognizing the increased vulnerability in times of pandemic.⁸

To document women's experience in the pandemic, and in turn support the independent women's artistic scene, UNJP supported the production of artworks (video, photography, prose, poetry) by women artists.⁹ This initiative paired nine women photographers with eleven women writers to explore, document and convey to the public the impacts of isolation. The artworks were exhibited online as part of the Tbilisi Photo Festival.¹⁰

Output 1.2. Gender-responsive policies implemented by national and local authorities

UNJP continued promoting gender-sensitive policies at both the local self-government and national levels. A milestone was achieved by introducing Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) principles to several national institutions, in line with the NHRAP priorities. Namely, UNJP supported the Parliament of Georgia (PoG) and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia (MoESCS) to develop an approach that would enable integrating GRB principles within the existing performance-oriented budget framework. The process constituted of UNJP support to partner institutions in conducting gender-sensitivity analysis,

⁸ <https://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/idahobit-2020-statement.html>

⁹ <https://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/covid-women-artists.html>

¹⁰ <https://tpmm.ge/en/education/iresidency/>

identifying budgetary resources linked to each gender-sensitive aspect of their activity, and classifying these according to their gender-relevance. As a result of this cooperation, both, the PoG and the MoESCS incorporated a gender perspective into their operations as one of their budgetary goals in the program budget annex. These changes have been in turn integrated into the State Budget for 2021. The process enabled the preparation of guidelines and a manual for replicating the process in other institutions.

UNJP continued its long-term efforts to promote care economy principles at national and local levels. In collaboration with the Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs, UNJP concluded the assessment of entry points to introducing care economy principles in Georgia. Subsequently, UNJP held several policy discussions regarding the key outcomes and recommendations of the assessment.¹¹ The two key avenues for future work, validated by national and local-level stakeholders, are the introduction of community-based planning of social care services, enabling to reflect the gender-responsive potential of care services, and the development of quality home care services for long-term care beneficiaries which have been identified as the least developed services of respite care with high potential for women's empowerment.

In response to the recommendations, UNJP, in partnership with Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions, developed and piloted a new short-term VET course for home care workers. This pilot project enabled the development of tailored short-term training which will ensure that care workers adhere to all the basic principles of bio-psycho-social care. Having solicited high demand among, both, the social care non-governmental sector and the general public, the VET course has been certified by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement¹², thus ensuring that future workers in this sphere will adhere to the minimum standards. As a result, the home care sector will benefit from a highly trained workforce, creating employment opportunities for women, as well as providing respite care to relieve the excessive burden of domestic care work.

In continuation of UNJP's traditional activity to promote women's participation in local decision-making, the Leadership School Certificate Program for elected local government officials further developed the leadership and management skills of women council members. Due to the pandemic situation, the Leadership School took place online, enabling enrollment from across Georgia, with 95 participants benefiting from the training, of which 89 received the completion certificates. The focus of the training was the preparation for the upcoming local elections in 2021. Participants improved their management skills for local self-government and acquired knowledge of election cycle, campaigning, and communication.

In addition to the Leadership School, women councilors were given the opportunity to formulate and voice key advocacy points through the UNJP-supported platform - the Women Councilors' Forum. The Forum has proven to be an effective platform for national-level advocacy for gender-related issues identified at the local level. Member councilors have voiced the need to further strengthen the institutional standing of the Forum to ensure its stable functioning despite political changes; an assessment to which UNJP plans to respond in upcoming institutional strengthening activities.

Following the effort of the previous two years, UNJP supported training –"Promoting justice through gender

¹¹ <https://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/care-economy.html>

¹² <https://eqe.ge/ka/page/static/779/gzamkvlevebi>

equality"– for judges held at High School of Justice (HSOJ) in December. 16 judges and staff participated in this training.

A new area of cooperation with the national authorities has formed around the response to COVID-19 and related impacts on the LGBTIQ minority. The cooperation related to loss of income, risk of violence and heightened risk of mental health issues, as well as the lack of access to healthcare. UNJP, in partnership with AoG, held several rounds of coordination meetings with LGBTIQ CSOs in order to harness the understanding of urgent needs of the community during the pandemic and establish mechanisms of cooperation to enable timely delivery of needed support.

Based on the mapping of needs, a UNDP Norway-funded sister project “Human Rights for All” issued two grants to LGBTIQ community organizations to respond to some of the urgent needs. Following these first steps, UNJP established a trilateral partnership with AoG and a LGBTIQ community CSO to devise a “Rapid Response Mechanism”. The mechanism, standing on the triangular assessment of applications by members of several CSOs, delivers urgent support to vulnerable LGBTIQ community members. This consists namely of rent subsidies and coverage of medical costs. This needed intervention, heralded for its relevance in times of urgent need,¹³ has been the first example of Government cooperation in direct response to the community needs and has been since built upon with other donor funding.

The cooperation has made the needs of the community rise to prominence. To address these in a long-term perspective, UNJP has partnered with AoG to draft a concept to ensure better responsiveness of state services to the community needs. The resulting document proposes concrete and achievable actions for several state institutions in the domain of employment and livelihood promotion, violence prevention, and promotion of access to education and healthcare. It will serve as a template for drafting results-based actions for the upcoming period of the NHRAP.

Output 1.3. Local women empowered economically and politically through capacity-building and engagement in local decision-making

In UNJP target regions, activities related to women’s empowerment were mostly defined by the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges emerging for partner organizations and beneficiaries in the two target regions.

Cooperation with three project partner VET colleges – LEPL College "Aisi" (Kachreti, Gurjaani municipality), LEPL College "Phazisi" (Poti), and LEPL Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi consisted of support to adapt to the pandemic conditions. The colleges, to the extent possible, adapted the theoretical components of vocational courses to online teaching mode, thus ensuring education continuity throughout the pandemic. The equipment and trainings to staff, provided by UNJP, proved transformative for the colleges as they expanded the use of online or blended teaching methods to cover all courses on offer. With a 90 percent graduation rate overall (91 percent with women and 85 percent with men), 788 women and

¹³ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review Of The Human Rights Situation Of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans And Intersex People In Europe And Central Asia](#), 2021, page 51-52.

122 men completed short-term vocational education courses in 35 different professional areas across all partner institutions. The average employment rate of women upon graduation in 2020 was upwards of 52 percent. Acting upon Mid-Term Evaluation recommendations¹⁴, UNJP recorded participation and put additional emphasis on promoting access of particularly vulnerable groups of women to VET.¹⁵

In connection with the care economy initiatives, the pilot short-term home care specialist course has been introduced to the ZSSU and Phazisi college. ToTs have been organized at the partner colleges and pilot distance short-term trainings were initiated with 24 beneficiaries. Piloted courses aimed to introduce basic principles and skills of the home care profession.

UNJP continued to promote women's active engagement in finding solutions to local community issues through the support of 26 WIGs operating in 11 municipalities of Kakheti and Samegrelo. In 2020, WIGs initiated and implemented 479 different activities. They included sports, cultural, educational, and other types of activities, in which around 11,000 community residents participated. One example of a very successful initiative is the establishment of a professional animation studio based in the WIG of Napareuli.¹⁶ Currently, ten young local people are learning the basics of animation, drawing and screenplay writing at the studio. WIGs were also actively involved in women-led local issue-based advocacy. As a result, 100 community issues were identified and submitted to the municipal government in Kakheti and Samegrelo. Out of 100, 45 most critical problems were addressed through municipal budget allocations, raising 7,382,894 GEL (2,374,150 USD¹⁷) a 35 percent increase from 2019.¹⁸ Women leaders actively monitor local actions, implemented by local governments, to solve respective problems.

Under the long-running microgrant scheme for WIGs' projects, UNJP dedicated 54 thousand GEL for WIGs' problem-solving community projects, catalysing an additional 47 thousand GEL from other sources. To directly respond to pandemic socio-economic impacts in the target regions, UNJP initiated an additional grant scheme to support women's livelihoods in rural areas. Covering 27 communities, UNJP supported 31 women's micro-businesses which responded to unmet community needs revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic. These needs were identified through the preliminary survey of problems and challenges associated with COVID-19 pandemic in the target communities.¹⁹ Among the supported initiatives were services not available locally prior to the pandemic, such as a bakery, dried fruit business, and an English language learning center. Experienced mentors supported grantees during the project.

An additional COVID-19 response activity was initiated in partnership with the Association of Women

¹⁴ Recommendation 12 b): 12. Consider the additional indicators for Outcome 1:

Number of women beneficiaries of the programme who are employed or have gained employment – disaggregated by vulnerability (e.g. IDPs and ethnic minorities).

¹⁵ 16.2 percent of graduates (n=128) were IDP women whose graduation rate reached 42.2 percent. Women from ethnic minorities comprised 2.7 percent of beneficiaries, with 28.6 percent graduation rate. This represents an increase since 2019 when IDP women consisted 15.9 percent of all women participants (graduation rate – 19.4 percent) and women from ethnic minorities 1.5 per cent (graduation rate 93.3 per cent).

¹⁶ <https://undpgeorgia.medium.com/animating-village-life-in-georgia-98bef1b695f6>

¹⁷ For conversion, the official exchange rate for 2020 was used (1 USD = 3.1097 GEL).

¹⁸ For comparison, in 2019, out of 84 identified issues, 44 were reflected in the municipal budgets.

¹⁹ 104 issues identified through the survey and in-depth interviews with the leaders themselves were referred to decision-makers in 11 municipalities for consideration in 2021 (9 online meetings and 11 formal written appeals).

Farmers (AWF). AWF conducted awareness-raising meetings regarding opportunities for rural women to apply for state economic support programmes. 373 farmers (262 women and 111 men) attended 21 seminars. Following the trainings, AWF supported farmers in funding applications. Out of 36 supported applicants, 16 women were awarded funding. The AWF was also active in raising awareness regarding VET and sustainable farming practices in schools, on TV and social media. Throughout the arranged meetings at four public schools, 150 students participated from target regions. GMTV and social media channels featured 16 broadcasts.

In partnership with two other UNDP projects, UNJP also expanded cooperation with AWF in light of the pandemic. The new initiative targets vulnerable rural women (IDPs, ethnic minority members, single mothers). Trainings are offered to sensitize the beneficiaries to opportunities in developing rural agrotourism. Also, 140 vulnerable women received agricultural inputs to start or upscale their family farm production and protect their livelihood.

OUTCOME 2 – Enabling environment to eliminate VAWG, especially sexual and domestic violence, created in Georgia

In line with its mandate and scope of work within the UNJP, UN Women has continued to aspire towards enhancing gender equality by contributing to the creation of an enabling environment to eliminate violence against women and girls (VAWG), especially sexual and domestic violence (DV). Efforts were targeted at further improvements to relevant policies and laws, as well as the development of services for VAWG/DV survivors provided by both State and non-State actors (such as shelters, crisis centres, access to justice, career advice, job placement for victims), focusing on maintaining access to the services during the pandemic.

Regardless of the pandemic, the Government has reiterated its commitment to addressing VAWG/DV in Georgia at different levels. For instance, the UNJP facilitated UN Women Executive Director's address to the President of Georgia on 7 December to encourage to take further stronger actions to address EVAW in COVID-19 response. As a result, the President underlined the importance of intensifying efforts to fight the shadow pandemic – violence against women, in times of COVID-19 in her public statements, including at the high-level meeting organized in the UN Headquarters reviewing progress achieved in 25 years after the Beijing IV World Conference on Women.²⁰

In the reporting period, the UNJP further supported GoG in meeting its accountability obligations to relevant treaty bodies and special procedures. More specifically, support has been provided to finalize its submissions to the CEDAW (sixth periodic report) and to GREVIO (initial submission). Both of these reports were submitted respectively to CEDAW (albeit with an almost two-year delay) and GREVIO in December 2020. Further, in lieu of Georgia's upcoming Universal Periodic Reporting (UPR) process in January 2021, the UNJP contributed to UN Women Georgia's individual confidential input to UPR members through the UN Women Geneva liaison office.

²⁰ See for example:

https://www.president.gov.ge/en/News/Article/sakaryvelos_prezidentis_sitkva_gaeros_maghali_rangis_shekhvedra_kalya_meoyk_he_msolfio_konferentsiis_25e_tslisyavyan_dakavshirebiy

The UNJP managed to advocate with AoG for the need to carry out analyses of the impact of COVID-19 on the accessibility of VAWG/DV services (See Annex 2A). The study along with the RGA of the COVID-19 situation, took place with UNJP support and has been incorporated into a broader COVID-19 impact analysis coordinated by the AoG and implemented by the UNCT and USAID. The findings will enable the UNJP in to support further strengthening of VAWG/DV services.

The UNJP continued to place great emphasis on the prevention of VAWG/DV, especially given the new reality in times of the pandemic. Considering the implications that COVID-19 has had on violence against women – the Shadow Pandemic – UNJP has supported the Government’s engagement in information dissemination about VAWG/DV essential services for survivors of towards increased awareness and more favourable social norms, attitudes and behaviours among Georgia’s general population. As a result, in 2020, the number of restraining orders issued amounted to 11,164,²¹ while 104 protective orders were issued.²² It should be noted, however, that the increasing trend in the issuance of restraining orders, i.e. reporting, has been declining since 2016 and fell from 34 per cent in 2019 to 9 per cent in 2020 (See Annex 2B).²³ Even though there is no other evidence to corroborate this finding, it could be attributable to COVID-19 and its implications on reporting. It remains to be seen, how the reporting trend develops during recovery.

As for indictments on VAWG/DV, 4,614 cases (as compared to 4,579 cases in the previous year) were brought forward with charges dropped in 0,3 per cent of cases only.²⁴ In terms of government funding of VAWG/DV specialized services, in 2020, the state budget allocated GEL 950,000 for the LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking (ATIPFund) to address VAWG/DV issues.²⁵

Output 2.1. National laws and policies on VAWG, especially on sexual and domestic violence, improved in line with international commitments (DEVAW, CEDAW, BPfA, Istanbul Convention)

The UNJP has continued to aspire towards further enhancement of the respective policies and laws and policies in the area of combating VAWG/DV.

In the spring of 2019, the Parliament of Georgia adopted the sexual harassment legislation establishing the legal definition of sexual harassment, as well as regulations against sexual harassment in public spaces and in the workplace. The evidence generated by UN Women and GEOSTAT under the EU/UN Women/GEOSTAT 2017 National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia has played a critical role in the advocacy efforts by presenting solid justification for sexual harassment regulation. However, reporting of sexual harassment cases, both at the workplace and in public space remains low. During 2020, the PDO²⁶ and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)²⁷ handled 10 and 26 sexual harassment cases respectively. It should be noted, that the

²¹ Source: Official communication with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia #454331 dated 26.02.2021.

²² Source Official communication with the Supreme Court of Georgia #P-20-21 dated 23.02.2021.

²³ See Annex 2B for more details.

²⁴ Source: <https://police.ge/en/home>

²⁵ The annual state budget allocated for the LEPL ATIPFund amounted to GEL 7,300,000 in 2020, while GEL 950,000 has been especially allocated for the operation of the shelters, crisis centres, and hotline, etc. This marks a 77 per cent increase over the baseline of GEL 538,493.89 allocated in 2014. See Law on 2020 State Budget of Georgia.

²⁶ Source: Official communication with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia #454331 dated 26.02.2021;

²⁷ Source: Official communication with the Public Defender of Georgia #24/127 dated 18.02.2021;

MIA does not keep track of sexual harassment cases that have been dropped prior to reaching trial courts. It remains to be seen, therefore, whether the low number of cases brought is attributable to low reporting rates, or due to high rates in dropped cases.

The UNJP provided TA to the Government of Georgia in developing legislative amendments aimed at increasing access to VAWG/DV services. A comprehensive Concept Note on the Standards for the Provision of Services to VAWG/DV Survivors in Georgia, which depicts the existing situation, gaps and needed legislative amendments to ensure compliance with the relevant international standards, was developed with UN Women's support and served as the basis for the bill. The bill implies removal of legal requirements for the eligibility to access state-shelters, thus allowing any woman seeking shelter to address a crisis center directly, where a group of specialists will determine the specific services needed in each individual case immediately. According to the bill, no formal procedures are required to access the shelters, such as a restraining/protective order, being recognized a victim in a criminal case, or being granted a victim's status by the DV status granting group.

In addition, support has been provided to the CGE in assessing implementation of the 2018-2020 National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be Implemented for the Protection of Victims (VAWG/DVP NAP), inter alia in light of international best practices as well as the requirements of the Government Decree on the approval of the rules for the development, monitoring and evaluation of policy documents. The assessment will inform development of the subsequent cycle of the VAW/DV NAP to be launched early next year.

The UNJP also supported the (ATIPFund) – the main service provider of VAWG/DV services – in the development of a questionnaire used to determine the need of specific services, such as shelter, or “out-patient” services. The current legal requirement of obtaining “victim” status in order to access state shelters has been continuously identified as a major impediment to effective service provision to victims/survivors of violence against women in Georgia and is contrary to the requirements under the Istanbul Convention (Article 23 – Shelters), as well as the CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35. The bill has been handed over to the CGE and is expected to be filed with the legislature and passed in early 2021.

To support evidence-based policymaking informed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNJP finalized a qualitative study on the impact of COVID-19 on VAWG/DV service provision. The study findings are to inform policy decisions to ensure continuous, high-quality and uninterrupted access to services during the pandemic and ensure the safety of beneficiaries. The findings and recommendations of this study will be incorporated into the gender chapter of the broader COVID-19 impact study coordinated by AoG and implemented by UN agencies and USAID.

To promote women's political participation and leadership in decision-making in the run-up to the Parliamentary elections in October 2020, the UNJP, supported by the wider UN GTG, has steered strategic policy discussions on VAWP. Policy discussions were held with members of the Parliament, development partners and civil society organizations to promote the placement of the issue of VAWP on the political agenda and to enhance the political will for its prevention, especially in light of the October 2020 parliamentary elections in Georgia.

This advocacy and awareness-raising work enabled the UNJP to launch the first-ever study on VAWP in Georgia. The study will be completed in 2021, providing needed evidence and data to work towards eliminating the violence faced by many women while exercising their active and passive political rights. A high-level meeting has been organized in March to raise awareness about VAWP and elections as one of the forms of gender-based violence; and to encourage the public in general and political parties to take measures for its prevention and elimination. The meeting was organized by the UNGTG with the support of the Government of Sweden and the participation of representatives from the legislative and executive branches, PDO, the diplomatic corps, political parties and civil society. At the meeting, the members of political parties were encouraged to sign a statement on the prevention of VAWP and elections (see Annex 2C). The document, on the one hand, recognizes the humiliating and excluding effects of such violence on women and, on the other, encourages parties to adopt a policy of zero tolerance to guarantee women's free and equal participation in political life. It is notable that two political parties - the European Democrats and United Georgia - signed the statement on the spot.²⁸

Output 2.2. Capacity of key policy and service delivery institutions strengthened to promote and protect women's human rights to life free from sexual violence, VAWG and DV

An enabling institutional environment that allows victims/survivors of VAWG/DV to disclose their suffering and freely seek protection and assistance is the main result of the UNJP's work at the institutional level under its Outcome 2. Capacity development work has been carried out targeting different service providers in the field of VAWG/DV towards the increased quality of, access to and demand for services.

During the reporting period, in order to increase the capacities of service providers to VAWG/DV victims/survivors and to ensure sustainability of the UNJP's capacity development results, the UNJP contributed to the improvement of the institutionalized training curricula for police officers, prosecutors, judges and lawyers. Overall, during 2020 alone, 207 police officers, 196 lawyers and 36 judges have been trained based on these training programmes. Even though due to COVID-19 related movement and gathering restrictions face-to-face training sessions were unfeasible, most of the sessions were conducted virtually.

In order to strengthen the first responders' performance in instances of VAWG/DV, a working group organized by the Anti-Violence Network of Georgia (AVNG), a UNJP implementing partner, finalized a methodological manual on the police response to domestic violence and sexual violence crimes focusing on criminal proceedings and criminal police operations reflecting recent legislative developments, including electronic monitoring of perpetrators. In addition, the working group operated by AVNG finalized updating the Special Operating Procedures for police officers.

UN Women, the Council of Europe and Equality Now have joined forces to improve the response to sexual violence in Georgia through the development of the Sexual Violence Investigation Manual. The manual is instrumental for improving the relevant practice and legislation related to sexual violence, ensuring de facto

²⁸ For more please see: <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/03/debate-begins-about-preventing-violence-against-women-in-politics-and-elections>

compliance with the standards set forth in the Istanbul Convention and the effective administration of justice. The manual will represent an investigative methodology tool, designed primarily for practical application and implementation by investigators, prosecutors and judges in Georgia. As such, it will cover the relevant procedures starting from the reporting process through the prosecution and punishment stages for acts of sexual violence. Based on its compliance with international human rights standards and commonalities among States concerning sexual violence, the manual will be valuable for post-Soviet countries and worldwide. The Manual will be finalized in early 2021.

During the reporting period, the ATIPFund provided 315 beneficiaries with shelter and 392 with crisis center services having continued uninterrupted service provision to the survivors of VAWG/DV. Overall, the nationwide VAWG/DV hotline received 1,775 calls²⁹.

The UNJP further provided support to the ATIPFund to develop internal safety and hygiene regulations related to COVID-19, in line with the WHO guidelines. The ATIPFund re-structured service models for ten shelters and crisis centers. During the State of Emergency period, the Tbilisi shelter was functioning as a quarantine zone for new beneficiaries, while old beneficiaries living in the Tbilisi shelter were referred to other regions temporarily; the personnel of shelters and crisis centers started working in shifts and when possible, some parts of the services were carried out remotely. The personnel were consistently provided with the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE). Emergency assistance and consultation hotlines continued to work non-stop. However, it is worth noting, that there was no publicly available information regarding the standard protocols of the organizations operations adapted to COVID-19. This finding has been corroborated by the Qualitative Research on Violence against Women within the Study on Impact of COVID-19 on Human Rights Protection and Government Response in Georgia³⁰. The UNJP will therefore support the ATIPFund in the development of the COVID-19 safety protocol for the shelters and crisis center in the next year and making it publicly available.

In addition, the UNJP supported the ATIPFund to procure additional household equipment (one Refrigerator, two washing machines and other items for office) for the Crisis Center in Tbilisi and 33 units of personal computers were purchased for Crisis Centers, Shelters for trafficking victims and Shelters for beneficiaries throughout the pandemic-related lock-down measures to meet their needs in terms of distance-learning and etc.³¹

In line with UNJP's recommendations, in April, MIA massively spread information via SMS, regarding the functioning of alternative reporting mechanisms on VAWG/DV, such as the 112 application and SOS button for VAWG/DV survivors. The information was also disseminated in ethnic minority languages. Information was also available in the pharmacies and grocery shops, as well as in quarantine hotels,. Short videos were created and disseminated via social media and TV. Importantly, the police were instructed not to fine persons who violated the curfew to escape domestic violence; The UNJP further facilitated that relevant measures taken by the Government to address VAWG/DV in COVID-19 times are featured in the Global COVID-19

²⁹ Formal communication with the ATIPFund #07/583 dated 01.02.2021

³⁰ For more information, see Annex 2A

³¹ Source: ATIPFund.

Gender Response tracker.³²

During the UNJP Phase II, in partnership with Women’s Advice Center “Sakhli” the network and coverage of VAWG/DV crisis centers has been expanded by adding two more crisis centres in the UNJP target regions (Telavi and Zugdidi) and advocate with the respective local self-governments to take over funding of these crisis centres by 2020. A relevant agreement has been concluded by Sakhli with the municipalities of Telavi and Zugdidi within the previous reporting cycles. The municipalities transferred buildings to Sakhli to operate the crisis centers, while UNJP covered renovation, equipment and operating expenses until October 2020.

Due to the parliamentary elections in Georgia (election date: October 31, 2020) and subsequent unrest, as well as pandemic-related constraints and consequent shift in priorities, the municipalities have failed to meet their obligations as laid down in the above agreement. It is therefore that UNJP will continue transitional support to the crisis centers to cover operating expenses of the crisis centers, while at the same time, advocating with the municipalities on the take-over and exploring other sustainable funding opportunities. During the reporting period, CSO crisis centers in Tsaishi of Samegrelo region and Telavi of Kakheti region provided services to 56 women.

The UNJP has continued to support the NGO Georgian Women’s Employment Association “Amagdari” in terms of the socioeconomic rehabilitation of DV survivors. The database operated by Amagdari comprises 974 women seeking employment (including IDP women); among them, 391 women are DV survivors. Amagdari has identified beneficiaries for vocational education courses and employment support and has conducted assessments of their background, qualifications, interests and needs. During the reporting period, up to 70 beneficiaries were consulted on employment issues; ten beneficiaries were employed; and 58 beneficiaries attended different internship and vocational training sessions online.

During the reporting period, the Gender Equality Department of the PDO carried out the monitoring of the State-run shelters as well as the crisis centres in Georgia on the basis of the monitoring tool developed with the support of UN Women in 2014. Detailed information on the main findings and recommendations has been reflected in the 2019 special report “Monitoring Results for Services of Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence Victims” released in 2020.³³ The report recommends, inter alia, that the ATIPFund improve the feedback system and appeals mechanism at the shelters; ensure a thorough medical check-up of the survivors upon their placement in the shelters in a way that ensures safety of other survivors; and better equip the libraries and gardens of the shelters.

The PDO’s femicide monitoring report 2014-2018³⁴ has been published and presented at an international conference in June 2020. The report highlights the main trends, achievements and challenges of the country’s justice policy in the field of violence against women. It has identified positive trends in how the criminal justice system deals with femicide cases, including the identification of patterns of systemic violence, the non-application of plea bargains in such cases and the application of increasingly proportional sanctions.

³² See at: <https://data.undp.org/gendertracker/>

³³ See at: <https://ombudsman.ge/eng/spetsialuri-angarishebi/ojakhshi-dzaladobisa-da-trefikingis-mskhverplta-momsakhurebis-datsebebebis-tavshesafiris-monitoringis-angarishi-2020>

³⁴ See at: <https://ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2020070314085774956.pdf>

In addition, the PDO prepared the femicide monitoring report for 2019. The methodology for the case analysis included assessment of statistical data, as well as of the administration of justice process to evaluate achieved progress and identify remaining gaps preventing the fight against the problem. Overall, 25 judgments of common courts related to crimes committed in 2019 were analyzed. The femicide monitoring report was presented by the PDO, with the support of the UNJP in November, marking the 16 days of activism against GBV campaign at an online conference on femicide prevention and monitoring. The purpose of the online conference was to discuss local and international monitoring practices aimed at preventing gender-based killings (femicide) of women.

During the reporting period, the UNJP initiated consultations with the Central Election Commission (CEC) on the technical support for capacity development on sexual harassment and GEWE ahead of the Parliamentary Elections in October 2020. Overall, about 18 and 15 managerial employees of the CEC have completed the UN Women/PDO online courses on sexual harassment and gender equality respectively.

To promote women's political participation and leadership in decision-making, the UNJP, in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the UNGTG, has steered strategic policy discussions on VAWP and in elections. Policy discussions were held with members of the Parliament, development partners and civil society organizations to promote the placement of the issue of VAWP on the political agenda and to enhance the political will for its prevention in light of the parliamentary elections in Georgia in 2020. To engage in evidence-based awareness-raising and advocacy work on VAWP and elections, the UNJP has initiated a study on the matter with original UN Women methodology (under UN Women HQ leadership). The study will be completed in the first quarter of 2021.

Output 2.3. Public awareness raised to support prevention and disclosure of the instances of VAWG, particularly sexual violence and DV

The work under this output aims to support the prevention as well as disclosure of VAWG/DV instances, specifically (a) targeting increased awareness among the target audiences of the problem of VAWG/DV; (b) encouraging disclosure of the instances of VAWG/DV and promoting the use of the existing victim support services; and (c) preventing violence from occurring in the longer run by promoting zero tolerance with regard to VAWG/DV.

In the reporting year, considering the implications that COVID-19 has had on violence against women – the Shadow Pandemic – we have seen substantial progress in the Government's engagement in information dissemination about violence against women and essential services for survivors of violence aimed at increased awareness and more favourable social norms, attitudes and behaviours among Georgia's general population.

The UNJP supported the CGE to develop a Communication Strategy on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence during COVID-19 crisis, aiming at raising awareness on these issues, as well as spreading information on the alternative ways of reporting violence cases. In addition, UN Women supported the CGE

in promoting existing services for survivors. Two videos promoting the nationwide VAWG/DV hotline and the national emergency service center 112 have been produced and aired on twice a day on one of the famous Georgian TV stations and 15 regional TVs (for a month, considering the dates of 16 days of activism against GBV campaign). Outdoor billboards were also produced and placed in Tbilisi and regions. UN Women supported the CGE to address the increased risk of violence against women and domestic violence, in 2020 the Inter-Agency Commission by supporting development and implementation of a communication strategy on VAW/DV during the COVID-19. The strategy outlines key messages and priority actions of the governmental entities and NGOs to ensure that information on state-provided services is available for all.³⁵

In line with UNJP's recommendation, the MIA used the countrywide SMS system reaching all registered mobile phone numbers in Georgia to provide information to citizens on alternative ways of reporting VAW/DV. Cellular SMS messages were being sent in ethnic minority languages (Armenian and Azerbaijani) as well. In addition, while most locations for large gatherings in the country were closed during the COVID-19 crisis, pharmacies and grocery shops continued to remain open. These spots were identified as safe spaces for victims/survivors of DV to learn about alternative ways of reporting DV and to do so immediately. Information on state services, alternative ways of reporting DV, police-protection mechanisms, instructions to download the 112 mobile app and calls for zero tolerance for DV were shared through TV and social media. The emergency hotline 112 under MIA continued to provide 24/7 free services for all. The mobile app has a chat mode and silent SOS button, which means that a potential victim could call the police by pushing the SOS button, even without dialing the phone number. The VAW/DV consultation hotline 116 006, run by the Agency for State Care, continued to provide legal, psychological and social consultations in eight languages: Georgian, Arabic, Armenian, Azerbaijani, English, Farsi, Russian and Turkish. The consultation hotline 1481, run by PDO, also continued to provide consultations on GBV 24/7.

In addition, GOG joined the world in commemorating the 16 Days of Activism against GBV, and the President of Georgia delivered a speech on 24 November at the high-level forum at UN Headquarters dedicated to combating GBV during the pandemic. The governmental campaign focused on carrying across the message that despite the strains on the health-care sector and the various social distancing, isolation and lockdown restrictions, combating violence against women remains a priority item on the political agenda and that victims/survivors will be treated with relevant attention. Still, the UN Women study on the impact of COVID-19 on VAW service provision identified very specific barriers faced by women, especially women belonging to ethnic minority groups, in accessing relevant protection and services. The recommendations generated by the study will be incorporated and addressed into the broader government-coordinated study on the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19.

During the reporting period, the legislative amendments envisaging inclusion of VAWG/DV component in the programmes of educational institutions from 1 September 2020 have entered into force. Relevant activities directed at facilitating the above-mentioned process will be carried out in 2021.

UNJP's partners – the Georgian Rugby Union (GRU) and the NGO Kakheti Regional Development Foundation (KRDF) – continued with awareness-raising meetings targeting boys (GRU) and youth (KRDF)

³⁵ See at: http://gov.ge/files/41_76497_133739_COVIDRESPONSEREPORTGoG_ENG.pdf

promoting zero tolerance for violence against women. The majority of meetings took place virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, although some face-to-face meetings also took place. Throughout the year, the UNJP reached out directly to some 450 boys with awareness-raising interventions through the GRU component across Georgia and to some 319 youth representatives through KRDF interventions in the region of Kakheti.

In the run-up to the Parliamentary Elections in October 2020, the UNJP commissioned an international expert to strengthen the role of the media in advocating the empowerment of women and gender equality. More specifically, the consultant conducted a training dedicated to the topic of VAWP for 30 journalists from around Georgia. Eva Barboni, founder and CEO of Atalanta, conducted the training. She spoke to Georgian journalists on the types of VAWP, the need for fair and gender-sensitive reporting on the matter, various aspects to consider, disinformation and other important questions.

As such, the reporting year saw substantial progress in the Government's engagement in information dissemination about VAWG/DV and essential services for survivors of violence aimed at increased awareness and more favourable social norms, attitudes and behaviours among Georgia's general population. As a result, the number of restraining orders issued amounted to 11,164, a 9 per cent increase as compared to the previous year, while the number of calls related to VAWG/DV made to the unified emergency number 112 amounted to 18,848 as compared to 18,242 in 2019.³⁶ The 112 online app was downloaded by 14,161 users³⁷, while no data is available in terms of how many people have used it to report VAWG/DV. It should be noted, that reportedly, the unified emergency 112 has been experiencing technical problems throughout the year due to the high number of callers related to COVID-19 resulting in the inability to reach the operators. This may have affected the number of calls received.

The social norms and attitudes towards gender and VAWG/DV issues have also slightly improved as compared to 2017. According to a recent study by UNDP, UNFPA and PROMUNDO on Men, Women and Gender Relations in Georgia: Perceptions and Attitudes, based on the methodology of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), some 13.6 per cent of women and 18 per cent of men still believe that there are times (as compared to 31 and 22 per cent in 2017)³⁸ can be justified in certain circumstances.

³⁶ Source: Official communication with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia #454331 dated 26.02.2021

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ EU/UN Women/GEOSTAT National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia (2018)

OUTCOME 3 – Advanced gender equality and reproductive rights, including for the most vulnerable women, adolescents and youth

Despite the pandemics, UNJP has advanced policy advocacy in response to SDG 5 and secured the government of Georgia's commitment to the agenda of International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The COVID-19 had a huge impact on the political and public discourse, mainly concentrating on the health-related consequences and opting out other social issues and challenges, such as exacerbated social consequences of the pandemics, increase of violence, inequalities, etc. The new reality more than ever necessitated introducing innovative solutions to the existing challenges. Being able to quickly shift the majority of the activities online has proved pivotal for maintaining the UNJP's agenda in the spotlight of the policy and public discourse.

Within outcome 3, UNJP managed to advance gender responsive Family Policies through advocating for maternity, paternity, and parental leaves in the country. The TA was provided to GoG to prepare such strategic documents as Voluntary National Report (VNR) and Human Rights Strategy, ensuring that the ICPD agenda is reflected and integrated. Supporting the Task Force on harmful practices of Early/Child marriage has been transferred to a thematic working group under the GoG, which highlights a full commitment of the government to achieve SDG target 5.3.

Moreover, UNJP has created quality knowledge resources for grounding policy advocacy and programmatic interventions. The flagship researches spearheaded in the reporting period were dedicated to the harmful practices of Early/Child Marriage (2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey-MICS data in-depth analysis on the issues)³⁹ and overall perceptions and attitudes towards gender equality in the country⁴⁰.

UNJP continued successful cooperation on the institutional level. The pilot of the health system response to VAW/GBV has been analyzed and relevant recommendations elaborated. Integration of the issues related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), GE, and healthy lifestyle in the formal education system has been sustained through working on the textbooks and mainstreaming SRH issues in the training sessions of the resource persons involved in the "New School" reform. Moreover, the PDO has continued its groundbreaking work to monitor the exercise of SRHR within the framework of the overall human rights monitoring framework.

Responding to the newly created reality as a result of pandemics, cooperation has been established with the Public Broadcaster of Georgia to support awareness-raising on male involvement for gender equality, as well as for assisting distance education on healthy lifestyle and SRHR. Great emphasis has been made to design and implement various communication campaigns using social platforms. For instance, the communication for the elimination of the harmful practice of Child Marriage has been mostly shifted on Facebook, tweeter, and through the means of traditional media. Moreover, new partnerships established within the reporting period enabled diversification of the channels of information provided to the wider spectrum of the society and the involvement of new allies in the process of supporting gender equality. For example, the cooperation with private sector representatives, such as the Body Shop and the Avon, opened new avenues for escalating

³⁹ <https://georgia.unfpa.org/en/publications/child-marriage-georgia>

⁴⁰ <https://georgia.unfpa.org/en/publications/men-women-and-gender-relations-georgia-public-perceptions-and-attitudes>

awareness-raising campaigns on Child Marriage, gender equality, etc.

Output 3.1. Strengthened evidence-based policy advocacy to advance an enabling environment for gender equality and reproductive rights and the prevention of violence and harmful practices against women and girls

Throughout 2020, UNJP continued creating a favorable policy environment to advance gender equality and reproductive rights and to prevent violence and harmful practices against women and girls. In the reporting period, several strategic documents have been developed with UNFPA's TA and input, such as the second Voluntary National Report (VNR). Furthermore, UNJP has been involved in the process of drafting the National Strategy on Human Rights. Subsequently, the key issues under the ICPD agenda have been substantially integrated into the draft document, thus, sustaining ICPD priorities on the policy agenda of GoG. To prepare a solid foundation for the Gender Equality chapter of NHRAP 2021-2023, the UNJP provided TA to the AoG and the Human Rights Council to assess the implementation of the gender equality related chapters of the NHRAP 2018-2020. Based on the exercise, the institutional experience of the state entities has been collected, the action plan has been evaluated according to a new Government Decree, best international practices have been compiled, and the ground for the preparation of a new action plan has been prepared. Moreover, the UNJP contributed to the Labour Code reform implemented in the country. More specifically, UNJP's advocacy has resulted in the introduction of paternity and parental leaves in the Labour Code of Georgia. Even though the package offered by UNFPA was not fully shared by the Government, the introduced amendments can still be considered as the step forward to supporting gender responsive Family Policies to support women's economic participation and advancing gender equality in general, however, further advocacy for the expansion of the policy measures is still needed.

In 2020, UNFPA as the chair of the UN Theme Group on Youth Issues has led the coordinated UN work in the area of Youth Policy and Strategy development. To ensure integration of the young people's needs in policy documents, the UNJP supported the elaboration of the national Youth Index. The document collected comprehensive information about the youth situation so that the policymakers and other interested stakeholders can evaluate the impact of the youth policy and achieve progress and make relevant strategic decisions for the comprehensive development of youth in the country. The document has been finalized and handed over to the National Youth Agency for further utilization. UNJP advocated that Youth Index becomes a solid monitoring framework for the Youth Strategy and is regularly updated in the country with reasonable intervals.

To ensure the sustainability of the work, the Task Force on Elimination of the Harmful Practices of Child Marriage, collaboratively chaired by UNFPA and CGE has been handed over to a newly established Thematic Working Group on Harmful Practices under the CGE. Thus, UNJP continued providing TA and enhanced ownership of GOG to lead the work. In the reporting period, the analysis of the institutional gaps was elaborated, and in consultation with the relevant line ministries, the Action Plan for the elimination of Child Marriage was developed. The CGE has committed to integrate the document into the overall Human Rights Action Plan in 2021.

To support evidence-based policymaking, UNJP generated several key knowledge resources. The in-depth analysis of 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) data has been spearheaded on harmful practice of Child Marriage. As a result, the fact sheet was developed and handed over to relevant line ministries and was used on advocacy events on multiple occasions. Through cooperation between UNFPA and UNDP, the research - “Men, Women, and Gender Relations in Georgia: Public Perceptions and Attitudes” - has been carried out based on IMAGES methodology. The research enabled comparison of the data over the last 7 years and depicted positive changes in the population’s attitudes towards Gender Equality, women’s political participation and economic empowerment, men’s role as involved fathers and responsible partners, etc. However, it is also noteworthy that the positive shift is largely attributed to the younger generation, which reinforces the need to further invest in the development and awareness of young people in Georgia. Moreover, it is notable that though favorable attitudes towards a more equitable society have been demonstrated, the behavior change of the population still lags behind.

UNFPA/Georgia along with the other UNCT agencies, supported the AoG to carry out the large-scale research to analyze how Georgia managed the pandemic-related crisis, identify shortcomings, assess the actions of state institutions and provide recommendations on how to enhance their capacities for more effective management of the projected next waves of the pandemic. Looking beyond the COVID-19 challenge, the research also recommended longer-term structural adjustments to build the resilience of Georgian institutions, economy and society to future crises. Partnering with UNDP and UN Women, UNFPA provided TA to prepare RGA, as well as the section on COVID-19’s Impact on Women in the Healthcare Sector in Georgia.

Output 3.2. Strengthened capacity of public organizations and national human rights institutions to advance gender equality and reproductive rights and prevent gender-based violence and harmful practices

Strengthening health system response to GBV/VAW has been one of the priorities for UNJP in 2020. During the reporting period, the pilot project, implemented under the leadership of the AtipFund, has been evaluated. The evaluation aimed to explore the knowledge, attitude, and skills of medical personnel regarding GBV/VAW and evaluate the institutional development of the health sector and its ability to respond to GBV/VAW cases effectively. Moreover, the pilot scrutinized the challenges facing by the system in preventing and responding to GBV/VAW to draw policy recommendations. For the quality assurance purpose, the evaluation was carried out in consultation with the UNFPA EECARO expert. The evaluation exercise revealed that the program was effective and efficient and tackled the major gaps existing in the system by improving the knowledge and perceptions of the healthcare workers on GBV/VAW. Moreover, the evaluation demonstrated that significant institutional disparities have been eradicated by elaborating SOPs and by amending medical forms. However, the recommendations pinpointed several challenges facing the system, such as the need for further legislative amendments to address the confidentiality clause, the necessity to carry out wider awareness-raising campaigns, the lack of administrative data, and the requirement to foster multi-sectoral cooperation.

UNJP continued strengthening the PDO to monitor SRHR of women and girls within the frameworks of the Human Rights monitoring framework. In 2020, the PDO finalized and released the findings of the Country

Inquiry (CI) on SRHR of women in psychiatric facilities. The report was discussed with the representatives of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (MoLHSA) that expressed a commitment to address gaps identified by the CI. Consequently, the PDO and UNFPA were requested to design and implement special training on SRHR of women with disabilities for medical personnel of the psychiatric and state care facilities. Thus, the online training - “Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women with psycho-social needs” was conducted for representatives of ten psychiatric facilities, five community houses, and three boarding houses. Considering the need for further training, the PDO designed an online course on SRHR of Women with Psycho-social Needs. This accredited online course is a joint product of UNFPA Georgia CO, the PDO, and the State Medical University (TSMU) and is uploaded on the TSMU on-line platform for continuous medical education. The work on this course was carried out in close cooperation with the UNFPA component under the UN Joint Programme “Transforming Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities in Georgia”, funded by the Joint SDG Fund.

To ensure the accountability of the relevant state agencies, the PDO prepared a dedicated chapter on SRHR in its annual Parliamentary Report. The chapter includes recommendations related to maternal health, access to contraception, abortion, comprehensive sexuality education, etc. The PDO’s recommendations also supported the process of amending the Law of Georgia on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which now includes the specific clause on SRHR of women with disabilities and their access to reproductive healthcare services. Overall, the PDO has integrated the methodology of the country inquiry into its monitoring framework and has assumed the responsibility to monitor SRHR of women and girls regularly. The capacity of the staff of the gender equality Department of the PDO has been substantially strengthened to perform the watchdog function and act as spokespersons and advocates for advancing women’s and girls’ SRHR.

The UNJP continued providing support to the MoES to integrate issues related to SRH, healthy lifestyle, gender equality, etc. in the formal education system of the country. In 2020, substantial work has been led to improve the quality of the school textbooks in Biology and Civic Education for the grade IX. Therefore, online meetings were held with a group of experts involved in the textbook evaluation process to discuss the peculiarities of the issues that need to be reflected in the textbooks. Through UNJP’s TA, the meetings were also conducted with the group of textbook authors, when the specific lesson scenarios were discussed. Moreover, the NGO Tanadgoma, UNFPA’s Implementing Partner, was involved in the review of Biology and Civic Education textbooks for the grade IX submitted to the MoES for certification. In 2020, UNFPA also supported the “New School Model” reform led by the MoES. An online workshop was conducted for Biology experts, so-called “Couches”, who are responsible for advising teachers in specific subjects. The attendees (24) were trained on the specificities of the topics integrated into the new Biology standard and specific exercises were discussed.

In preparation for an assessment of the comprehensive sexuality education implemented in the country, media monitoring was conducted to elaborate on the frequency and the mode of coverage of SRHR issues in Georgian media. The final report of the media analysis will be produced early in 2021.

Output 3.3. Strengthened public advocacy for enhancing de facto gender equality and promoting SRHR

Leading Gender Transformative programming has been one of the priorities for UNJP in 2020. The majority of the activities within the frameworks of MenCare Georgia have been spearheaded online due to the pandemics. MenCare Georgia not only maintained the spotlight in 2020 but managed to turn the challenge into the opportunity through engaging in new partnerships and implementing various innovative projects. More specifically:

- ❖ In 2020, cooperation has been established with the Public Broadcaster of Georgia to air 14 videos featuring campaign male activists and celebrities reading short stories of famous authors. All the videos were uploaded on the MenCare Facebook page with over 20 000 people seeing and sharing the stories;
- ❖ Cooperation has been sustained with one of the most famous Georgian online media platforms - On.ge. Through the initiative – Fathers and Children: Stories from the Isolation – Georgian men shared their tips on how to be involved fathers and responsible partners. Moreover, the series of online viral quizzes on different stages of fatherhood and daily experiences were elaborated and widely shared on social media. The quizzes engaged a wide audience in the conversation on fatherhood and the importance of parenting.
- ❖ The Father’s Day in Georgia was celebrated online with posting photos showcasing fathers and their children and the quotes about parenthood. The photos were widely shared on Facebook reaching more than 70,000 people and generating 13,372 reactions, 753 comments, and 499 shares.
- ❖ Within the frameworks of Father's Day, the MenCare campaign partnered with a delivery service “Glovo” to deliver 1000 Fathers’ Day greeting cards to their clients in Tbilisi and Kutaisi. Moreover, Glovo offered a one-day 20% discount to the clients and initiated its communication campaign supporting male involvement for gender equality.
- ❖ A Facebook page – Fathers’ Group – has been set up to encourage men to get involved in their children’s upbringing and families. The group quickly attracted a large number of people and turned into a hub for Georgian men to discuss various issues, including personal experiences on fatherhood and partnerships. The group currently lists 5 000 members. Fathers’ Group attracted media interest and several TV shows dedicated air time to discuss the aims and the successes of the group. Series of video stories showcasing men at different stages of fatherhood, sharing their experiences on childcare and shared household responsibilities, were prepared and disseminated through social media. The videos attracted a wide audience reaching more than 76,000 people and generating 14,600 reactions on Facebook. The public perceptions based on the reactions were very positive and welcoming.
- ❖ Men Talking to Men (MTM) training sessions continued in Kakheti and Samegrelo target regions. It is remarkable that this initiative has been further expanded in two new regions within the framework of the UN Joint Program “EU 4 Gender Equality: Challenging Gender Stereotypes and Practices in the EaP countries” funded by the European Union. The training module has been updated based on the recent research findings and strengthened the focus on gender stereotypes and toxic masculinities. Within the framework of UNJP, a new cohort of local facilitators has been trained to lead the MTM sessions reaching more than 40 men in the target regions. MTM was conducted for ethnic minority young men. ToT and follow-up sessions were conducted for local activists, NGOs, and media representatives. Moreover, education videos were prepared for the MTM participants to be integrated into future training sessions.

Despite the pandemics, 2020 turned out to be remarkable for MenCare Georgia with more social media engagement than ever before. MenCare Georgia is one of the most active Facebook pages on social issues in Georgia. The page actively generates organic reach and engagement from the public (75% of all reach and

engagement is organic). Overall, the content posted on MenCare Georgia ranged from local videos, blog posts, photos, posters to international posts from various organizations, and Facebook Pages. The followers of MenCare Georgia has increased by 27% and has now reached 51,086, with the biggest age group is 25-34 – 46%. An average daily reach of the page was 16,685 (meaning 16,685 people daily saw this or that Facebook post). The total engagement for 2020 was as follows: 120,000 Reactions, most reaction received was Like; 4,868 Comments; 7756 Shares; 1,170,000 Video Views; 114 Posts have been published; Consequently, 454,142 unique people reached by the MenCare Georgia social platform in 2020.

UNFPA continued establishing new partnerships and involving celebrities and the private sector to promote gender equality and men engagement. In 2020, UNJP cooperated with Georgian Football Federation and Football Club “Locomotive Tbilisi”. The collaboration framework includes advancing gender equality and supporting the national Campaign – MenCare Georgia. As football is one of the most popular sports in Georgia, this partnership helps reach out to the wider audience of the general population, especially, youth and men, as well as mass media. Georgian football players were actively involved in different events and media/social media activities, including Father’s Day, 16 days of activism against GBV, etc.

Moreover, building on the results obtained by UNJP in the field of advancing gender equality agenda, UNFPA Georgia has spearheaded some flagship initiatives and partnerships within the framework of the Country Programme. These initiatives resonate with the UN JP agenda and reinforce advocacy and communication for the elimination of harmful practices and women and girls’ empowerment by involving new stakeholders in the process:

- ❖ UNFPA Georgia, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Liberty Bank initiated the project for rural women to address the gap in awareness on SRHR and women’s rights issues. The informational brochures prepared within the framework of the UNJP, were distributed during the informational sessions, so that rural women could be equipped to act as the knowledge multipliers in their communities;
- ❖ Advancing advocacy initiated by UNJP for the elimination of harmful practices of Early/Child Marriage, UNFPA Georgia, the GoG and the Body Shop initiated the communication campaign to eliminate harmful practices and establishing scholarships to adolescent girls at risk of Child Marriage.
- ❖ UNFPA in cooperation with the National Library of Georgia, opened the Equality Corner in Khulo Municipality Library. The opening of the Equality Corners in the remote areas of Georgia is a part of a wide-scale advocacy work led by UNFPA for the elimination of harmful practices and empowerment of adolescents and youth. The documentary photo exhibition “Girls from the Future” prepared within the framework of the UNJP was displayed there to reinforce the importance of empowering girls.
- ❖ Within the framework of the International Day of a Girl Child, celebrated worldwide on October 11, UNFPA and the Government of Georgia initiated a campaign “Equal Opportunities – Equal Future”. The campaign videos were prepared to feature ethnically Georgian, Azeri, Arminian youngsters, girls with disabilities, and Child Marriage survivors talking about their aspirations and breaking stereotypes. Resorting on the experience accumulated in UNJP, the scenarios were reviewed and adjusted considering the recent findings of the surveys conducted in the field of Early/Child Marriage;
- ❖ UNFPA Georgia established innovative cooperation with the Avon Cosmetics Georgia to pave way for the engagement of the private sector in the fight for gender equality. The purpose of cooperation between UNFPA and the Avon Georgia is to eradicate harmful practice of child marriage through the

empowerment of adolescent girls and young women. It has to be highlighted that it was the first precedent when UNFPA Georgia received a direct financial contribution from the private sector to run the awareness raising campaign on this issue.

OVERALL, the progress towards the achievement of the UNJP's outcomes has been significant in 2020. Notwithstanding pandemic situation in the country, UNJP managed to lead the policy and public discourse on women and girls' SRHR, harmful practices, comprehensive sexuality education, and gender equality. New partnerships have been secured with the private sector representatives to ensure the wider outreach and engagement of people as the allies of gender equality.

UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality

2020 NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT

Annex 1: Indicator Based Performance Assessment

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1	Enhanced women's political and economic empowerment	Proportion of women to men in the Parliament / local councils	11.3% in parliament; 11.6% in local self-governance (2014)	16% in parliament; local self-governance: 14%	<u>Target has been met</u> Following 2020 parliamentary election, the share of women elected to parliament is 20%		Central Election Committee (CEC)
		Increase in Women's employment and economic activity	Employment rate - women 47.3%, men 62.1% (2013); economic activity rate - women 55.4%, men 76.6% (2013). [Revised GEOSTAT methodology] Employment rate - women 33.3%, men 46.7% (2013); Economic activity rate - women 43.6%, men 65.4% (2013)].	Employment rate - women 50%; economic activity rate - women 57%. [Revised GEOSTAT methodology] Employment rate - women 36.1%; economic activity - women 45%. Calculated based on the average % point difference between the old and new data for the years 2016-2019].	<u>Target has not been met</u> [Revised GEOSTAT methodology; former methodology no longer available]. Employment rate - women 33.9%, men 49.5% (2020); economic activity rate - women 40.4%, men 62% (2020).	According to the new standard, self-employed persons who are not market-oriented and produce agricultural products mainly (more than 50%) for their own consumption will no longer be considered as self-employed. As a result of the recalculation of the data caused by the introduction of the new standard (2019-2020), the unemployment rate has increased and the employment rate has decreased. Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the positive trend in job growth among women has been reversed and the target was thus not met.	GeoStat - Household Budget Survey, Labor Survey, Statistical information on employment and earnings
Output 1.1.	1.1. Duty bearers and rights holders are better able to advance gender equality	institutional mechanism for GE at legislature operational	No	Y	<u>Target has been met</u>		Parliamentary website GEC web-site
		institutional mechanism for GE at executive operational	No	Y	<u>Target has been met</u>		AoG website
		Percent of population aware of GE issues; Percent of women and men supporting women's engagement in political economic and social life	63.8% of population aware of GE issues (2013);	Increase by 10 % (cumulative 2016-2020)	<u>Target has been met</u> 86.3% of population (88% of women and 84% of men) do not consider that when women exercise their rights, they are in fact depriving men of their rights (UNDP/UNFPA 2019 survey); 60% of Georgian population think that women's engagement in politics in Georgia will have positive effect on the country (UNDP/UNFPA 2019 survey). 10 percentage points increase since 2013.	The target has been met in 2019. No new survey has been conducted.	Information in Media; Public awareness surveys; Reports/ Assessments by CSOs
		Proportion of women (to men) participating as candidates in parliamentary and local elections	N/A	30 % of the all candidates	<u>Target has been met</u> Women comprised 42,8 percent of all candidates (44.3% on proportional lists; 21.7% for majoritarian seats).		CEC
Activity Result 1.1.1.	1.1.1. Human Rights Inter-Agency Coordination Council (HRIAC), its working group on Gender Equality and the dedicated secretariat structure have a greater capacity and positioning as a gender equality advocate	GE Working Group institutionalized, organized and effective (Y/N)	No	Y	<u>Target has been met</u>		AoG website
		HRIAC leads the next NAP(s) preparation and adoption (Y/N)	No	Y	<u>Target has been met</u> NHR Strategy drafted and awaiting adoption; Human Rights Action Plan in development.		GEC Activity Report

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Activity Result 1.1.2.	1.1.2. Gender Equality Council has a greater capacity and positioning to champion policy change on gender equality	Number of legislative and policy initiatives advocated by the GEC	0	10 initiatives, successful 20% (cumulative 2016-2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> By 2019, a total of 19 initiatives were advocated (successful 15 (79%)). Parliament committees completed GIAs; the draft Gender Equality Concept was written; the simplified GIA checklist for the parliament was developed; GEC advocated for legislative amendments supporting women's increased political participation in electoral code; Amendments to the Labor Code of Georgia were elaborated and discussed with stakeholders and will be presented to parliament in 2020; GEC also conducted gender self-assessment of the Parliament of Georgia; Two thematic inquiries on barriers to women's economic empowerment were conducted with recommendations issued to state agencies. In addition, 2 quotas in GRB have been completed in 2020.		GEC Annual Report 2019
Activity Result 1.1.3.	1.1.3. Public better aware of GE issues and supportive to women's engagement in political, economic and social life	Number of media coverages reflecting adequately GE and women's rights issues	903 media articles in 2014 incl. radio, TV, internet and press (2014)	a) Increase by 10% b) Y	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> a) 2476 (i.e. 174.197% increase from the baseline); b) Yes.		Media monitoring
Activity Result 1.1.4.	1.1.4. In-party and inter-party machinery supporting women is strengthened	Women candidates running for parliamentary elections supported by UNDP	N/A	40	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> 42 women candidates from across the political spectrum attended the training sessions in media communication, messaging, and work with the camera to strengthen their skills and enable better visibility. A media roundtable was held, uniting women candidates and representatives of main media channels.		Activity Reports
Activity Result 1.1.5.	1.1.5. Public - including first-time voters, are better aware of the importance of equal political representation and has increased capacity to create a bottom-up demand for women's political representation	Number of awareness-raising measures promoting gender equality in politics	N/A	National - 1; Local - 3	<u>Target has been met</u> National: 1. A national-wide public outreach campaign was held to raise young persons' interest in engaging on the questions of equality in politics. Through a series of workshops for selected applicants, 45 young people from the UNJP target regions of Samegrelo and Kakheti learned and discussed the electoral system and explored how to use participatory approaches to break down the barriers women and other underrepresented groups face in entering politics. 2. UNJP awarded two local CSOs a grant to conduct a social media monitoring project to identify, categorize and address gender bias in the political campaign. Local: 10 local advocacy micro-projects and 2 trainings were funded, sensitizing local populations with the importance of equal representation.		Activity Reports

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Output 1.2.	1.2. Gender responsive policies applied by national and local authorities	Number of gender sensitive national and/or local programmes/policies approved	N/A	10 (cumulative 2016 - 2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> 20 gender sensitive national and/or local programmes/policies have been approved in 2016-2019. Additional activities in 2020 included adoption of the Gender Responsive Budgeting principles into budgets of the Parliament and MoESCS.		AoG website Government decisions Activity Reports
		The proportion of implementation of NAP actions;	N/A	80% (8/10 of all NAP actions) (cumulative 2016-2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> 93% in 2019.	Status update on GE NAP 2018-2020 has not been produced yet. Target was met and surpassed in 2019.	AoG website
Activity Result 1.2.1	1.2.1. Target executive branch agencies (MOF, MOA, MES, MRDI, MESD, CSB) have greater capacities to implement the GE NAP	Proportion of activities from NAP implemented by each target institution	N/A	80% (8/10 of all NAP actions) (cumulative 2016-2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> MoF - 80% - partially fulfilled, MRDI - 100% completed, MFA - 90 % completed, MOH - 80% partially fulfilled, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development - 90% partially fulfilled, MES - 95% partially fulfilled.	Status update on GE NAP 2018-2020 has not been produced yet. Target was met and surpassed in 2019.	GEC Report; AoG website
		Number of capacity building measures, bringing along measurable change in understanding of respective issues;	N/A	15 (cumulative 2016 - 2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> In 2016-2019, a total of 36 measures were taken. In 2020, the following activities were conducted: 1) training on GIA with Parliamentary Research Centre; 2) Gender sensitivity analysis trainings with GEC and MoECSC; 3) Care economy round-table policy discussions held with representatives of LSGs and national institutions.		Activity Reports
Activity Result 1.2.2.	1.2.2. Gender Equality institutionalized in the standard judicial training curriculum and Courts collect sex disaggregated data	number (or percentage) of judges and court staff trained in GE	N/A	40 (cumulative)	<u>Target has been met</u> 40 judges and court staff were trained in 2016-2020, including 14 judges and 2 court staff in 2020.		HSOJ report
		Courts produce sex disaggregated data	No	Y	<u>Target has been met</u>		Court Statistics
Activity Result 1.2.3.	1.2.3. Local Authorities consider gender differences while planning and delivering local services (in collaboration with UN Women and UNFPA)	number of LG units incorporating gender indicators in their programmes	N/A	5 (cumulative 2016- 2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> In 10 target municipalities, the WCF has started the evaluation of the gender-responsive indicators in Municipal Development Documents.		Tbilisi City Hall website
		Analysis of the local budgets from Gender perspective demonstrating the positive dynamics	No	Y	<u>Target has been met</u> 45 out of 100 gender-responsive proposals have been approved and included in municipal budgets in two target regions - Kakheti and Samegrelo.		Activity reports
		Women candidates running for local elections supported by UNDP	N/A	N/A	N/A		

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
		Number of initiatives advocated by the Women Councilors Forum with Regional and/or central authorities;	N/A	5 (cumulative 2016- 2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> 11 initiatives took place between 2016-2020. In 2020, two Task Force meetings were held on 1. Institutional development of the Task Force and 2. Preschool education reform progress on the regional level. Three regional meetings (in lieu of the 2021 Women Councilors' Forum) were held in Zoom. Topics discussed included Leadership School Program and the task force activities. Leadership School took place online, enabling enrollment from across Georgia, with 95 participants benefiting from the training, of which 89 received the completion certificates. The focus of the training was the preparation for the upcoming local elections in 2021.		Activity Reports
Output 1.3.	1.3. Local women empowered economically and politically through capacity building and engagement in local decision making	Number of women that improved their economic/social conditions as a result of the programme;	N/A	At least 180 (cumulative 2016 - 2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> 1739 women have improved their economic conditions (2016-2019). In addition, 465 women (2020) have improved their economic conditions – 413 women trained at VETs were employed. 16 women supported by the programme received funding either from State and donor programmes. Moreover 31 women's microbusinesses were funded and 5 women formed a cooperative.		Activity Reports
Activity Result 1.3.1	1.3.1. Women workforce better equipped with income generation skills through tailored professional education programs offered at VET centers and more women engaged in agricultural cooperatives	Number of women trained	N/A	700 (cumulative 2016 - 2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> 2329 women were trained (2016 - 2019). In addition, 788 women (2020) successfully completed short-term vocational education courses in 35 different professions across all partner institutions. 16.2 % (128) of all women training participants were IDP women; 2.7% (21) of all women training participants were from ethnic minorities.		Desk review
		Number of cooperatives formed and operational;	N/A	5 (cumulative 2016- 2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> 7 agriculture cooperatives were formed in 2016-2019. In addition, 1 agriculture cooperative was formed by women farmers in 2020.		Field visits/observations/interviews with beneficiaries
		Ratio of women employed as a result of the trainings	N/A	50%	<u>Target has been met</u> Overall employment rate - 52.4% IDPs - 42.2% Ethnic minorities - 28.6%		VET Institution reports
Activity Result 1.3.2	1.3.2. Local women have better entrepreneurial/life skills and enjoy improved access to financial resources through micro credits and/or government programs	Number of women applied for financing;	N/A	100 (cumulative 2016 -2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> 507 women applied for financing in 2016-2019. In addition, 36 women applied for financing in 2020.		Activity Reports
		Proportion of projects financed;	N/A	30%	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> 44% (16)		Activity Reports

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Activity Result 1.3.3	1.3.3. Community mobilisation results in enhanced women's participation and activity in local decision making.	Number of initiatives advocated by active women at the local level;	N/A	200 (cumulative 2016 - 2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> 336 initiatives were submitted in 2016-2019. 100 initiatives were submitted in 2020.		Activity Reports
		Proportion of initiatives that will be adopted/implemented by local authorities as a result of women's advocacy;	N/A	30%	<u>Target has been met</u> 45% (45 out of 100 initiatives).		Activity Reports
Activity Result 1.3.4	1.3.4. Successful cases of women's empowerment promoted and replicated outside target regions	Number of initiatives implemented outside the target regions	N/A	10 (cumulative 2016 - 2020)	<u>Target has been met and surpassed</u> 12 initiatives were implemented outside the target regions in 2016-2019. In addition, 7 initiatives outside the target regions (5 initiatives from AWF and 2 from CSRDG) were implemented in 2020. AWF - meetings/seminars with farmers; meetings at public schools; interviewing; distance trainings; round up meetings. CSRDG - economic microgrants; trainings in Guria (2 initiatives).		Activity Reports
Outcome 2	Enabling environment to eliminate VAWG, especially sexual and domestic violence created in Georgia	1. % change in issued protective and restrictive orders; Target 2020: 50% increase	902 restrictive orders and 87 protective orders issued in 2014 (100%).	50% increase	11,268 restraining and protective orders issued amounting to a more than a ten-fold increase		External evaluation
		2. % of change of indictments on VAWG cases, in particular DV and sexual violence crimes; Target 2020: 40% increase	516 DV and 80 rape cases in 2014 (100%)	40% increase	120%		Chief Prosecutor's Office official data
		3. % of change in the state budget allocation for the ATIPFund on DV issues by 2020; Target 2020: 20% increase	GEL538,493.89 allocated in 2014 (100%)	20% increase	77%		Official communication with the ATIPFund re budget and external evaluation report
Output 2.1	2.1. National laws and policies on VAWG, especially on sexual and domestic violence improved in line with international commitments (DEVAW, CEDAW, BPfA, Istanbul Convention)	1. Existence of an adopted and costed DV NAP	DV NAP 2013-2015 has not been costed	Yes	Achieved during the previous reporting cycle		Formal communication with the GE/VAW Commission
		2. Recommendations for amending the DV and VAWG related legislation drafted	Recommendations for amending DV and VAWG related legislation partially drafted (2015). (Second wave of amendments needed to ensure compliance of the Georgian legislation with the Convention)	Yes	Draft package developed and cleared with the GE/VAW Commission pending for submission to Parliament		Package of amendments to the DV and VAWG related legislation adopted by the Parliament.
Activity Result 2.1.1	2.1.1. Technical assistance provided to the DV Council to enhance its capacity to fulfill its mandate, i.e. coordinate and monitor implementation of the national laws and policies in the area of combating and preventing VAW/DV;	1. # of GE/VAW Commission meetings resulting in concrete follow-up actions	0	2 meetings	Yes, for example VAWG/DV issues mainstreamed in the COVID-19 communications strategy		External evaluation
		2. Regularity of reports on the implementation of the relevant sections of the VAWG/DV NAP developed by the GE/VAW Commission members and submitted to the Commission	0	Annual	CEDAW sixth periodic report and GREVIO first submission submitted		GE/VAW Commission meeting minutes

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Activity Result 2.1.2	2.1.2. Technical assistance provided to the Commission to enhance its capacity for the evaluation of the VAWG/DV NAP 2016-2017 and facilitate informed and participatory process of drafting and implementation, monitoring and reporting in relation to the subsequent VAWG/DV NAP (2018 - 2020)	1. # of NAP objectives implemented as per annual progress reports on the implementation of the new VAWG/DV NAP.	0	Yes	Yes		Annual progress reports by Commission on the implementation of DV NAP (2018 - 2020)
Activity Result 2.1.3	2.1.3. Technical assistance provided to the Commission to enhance its capacity to carry out analysis and prepare needed amendments to VAWG, especially sexual and domestic violence related legislation and relevant policies	1. Existence of amendments to the VAWG related legislation and relevant policies drafted by the Commission in line with international commitments and best international practices (DEVAW CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, CAHVIO) and submitted to the DV Council.	No	Yes	Draft package developed and cleared with the GE/VAW Commission pending for submission to Parliament		Formal communication with the GE/VAW Commission on the receipt of the draft legislative amendments for the submission to the Parliament of Georgia for adoption.
Activity Result 2.1.4	2.1.4. Technical assistance provided to the Commission to enhance its capacity to improve data collection and analysis in the field of VAWG, especially sexual and domestic violence	1. Concept on data collection and analysis system developed in line with the UNECE minimum set of gender indicators relevant to VAWG and submitted to the Commission for approval;	No	Yes	In progress		Concept on the data collection and analysis system
Output 2.2	2.2. Capacity of key policy and service delivery institutions strengthened to promote and protect women's human rights to life free from sexual violence, VAWG and DV	1.# of shelters for DV victims/survivors functional and funded from the State Budget by 2020 (Target: 6 shelters operational by 2020)	4 shelters in 2015	Yes			External evaluation
		2. # of crisis centers operational and funded from local budgets Target 2020: 3 crisis centers	No ATIPFunded crisis centers exist as of 2014	Yes	5		External evaluation
		3. Existence of specialized state provided services for sexual violence victims/survivors delivered in line with the Istanbul Convention requirements; Target 2020: Specialized state provided services for sexual violence victims/survivors established and functional in line with the Istanbul Convention requirements	No specialized services for sexual violence victims/survivors exist by 2014.	Yes	Yes		External evaluation
		4. LGBTI issues mainstreamed in capacity development interventions of key government stakeholders working on violence (MoIA, Chief Prosecutor's Office, GBA, Judiciary)	LGBTI concerns are not integrated into the capacity development interventions of key government stakeholders working on violence by 2015	Yes	Yes		External evaluation

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
		5. Existence of institutionalized mandatory training programs on VAWG, in particular DV and sexual violence for judges, prosecutors, and lawyers; Target 2020: Mandatory training programs on VAWG, in particular DV and sexual violence for judges, prosecutors, and lawyers developed and institutionalized;	Sexual violence issues are not covered in training programs for judges, prosecutors and lawyers only exist on DV issues as of 2014	Yes	Yes		Formal communication with the HSOJ, Chief Prosecutor's Office and GBA
		6. The mandate of social workers expanded to respond to DV cases by 2020;	Social workers only engage in DV cases where juveniles are direct victims/survivors as of 2014	Yes	Yes		Formal communication with the MoLHSA / SSA
Activity Result 2.2.1	2.2.1 Capacity of patrol and district police officers strengthened to ensure efficient response to VAWG and DV cases	1. Existence of curricula for future patrol and district police included in the regular training programme of the Police Academy	Yes	Yes	Yes		Formal communication with the Police Academy and the MoIA
		2. Number of district and patrol police officers trained on DV issues. Target 2020: At least 300 police officers trained	0	300 police officers	107		Periodic reports by the Implementing Partner and external evaluation report
Activity Result 2.2.2	2.2.2 Capacity of criminal police strengthened to ensure efficient response to VAWG, in particular sexual violence cases;	1. Existence of curricula for criminal police officers on VAWG, in particular sexual and domestic violence developed	No	Yes	Yes		External evaluation report.
		2. At least 100 criminal police officers trained based on the newly developed curriculum	0	100 criminal police officers	100		Official correspondence with the MoIA
		3. Standard operating procedures for criminal police in relation to response to VAWG cases developed and enforced by 2020	No	Yes	Yes		SOP document
Activity Result 2.2.3	2.2.3 Support the Ministry of Internal Affairs provided in the establishment and development of a specialized unit/division to oversee investigations into and response to VAWG, in particular sexual violence and DV cases and analyze relevant data;	1. Decree of the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia drafted establishing the specialized unit/division including its terms of reference	No	Yes	Yes		Decree document
Activity Result 2.2.4	2.2.4 Support the Supreme Court of Georgia provided through the analysis and capacity development of the common courts of Georgia to generalize	1. Analysis of domestic violence cases heard by the common courts system of Georgia conducted and recommendations developed to ensure common practice;	No	Yes	Yes		Analysis of domestic violence cases and recommendations

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
	judicial practice on VAWG , in particular sexual violence and DV cases;	2. Based on the recommendations drafted to ensure common practice on VAWG and DV cases across common courts of Georgia, a VAWG training programme for judges with a special focus on sexual violence and domestic violence developed and included into the High School of Justice's official curriculum.	No	Yes	Yes		Formal communication with the HSOJ
		3. # of judges trained on VAWG with a special focus on sexual and domestic violence; Target 2020: At least 100	0	100 Judges	36		Formal communication with the HSOJ
Activity Result 2.2.5	2.2.5 Support provided to the Georgian Bar Association in order to train private lawyers on VAWG, in particular sexual violence and DV as part of the mandatory continuous legal education program;	1. A curriculum for lawyers developed on VAWG with a special focus on sexual violence and DV and included in the CLE program of the GBA	No	Yes	Yes		Formal communication with the GBA
		2. # of lawyers trained based on the new curriculum; Target 2020: at least 300	0	300 lawyers	196		Report by the GBA Training Center
Activity Result 2.2.6	2.2.6 To support the ATIPFund to establish specialized services for victims/survivors of sexual violence;	1. Existence of specialized services for sexual violence victims/survivors delivered in line with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention 2. Number of beneficiaries served; Target 2020: at least 50	No	Yes	Yes		External evaluation report.
Activity Result 2.2.7	2.2.7 Support provided to the ATIPFund to establish two additional shelters (location TBD) for DV victims/survivors;	A network of six shelters for DV victims/survivors functional and funded from the State Budget by 2020;	No	Yes	Yes		External evaluation report.
Activity Result 2.2.8	2.2.8 Capacity of the PDO's GED strengthened to monitor implementation of the legislation in relation to women's rights, gender equality and VAWG;	1. % of the PDOs Gender Mainstreaming strategy and action plan 2019-2020 implemented	No	80%	Yes		PDO report on the Gender Mainstreaming strategy implementation
		2. Existence of an institutionalized training program on VAWG with the PDO Human Rights School	Yes	Yes	N/A	HR school no longer exists	Formal communication with the PDO
Activity Result 2.2.9	2.2.9 Capacity of social workers of the Social Service Agency under the MoLHSA strengthened to provide quality services to DV victims/survivors (and sexual violence if possible);	1. # of social workers trained on the efficient response to DV Target 2020: at least 50; 2. Ration of social workers / beneficiaries	No	50	N/A		Formal communication with the SSA
Activity Result 2.2.10	2.2.10 Capacity of the Legal Aid Service of Georgia strengthened to provide legal consultation and court	1. # of DV victims/survivors provided with quality legal aid services and consultations; Target 2020: at least 200	0	200	N/A		External evaluation report.

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
	representation services to VAWG and DV victims/survivors on legal matters related to being subjected to VAWG and DV;	2. # of Legal Aid Service lawyers trained on sexual and domestic violence issues; Target 2020: at least 100	No	100	N/A		Formal communication with the PLE Legal Aid Service
Activity Result 2.2.11	2.2.11 Support provided to the Chief Prosecutor's Office of Georgia to strengthen capacities of prosecutors to ensure efficient response to VAWG and DV cases;	1. Existence of a VAWG training programme for prosecutors with a special focus on sexual violence and domestic violence developed and included into the regular training programme for prosecutors. 2. # of indictments presented in VAWG/DV cases; Target 2020: at least 150	No	Yes	Yes		Formal communication with the Chief Prosecutor's Office of Georgia
		2. # of prosecutors trained on VAWG with a special focus on sexual and domestic violence; Target 2020: at least 100	N/A	100	N/A		Formal communication with the Chief Prosecutor's Office of Georgia
Activity Result 2.2.12	2.2.12 Support provided to the government in setting up a network of crisis centers for sexual violence and DV victims/survivors;	1. # of crisis centers for the victims/survivors of VAWG (sexual and domestic violence) established and operational in line with the developed crisis center standards; Tagret 2020: at least 3	0	3	3		External evaluation report.
		2. # of victims/survivors provided with quality services per year; Target 2020: at least 60	0	60	56		Crisis center statistics
Activity Result 2.2.13	2.2.13 Support provided to the government in the establishment of a system of socio-economic rehabilitation for VAWG and DV victims/survivors;	1. # of socially vulnerable DV victims/survivors accessing social protection benefits;	N/A	20	N/A		Official communication with MoLHSA
		2.# of DV victims/survivors with access to vocational education; Target 2020: at least 50	N/A	50	58		Official communication with the MoES
Output 2.3	2.3. Public awareness raised to support prevention and disclosure of the instances of VAWG and DV	1. % of change in public awareness of the existence of the DV law and relevant services in Tbilisi and target regions above the	In 2013, 50% were aware of the existence of DV hotline and 57% were aware of the existing legal protection mechanisms	20% increase	In progress		Surveys
		% of people who think it is never justifiable for a man to beat his wife, by sex;	In 2013, 69% of citizens (73.3% women and 60.5% men) believed that DV is a crime and it is never justifiable for a man to beat his wife	80% of people	13.6 per cent of women and 18 per cent of men still believe that there are times (as compared to 31 and 22 per cent in 2017) can be justified in certain circumstances		Surveys

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Activity Result 2.3.1	2.3.1 Services established in the area of VAWG and DV promoted in partnership with celebrities from the field of sport and art;	1. Number of reported cases of DV registered in the ATIPFund shelters, hotline and sexual violence services. Target 2020: At least 2500 cases	In 2014, 1182 calls on the hotline and 114 victims served in DV shelters, 0 victims/survivors of sexual violence;	At least 2500 cases	2,482	Official communication with the ATIPFund	ATIPFund narrative report
Activity Result 2.3.2	2.3.2 Zero tolerance towards VAWG and DV promoted in partnership with celebrities from the field of sport and art;	1. Number of media coverages on the problem of DV and VAWG stimulated by the project each year. Target 2020: At least 350 coverages	Up to 300 media coverages throughout 2014	350 coverages	120 UNJP-related	Media monitoring report	Media monitoring report
		2. % of service users who received information on the services through awareness raising efforts; Target 2020: At least 80%-90% service users	80% of service users received information on the services through awareness raising efforts	80-90 per cent of service users	N/A	Data will be provided at a later stage	ATIPFund narrative report
Activity Result 2.3.3	2.3.3 Partnerships established with the representatives of media to enhance their capacities in gender sensitive and ethical reporting & cooperation with the Georgian Chapter of Journalistic Ethics on raising awareness on VAW in politics;	1. Number of trained journalists and bloggers from different media outlet	N/A	50	60		Georgian Chapter of Journalistic Ethics
Activity Result 2.3.4	2.3.4 Capacity of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia strengthened to promote zero tolerance towards VAWG, in particular sexual violence and DV through integration of these issues into the national school curricula and teacher training programs;	1. Integration of VAWG, in particular DV and sexual violence issues into the general education national curriculum	No	Yes	In progress		MoES
		2. % of the proposed materials included in the general education national curriculum; Target 2020: at least 70%)	0	Yes	In progress		MoES
		3. Existence of a training program for general education teachers on VAWG issues (Y/N)	No	Yes	In progress		Teacher's Professional Development Center
Activity Result 2.3.	A qualitative study on violence against women in politics in Georgia (including women politicians not holding elected positions) conducted	1. Existence of a study on violence against women in politics	No	Yes	In progress		
Activity Result 2.3.	The findings and recommendations of the study shared with wide audiences (through press conference, social media, iconographic, etc.) in close collaboration with the GTG/Task Force for Women's Political Participation)	1. A communications plan for the dissemination of the findings and recommendations developed	No	Yes	In progress		GTG/Task Force for Women's Political Participation
Activity Result 2.3.	To provide capacity development for the Central Election Commission members and	1. Access to the CEC members to sexual harassment e-course designed by UN Women and PDO for public servants	No	Yes	Yes		Central Election Commission members and parliament

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
	parliament staffers on sexual harassment prevention and response (using UN Women /PDO updated on-line sexual harassment course) and on prevention of violence against women in politics	2. E-course on VAW in politics developed	No	Yes	No		
		3. Number of course participants	N/A	50	33		
Activity Result 2.3.	High-level advocacy meeting that will reaffirm the commitments to prevent violence against women in politics and elections (UNJP/GTG) organized	1. High level advocacy meeting organized	No	Yes	Yes		GTG
Activity Result 2.3.	Technically support the Human Rights Council Secretariat/ the Interagency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence Against women and domestic violence in the implementation of the CoE Istanbul Convention (upcoming GREVIO monitoring mission 2020), and ensuring violence against women in politics and elections is included in the reporting	1. A recruited local expert	No	Yes	Yes		GE Commission
		2. Drafted GREVIO report	No	Yes	Yes, report submitted to GREVIO		
Outcome 3	Advanced gender equality and reproductive rights, including for the most vulnerable women, adolescents and youth	3.1. Proportion of the Universal Periodic review accepted recommendations and CEDAW concluding comments related to women's rights from the previous reporting cycle implemented or actions taken	N/A	Target 2020: 50%	3.1.The UPR recommendations extensive cover issues related to gender equality, women't empowerment, harmful practices, CSE. The government is expected to accept all the recommendations provided. <u>Target on track</u>		National Strategy/Policy Papers /National Action Plans adopted; Monitoring reports of GE and DV NAPs implementation.
		3.2. Functional tracking and reporting system to follow up on the implementation of reproductive rights recommendations and obligations exist	N/A	Yes	3.2. The Country Inquiries on SRH and Well-being are regularly conducted, methodology is embedded in PDO's human rights monitoring framework. <u>Target achieved</u> has been met		PDO specialized reports published in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020; dedicated chapters on women's SRHR in the PDO Parliamentary Reports; Parliamentary Resolutions cover SRHR issued per PDO recommendations.
Output 3.1	3.1 Strengthened evidence-based policy advocacy to advance an enabling environment for gender equality and reproductive	3.1.1. National Action plan(s) addressing child marriage, FGM, gender-biased sex-selection, and violence against women adopted.	No	Yes	<u>Target has been met</u> 2021-2023 Action Plan will be elaborated in 2021.		Relevant State Documents: NAPs, Gov Decrees

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
	rights and prevention of violence and harmful practices against women, and girls;						
		3.1.2. # of studies to establish evidence on harmful practices, gender inequality and gender-based violence for informed policy making conducted and disseminated.	2	5	3.2.2. In total 5 knowledge resources produced. In 2020: Findings of the "Men, Women and Gender Relations: Perceptions and Attitudes" was disseminated; MICS data in-depth analysis on Early/Child Marriage was released. <u>Target has been met</u>		Study Report, UNJP Report
Activity Result 3.1.1	3.1.1. Evidence-based policy advocacy on issues related to GE, DV/VAW, and SRH&RR, harmful practices is strengthened	3.1.1. a) Researches to establish evidence on early marriage, FGM, gender-based violence and men and gender relations in Georgia conducted during 2015-2020	2	5 Target for 2020: Research on "Men, Women and Gender Relations: Perceptions and Attitudes" released	3.1.1. Findings of "Men, Women and Gender Relations: Perceptions and Attitudes" (IMAGES) were disseminated; MICS data in-depth analysis on Early/Child Marriage is prepared; UNJP assisted AoG to conduct second round of RGA, and Impact of Covid-19 on health- sector; <u>Target has been met</u>		Study Report, UNJP Report
		3.1.1. b) # of advocacy/capacity development events conducted to support capacity development of policy makers to address GBSS, early marriages, FGM, gender equality and reproductive rights	0	at least 10 advocacy/capacity development events held Target for 2020: At least 2 advocacy meetings conducted	Advocacy Meetings on Paternity Leave throughout the year - 1 meeting with the Gender Equality Council Advocacy Meetings on Sexuality Education - at least 2 with MoES <u>Target has been met</u>		UN JP Reports
		3.1.1. c) Working Group consisting of representatives of Gender Equality machinery at the executive and legislative branch and civil society actors elaborated legislative and policy recommendations to be integrated into the National Action Plans on Gender Equality, Youth and civic integration for prevention of early marriages	No	Yes Target for 2020: Yes Amendments on maternity, paternity and parental leave advocated for	3.1.1. c) The Task Force on Harmful practices (TF) continued operation under the thematic working group on harmful practices led by GE Commission; WG elaborated section of the Action Plan on combating harmful practices of Early/child marriage Amendments on maternity, paternity and parental leave introduced in the Labour Code of Georgia <u>Target has been met</u>		National Policy and Strategic Documents, UN JP Reports
		3.1.1. d) Integrated policy support provided to national GE machineries to refine the mechanism and update the NAPs related to Gender Equality and Domestic Violence (in collaboration with UNDP and UN Women)	No	No Target for 2020: No Note: Provide TA to the GE Commission if the process of the 2020-2023 NAP elaboration commences	3.1.1. d) UNJP provided TA in the process of drafting HR Strategy; TA was provided to AoG to assess the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan; Note: Due to COVID-19, the preparation of 2021-2023 NAP has not commenced in 2020; <u>Target has been met</u>		HR Strategy; NAP assessment

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Activity Result 3.1.2	3.1.2. Participatory partnership platforms to advocate for increased investment in marginalized adolescents and youth to advance gender equality is supported	3.1.2. a) Participatory platform that advocates for increased investments in adolescents and youth within gender equality, youth and health policies, plans and programmes exists (Yes/No)	No	Target 2020:Yes Target 2029: Yes Youth Index elaborated	3.1.2. Youth Index has been elaborate and handed over to the Youth National Agency. <u>Target has been met</u>		Youth Index
		3.1.2. b) # of multi-sectoral/local forums conducted to advocate for youth SRH&RR and promote youth participation in policy formulation and monitoring process	0	Target by 2020: 3 Target for 2020: 0	3.1.2. b) <u>Target has been met in 2018</u>		Documents generated by an informal network/youth watchdog group; UN JP Reports
Output 3.2	3.2. Strengthened capacity of national public organizations and national human rights institution to advance gender equality and reproductive rights and prevention of gender-based violence and harmful practices	3.2.1. DV and VAW response Recommendations are integrated into the health system	No	Target 2020:Yes	3.2.1 Pilot of a Healthcare Response to VAW/DV evaluated, updated medical forms approved, funding mechanism for the services for victims of sexual violence identified. <u>Target has been met</u>	Several key normative acts regulating the healthcare system, specifically, Documentation for Ambulatory Care (Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs (MoLHSA) Ministerial Decree N01-41/n), Regulations for Documentation for Stationary Hospital Care (MoLHSA Ministerial Decree N108/n) were revised, enabling the primary healthcare professionals to document the cases of the VAW/DV appropriately. The regulatory documents include standardized forms (as well as guides on how to fill them in) that will be used for documenting DV/VAW cases in healthcare settings.	UN JP Reports, package of Recommendations, SOPs for health system response to VAW/DV, documents of the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
		3.2.2. Curriculum and methodology of SRH&RR and health life-style education in secondary education system is aligned with international standards. (Yes/No)	Yes	Target 2020:Yes	3.2.2. School subject standards for basic education levels approved and aligned with the UNESCO standards on CSE and Pass Through Standard; New School Concept supported. <u>Target on track</u>		External Evaluation Report, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia
		3.2.3. Reproductive Rights monitoring methodology is institutionalized in the Public Defender's system allowing to elaborate policy recommendations and monitor their implementation	No	Target 2020:Yes	3.2.3. Country Inquiry on SRH and Well-being conducted by the PDO, results are integrated in the PDO parliamentary report for 2020 <u>Target on track</u>		Documents of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia
Activity Result 3.2.1	3.2.1. Health system response to DV and Sexual Violence against Women through integrating Recommendations on Revealing, Referring, and Documenting the Cases of Physical, Sexual and Psychological Violence against Women in the health system is strengthened	3.2.1. a) # of health care facilities supported to pilot protocols and SOPs on response to DV/VAW	0	Target 2020: At Least 10 Target for 2020 Evaluation of the Pilot Program Concluded and the nationwide roll out supported	3.2.1. a) The evaluation of the Pirol Proram has been finalized with TA of the UNFPA Regional Office <u>Target has been met and surpassed</u>		ATIP Fund report, UN JP reports
		3.2.1. b) # of health professionals trained in the selected pilot of health care facilities on protocols and SOPs on response to DV/VAW	0	Target 2020: At Least 60 Target 2020: N/A	3.2.1. b) <u>Target has been met and surpassed</u>		ATIPFund Documents, MoLHSA; UN JP report, IP reports

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
		3.2.1. c) Special curriculum on Health System Response to DV/VAW for medical students developed and institutionalized at the medical university	No	Target 2020: Yes Target for 2029: Yes Online module operational	3.2.1. c)The accredited module is posted on the TSMU website and is available for the interested parties <u>Target has been met</u>		UNJP Reports
		3.2.1. d) Routine data collection on DV/VAW is integrated into the medical statistical information system;	No	Target 2020: Yes Target for 2020: Yes	3.2.1. d) NCDC IN-patient form include specific field for data collection. <u>Target is on Track</u>	The challenge remains regarding properly filling out the forms by the healthcare professionals. Due to pandemic situation, NCDC was not able to work on the out-patient forms;	Medical Forms/ Electronic database
Activity Result 3.2.2	3.2.2. Technical assistance to integrate the healthy lifestyle, sexual and reproductive health and gender equality issues into the national educational system of Georgia is provided	3.2.2. a) Age-sensitive education on SRH&RR and healthy life-style issues is integrated into the formal education system (National Education Plan, pass-through standard, standard of subjects, etc.)	No	Target 2020: Yes Target for 2020: Yes Elective Course on Healthlifestyle Elaborated Online teaching platform supported	3.2.2. a) Biology and Civic Education subject standards for grades IX-X revised and adopted; Biology textbook for grade IX prepared integrating topics recommended by UNESCO standard; distance education was supported with 12 lessons/episodes aired around topics of Civic Education and Biology; <u>Target has been met</u>		School subject standards of the Ministry, UNJP reports; Public Broadcaster - Channel 1 viewership;
		3.2.2. b) Teaching materials on SRH&RR, healthy life-style issues for students of different classes developed	No	Target 2020: Yes Target for 2029: N/A	3.2.2. b) N/A <u>Target has been met</u>	Teacher education still remains to be a challenge, the issue will be incorporated in Phase III of the program	UNJP Reports
		3.2.2. c) Training modules for teachers on youth SRH, healthy life-style developed and integrated in the teacher professional development system	No	Target 2020: Yes Target for 2020: N/A	3.2.2. c) the training module is prepared, however, its transformation as an electronic module has been delayed. <u>Target on track</u>	Legislative amendments are to be introduced in the regulation of the Teacher's professional development. Until the clearer plans are developed by the MoES in this regard, spending resources on the development of the e-module will not be efficient.	UNJP Reports
		3.2.2. d) E-learning resources for parents developed on SRH&RR, healthy life-style issues to be based on MoES web platform	No	Target 2020: Yes Target for 20209: N/A	3.2.2. d) N/A in 2020 <u>Target has been met</u>		UNJP reports, MoES website; mstavlebeli.ge - portal for teachers
		3.2.2. e) Learning resources on youth SRH and GE developed and integrated into the school supervisors' mandatory training	No	Target 2020	3.2.2. e) N/A	In consultation with the donor and agreed on the steering committee, the activity has been restructured and the resources used for other activities within the output	
		3.2.2. f) Learning resources on Youth SRH&RR, healthy life-style and GE for school doctors, updated and integrated in the CME system	NO	Target 2020: YES Completed	<u>Target has been met</u>		UNJP reports
		Activity Result 3.2.3	3.2.3. Monitoring of the exercise of reproductive rights and right to sexual and reproductive health through strengthening the National Human Rights	3.2.3. a) Monitoring tools for conducting national inquiry into the use SRH&RR developed and institutionalized	No	Target 2020: Yes Target for 2020: Monotoring tools are adapted and itnegrated in the PDO framework	3.2.3. a) Methodology of monitoring women and girls' SRH is integrated in the PDO Human Rights monitoring framework; <u>Target has been met</u>

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
	Institution – The Public Defender’s Office is supported	3.2.3. b) National inquiry conducted by a National Human Rights Institution concerning the exercise of reproductive rights exist	No	Target 2020: Yes Target for 2020: III round of the national inquiry completed	3.2.3. b) Third round of the Country Inquiry on sexual and reproductive health and well-being conducted. The results are integrated in the PDO 2020 parliamentary report; Over 40 professionals from 10 psychiatric facilities, 5 community houses, and 3 boarding houses were trained on “Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women with psycho-social needs” Online training module has been prepared; <u>Target has been met</u>		UN JP Reports PDO documents Training module, online training module.
		3.2.3. c) Policy recommendations developed by the PDO related SRH&RR	No	Target 2020: Yes Target for 2020: Yes	3.2.3. c) The recommendations based on the Country Inquiry was included in 2020 PDO parliamentary report; <u>Target has been met</u>		Specialized Reports Public Defender's Parliamentary Report
Output 3.3	3.3. Strengthened public advocacy for enhancing de facto Gender Equality and promotion of SRH&RR	3.3.1. Analysis of content and media response reveal public support to GE in general and to increased male involvement for greater gender equality	N/A	Target 2020: Yes	3.3.1. Yes <u>Target has been met</u>		Media (including social media) content analysis report
		3.3.2. % change in knowledge about GE and SRH&RR among the training participants (male population and youth)	N/A	Target 2020: 10-20% increase	3.3.2. 10% change in average <u>Target on track</u>		UN JP Reports, training reports
		3.3.3. New advocates (CSOs, and champions) are involved in advocacy for increased involvement of men for gender equality	N/A	Target 2020: Yes	3.3.3. <u>Target on track</u>		UN JP reports, public statements and speeches
Activity Result 3.3.1	3.3.1. Gender Transformative Programming through increasing male involvement in attaining greater gender equality is supported	3.3.1. a) MenCare Global Campaign launched and unfolded	No	Target 2020; Yes Target 2020: Yes	3.3.1. a) Due to Pandemics, major activities were shifted online; Cooperation has been established with the Public broadcaster; <u>Target has been met</u>		UN JP Reports
		3.3.1. b) # of trainings conducted with male participants using Men Talking to Men module (MTM)	0	Target 2020: At least 15 Target 2020: 4	3.3.1. b) 4 MTM training sessions conducted in Kakheti region. In total 40 ethnic minority men were reached; <u>Target has been met and surpassed</u>		UN JP Report
		3.3.1. c) # of civil society and youth organizations trained on Gender Transformative Programming	0	Target 2020: at least 5 Target 2029: N/A	3.3.1. c) <u>Target has been met</u>		

Outcome/Output/Activity		Indicator	Baseline	Planned Target	Target Status	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Activity Result 3.3.2	3.3.2. Youth advocacy for enhanced GE and HR of youth is supported	3.3.2. a) Number of youth reached with GE and SRH information through: i. mass media/public events ii. Community Outreaches	0	at least 1000 youth reached annually Target for 2020: 200	3.3.2. Informational sessions were conducted for young people on COVID-19, transmission of the disease, ways of communication. Over 70 young people from Kakheti and Samegrelo regions participated in the sessions. <u>Target has been met and surpassed</u>	Due to pandemics, all the activities with young people were cancelled.	UN JP Reports
		3.3.2. b) # of Community Based Organizations in selected regions to implement GE and SRH awareness-raising activities targeting youth at the grass-roots level	0	Target 2020: 2 annually in each target region Target for 2020: N/A	3.3.2. b) <u>Target has been met and surpassed</u>		UNJP Reports
Activity Result 3.3.3	3.3.3. Public Advocacy for creating enabling socio-cultural environment to promote Gender Equality, SRH&RR and preventing harmful practice is supported	3.3.3. a) Number of issue-based public advocacy campaigns (including through IEC, TV, social media) against harmful practices	2	5 Target for 2020: 2	3.3.3. a) 2 Issue-based Campaigns were led in 2020: Awareness raising campaign on Early Marriages - Videos were prepared and aired on TV in cooperation with the Administration of GoG; Awareness raising campaign MenCare Georgia - media platforms were used, as well as the Public Broadcaster's Platform <u>Target has been met</u>		Media reports on SRH&RR, GE, GBV, child/early marriages, GBSS, etc.
		3.3.3. b) # of media coverage (including social media) on SRH&RR, GE, GBV	70 annually	Target 2020: at least 80 Target for 2020: 70	3.3.3. b) In total 164 in 2020 <u>Target has been met and surpassed</u>		Media reports, social media blog posts
Activity Result 3.3.4	3.3.4. Media is strengthened to raise awareness and trigger opinion change related to gender equality, SRH&RR and harmful practices	3.3.4 a) # workshops/roundtable discussions conducted on sensitive reporting related to GE and SRH&RR for traditional and new media journalists	3	Target 2020: 5 Target 2020: 1	3.3.4 a) Meeting with the Higher Education Institutions <u>Target has been met</u>		UNJP Reports
		3.3.4 b) Syllabus on sensitive reporting for journalism students integrated in the higher education for journalists	No	Target 2020: Yes Target 2020: Syllabus on sensitive reporting elaborated	3.3.4 b) Syllabus prepared <u>Target has been met</u>		UNJP report, Sullabus

Qualitative Research on Violence against
Women within the Study on Impact of COVID-
19 on Human Rights Protection and
Government Response in Georgia

Author: Gvantsa Jibladze
Contributing Author: Dako Bakhturidze
November 2020

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the study was to assess how the COVID-19 crisis affected on the violence against women and domestic violence problem in Georgia, in terms of its prevalence, forms, severity and drivers. Furthermore, the study attempted to capture the major gaps and challenges in the service provision for VAW since the pandemic. With this aim 15 in-depth interviews and 4 focus group discussions were conducted with the state service providers and NGO representatives. In addition, 10 in-depth interviews were conducted with survivors to capture their experiences during the accessing to the services.

Prevalence and severity of VAW/DV - The results show no tangible changes in prevalence and forms of VAW could be captured in the official statistics. The general trend of increase in restraining orders and recorded calls on hotline is maintained throughout 2019 and 2020 years. As NGO representatives explained, this general increasing trend might be associated with the raised awareness among people regarding the DV/VAW and it cannot be linked to the pandemic effects. Furthermore, according to them, keeping the same tendencies in the statistics might be an indication that response mechanism to the violence cases might not work effectively in crisis situation.

The similar pattern is maintained in terms of violence forms. Psychological violence has been the most prevalent form of violence since pandemic, as it was before. Worsened social-economic situation made violence as secondary issue for people, as much as people had to struggle for survival in everyday life due to poverty and other socio-economic problems. Furthermore, according to the research respondents, violence cases in referral became non-systematic single episodes of violence, however extreme in its form; meaning that if before the pandemic victims would seek for help even for less severe cases of violence, during the pandemic most of the referred cases requested urgent response and intervention.

Main drivers of VAW/DV - Aggravation of gender inequality as a result of the COVID-19 crisis has amplified specific factors, that in turn accelerated violence against women. Specific drivers of violence against women and domestic violence, such as worsened economic situation in the families, increased domestic work and multiplied responsibilities for women, limited personal space and losing opportunity to avoid being in one space with abuser, worsened mental health and increased consumption of alcohol - have been presented intensively in everyday lives of women. Limited space factor was especially problematic for LGBTQI+, especially for trans community. As discussed by the NGO representatives participating in the research, “stay at home” strategy was “luxury-based policy” and it did not consider the challenges that trans community face, since home cannot be considered as safe place for majority of trans people. These circumstances made women even more vulnerable towards violence against them, as much as it deprived the opportunity to escape from violent situation.

Patterns of disclosure of VAW/DV – According to the official reports of 116006 the call initiators were victims and the trend remained during pandemic. However, the available official statistical data is not sufficient to conclude how the patterns of disclosure of VAW and DV cases changed as a result of COVID-19 crisis. As observed by police officers and MIA representatives the reports from juveniles and neighbors

has been slightly increased since the pandemic. Restrictions posed by the GoG created potential barriers for victims to disclose the violence. These barriers include *inaccessible transportation, eliminated opportunities to escape and less affordable communication means for secured disclosure for victims*. In addition to these barriers, in some cases victims of violence considered that VAW could not be a priority issue for police due to pandemic and they avoided to report violence unless it became unbearable.

Experiences of survivors in accessing to the services - All the survivors participated in the research did manage to report the violence case successfully and access the respective services for victims of violence. The study is missing the perspectives of those victims, who faced barriers in the process of reporting the violence incidents. According to the NGO representatives, these barriers are linked to the factors such as restricted movement of public transportation and inaccessible communication means for safe reporting. If the survivor managed to report the violence incident and escape the situation, then accessing to the supportive services in crisis centers and shelters was easy. The survivors assess the experience of receiving the supportive services very positively. It is important to mention that survivors lacked information about the shelters and crisis centers before they get the service and some of them even refused to move to the shelters initially, due to incorrect suppositions regarding the conditions at shelters. Accordingly, they highlighted the importance of providing sufficient information to the victims about the situation in shelters. The biggest gap is related to the procedures of survivors leaving shelter.

Gaps and challenges experienced by service providers - pandemic and respective restrictive measures affected all aspects of the state response of violence against women and domestic violence. As the NGO representatives assessed, the government's approach to continue applying existing procedures routinely was not effective. Although state took specific measures for prevention through disseminating SMSs regarding reporting options of violence incidents, NGO representatives assessed these measures as insufficient and identified the need for more proactive prevention campaign. Furthermore, changes in communication form, i.e. distance mode of communication created barriers at both early identification and addressing stages, on one hand for victims to establish the communication with the police or service providers due to the lack of access to the internet and technologies, on the other hand service providers were not able to provide quality support in online format. The absence of adjusted referral mechanism for pandemic situation and especially for quarantine zones was especially emphasized by both state and NGO representatives. The respondents identified the need of the third parties', such as healthcare workers and teacher's role to be specified and strengthened in addressing the violence cases.

As per the NGO representatives' assessment, the existing approach is lacking perspective on increased risks of domestic violence and violence against women and proactive measures to address these risks are missing in the approach. Accordingly, it is essential that specific needs of victims are acknowledged and respective measures against domestic violence and violence against women is being emphasized in the state anti-crisis plan, together with the measures for women empowerment to eliminate the inequality intensified as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

In addition, increased workload for service providers and obscure regulations regarding the testing procedures of staff, as well as insufficient facilities and infrastructure to fully adhere the safety regulations

regarding the COVID-19, increased the risks for service providers' health, which in turn creates risks for the adequate functioning services.

Furthermore, gaps in communication and coordination with different agencies was identified as a significant factor that needs to be improved for successful provision of the services for beneficiaries. The lack of communication was especially emphasized by NGO representatives. As they mentioned, the proactively disseminated information how the state services were functioning during the lockdown was not available, accordingly they were not able to provide information to the victims, who approached to them first.

Recommendations:

- ⇒ Intensive media and information campaigns needs to be carried out to proactively communicate existing VAW response mechanism and functioning supportive services amid COVID-19 crisis.
- ⇒ Human rights approach needs to be integrated in COVID-19 crisis response. A guiding document for government would be useful to help to integrate human rights approach in the preventive measures against spreading virus, as well as in government programs on crisis response. It is essential that specific focus is done on the LGBTQI+ community and other vulnerable groups' needs during the crisis and is reflected in the anti-crisis plan.
- ⇒ Coordination mechanism between state and NGO sectors needs to be defined on VAW during COVID-19 crisis. The coordination framework also needs to cover prevention mechanisms of violence in quarantine zones.
- ⇒ VAW referral mechanism needs to be elaborated according to the crisis context and specific regulations for identification of VAW needs to be elaborated for quarantine zones.
- ⇒ Together with the law enforcement officers, the role of third parties, such as teachers and healthcare workers role should be emphasized in reporting of VAW.
- ⇒ Alternative reporting mechanisms should be introduced and promoted, through establishing cooperation with private sector. Specifically, other countries' experience shows that most effective reporting alternatives could be markets or pharmacies, since in many cases those were only places where potential victims are allowed to go during pandemic.
- ⇒ The role of Coordinator of a Witness and a Victim should be promoted and used meaningfully, and special attention should be directed to the equal access to justice by victims during the COVID-19 crisis. It is critical that justice system ensures the proper participation of the victim in the court process and supports her in accessing to justice.
- ⇒ Atipfund should elaborate standard operating procedures specifically for agencies' operations amid COVID-19 and ensure that all shelters have sufficient infrastructure and facilities to meet the safety needs emerged due to COVID-19.

1. Introduction

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic. The Government of Georgia (GoG), in close coordination with the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC), started implementing various measures in response to the COVID-19 outbreak from early January. The first case of COVID-19 in Georgia was reported on February 26, 2020, which was soon followed by strict lockdown measures. The worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 has numerous negative impacts which have led to a global crisis. The outbreak of the pandemic and the strict lockdown measures have had their toll on worsening Georgia's social and economic situation too.

Experience from previous pandemics reveals that a crisis aggravates pre-existing gender and intersectional inequalities at political, social, and economic levels, which in turn intensifies the impacts of the pandemic.¹ For example, evidence from the 2010 Cholera epidemic in Haiti and the 2014-2016 EVD outbreak in West Africa both indicate that the workload for unpaid female caregivers increased by three times during those periods². The same events highlight that multiple forms of violence including trafficking, child marriage and sexual exploitation and abuse cases against women increased during these crises³. While movement restrictions during the 2014-2016 EVD outbreak in West Africa also significantly impacted women's economic wellbeing.⁴

Women and girls are anticipated to experience elevated impacts from the COVID-19 outbreak too as a result of their gender. Specifically, women and girls face additional economic uncertainty, poorer health outcomes, an increased share of unpaid care work and a greater risk of gender-based violence. Moreover, measures such as curfews, which have limited travel outside the home, may risk trapping victims of gender-based violence in their homes with abusers and away from support networks. These risks may be exacerbated by economic factors, which may lead to family conflict or loss of employment and further reduced movement outside of the home. Variety of assessments of COVID-19 impact on gender conducted by different organizations provide evidence that women and girls experience COVID-19 crisis related outcomes more severely and as expected, in long-term this negative impact on women and girls will become even more obvious⁵.

Countries with "stay at home" measure report on increased cases of domestic violence and violence against women based on the different indicators, such as frequency of calls on emergency helplines, requests received by frontline workers and etc.⁶ Although some countries' formal reports show no increase in domestic violence and violence against women cases, this does not mean that women are not

¹ The United Nations. April 9, 2020. *Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women*. [Available here](#).

² *Gender Implications of COVID-19 Outbreaks in Development and Humanitarian Settings*. Care International. 2020. [Available here](#)

³ *ibid*

⁴ *ibid*.

⁵ The impact of COVID-19 on women's and men's lives and livelihoods in Europe and Central Asia: Preliminary results from a Rapid Gender Assessment. UN Women. 2020. [Available here](#)

⁶ *COVID-19 and Violence Against Women and Girls: Addressing the Shadow Pandemic*. UN Women. 2020. Pg. 2-3. [Available here](#)

experiencing violence, instead it might be an indication that women are not able to report the cases due to variety of restrictions.⁷

Since the early start of the pandemic and introduction of restrictive measures by governments, international and local organizations started to spread alarming messages regarding the increased risks of VAW and the urgent need of specific measures. The reviews of the government responses show, that many governments and service providers had to reduce their offering of in-person support, in some cases, services such as shelters for survivors of domestic violence have not been considered as ‘essential’⁸. Furthermore, health and social care systems that provide life-saving support to women who experience violence have been disrupted due to health service providers being overburdened and focused on handling COVID-19 cases⁹. According to the UN Women and UNDP COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker, although countries made some efforts to make their COVID-19 responses gender sensitive, through strengthening essential services such as shelters, helplines and reporting mechanisms, less than a quarter of analyzed countries (48 countries) have VAW related services integrated in their national and local COVID-19 response plans.¹⁰

2. Research objectives

The overall purpose of the research was to conduct an in-depth, qualitative impact assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic vis-à-vis violence against women and domestic violence. The study tried to explore how well did Georgia ensure the protection of survivors and whether they received needed support during the pandemic with an aim to determine necessary adjustments for the subsequent response and recovery efforts. The research analyzed whether the prevalence of violence against women and domestic violence has increased, as seen by service providers (both state as well as non-state) and law enforcement, whether specialized services for survivors (hotline 116 006, state and non-state shelters and crisis centers) were accessible and to what extent and whether or not legal protection mechanisms (restraining and protective orders and criminal investigations) were executed and monitored efficiently. Specifically, the study was designed to answer the following research objectives:

- ⇒ To study changes in prevalence and severity of violence against women and domestic violence, from the perspective of service providers and law enforcement.
- ⇒ To study and compare main drivers of violence against women and domestic violence before and during the pandemic and how the latter is linked to the lockdown and other preventive measures.
- ⇒ To understand patterns of disclosure of violence to service providers and law enforcement in the period of March-May 2020 (lockdown period) and June-August 2020 as compared to the same months of 2019, considering the increasing trend in disclosure over the last few years to identify what fraction in increase/decrease, if any can be attributable to the pandemic and related factors;

⁷ ibid

⁸ COVID-19 and Violence Against Women and Girls: Addressing the Shadow Pandemic. UN Women. 2020. Pg.3. [Available here](#)

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ Covid-19 Global Gender Response Tracker. UNDP. 2020 <https://data.undp.org/gendertracker/>

- ⇒ To assess challenges experienced by the state and non-state service providers in addressing the problem during the pandemic to inform future policymaking.
- ⇒ To explore survivors' experiences in accessing and benefiting from specialized services and legal protections from the state.

3. Methodology

The study utilized qualitative methodology of the research. Qualitative approach provides in-depth understanding of the context and fundamental processes related to the social phenomena to be explored¹¹. The study was carried out in three phases: desk review, qualitative study and data analysis.

Desk Review

At this stage document review was conducted to examine all relevant literature in order to enhance the understanding of existing knowledge/data on the implications of COVID-19 on VAW victims/survivors. The list of reviewed documents included:

- Relevant available research articles on impact of COVID-19 crises on VAW victims/survivors and lessons learnt on effective functioning of respective services and government response.
- Development partners' interventions and respective reports/related materials relevant to implications of COVID-19.
- Relevant official documents, guidelines, and strategies referring the measures to address VAW cases during COVID-19.

In addition, secondary data analysis was conducted at this stage. The researcher requested official recorded information on disclosure of VAW cases and respective law enforcement from the period of March-May 2020 (lockdown period) and June-August 2020 and compared the same data from same period of 2019. Data sources for this analysis include:

- Official records of 116006 hotline
- 112 data of call on domestic violence
- Official records on issued restrictive orders
- Official records on issued protective orders

The secondary data analysis was used to provide the insights on the patterns of disclosure of violence to service providers and law enforcement during COVID-19 related crisis.

Qualitative study

¹¹ Tsuladze, L (2020). *Qualitative Methods for Social Research*. (pp. 13-20) Tbilisi. TSU Press

At this stage in-depth qualitative data was collected in response to the study objectives. Specifically, the study employed In-Depth Interviews (IDI) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and reached the participants using purposive sampling.

The study participants included all state and non-state actors and service providers, who are involved in the response to the VAW cases both at grassroots and policy levels. In particular, the study participants were (1) district, patrol and criminal police officers and prosecutors, (2) state service providers (hotline 116-006, shelters and crisis centers) and (3) field experts, in particular those NGO/SCO representatives who have been involved in the COVID-19 response, designing measures and/or assistance schemes/benefit packages. In addition to that, survivors of violence against women and domestic violence, i.e. beneficiaries of the specialized services were included in the study in order to explore survivors' experiences in accessing and benefiting from specialized services and legal protections from the state.

The data was collected from both capital and regions of Georgia to capture any differences in terms of accessibility and functionality of VAW mechanisms and services during the pandemic in different parts of Georgia.

15 In-depth Interviews were conducted with service providers and field experts. The representatives of the respective departments of the state and non-state service provider organizations, as well as field experts were interviewed in order to capture broader picture on provision of the services targeting victims of violence, including from marginalized groups.

Procedures: The above-mentioned key informants were approached through the official e-mail explaining the aims of the research and an invitation to the interview. The interviews were conducted using the interview guides that was developed by the consultant in advance. Interviews were conducted remotely using online communication platforms (e.g. Zoom). Each interview was audio recorded under the consent of the respondent and transcribed at the later stage.

10 in-depth interviews were conducted with survivors of violence who received services from various (state and non-state) service providers before and during the pandemic in order to identify the specific challenges faced by the beneficiaries of state and non-state services.

- 6 survivors were interviewed from state shelter and crisis centers.
- 4 survivors were interviewed from non-state shelter.

Procedure: Considering the high vulnerability and sensitivity of this group, visiting the shelters is limited for external persons. Thus, the consultant was supported by UN Women in the process of approaching respective respondents. They were purposively selected to reflect the experiences of people from diverse experiences. Specifically, 5 interviewees were survivors who experienced violence and applied for services during the lockdown and 5 interviewees were survivors who experienced violence and received services before COVID-19. The other important factor while selecting the respondent for the interview was that by the time of the interview the respondent were not in abusive relationship. The interviews were

conducted using the interview guide developed by researcher in advance. Due to the increased risk of COVID-19 the interviews were conducted via Zoom platform. Each interview was audio recorded under the consent of the respondent and transcribed at the later stage.

4 Focus Group Discussions were conducted with service providers. While the IDIs helped to obtain higher level perspectives, the FGDs focused on grassroots level stakeholders/service providers working with the community members daily. The FGDs covered the different groups of service providers such as police, social workers, state and non-state service providers and aimed at obtaining perspectives of service providers working in the field regarding the everyday challenges and gaps they faced since the pandemic. The FGD participants were selected from Tbilisi, as well as from the regions of Georgia.

- 1 FGD: district, patrol, criminal police officers and prosecutors (Tbilisi)
- 1 FGD: district, patrol, criminal police officers and prosecutors (Regions)
- 1 FGD: state service providers, such as, hotline 116-006, shelters and crisis centers, social workers (mix group from Tbilisi and regions)
- 1 FGD: non-state service providers (mix group from Tbilisi and regions)

Procedures: The researcher approached to the respective agencies/organizations with the official request to invite the service providers to participate in FGDs. 4-7 participants participated in each discussion, 25 participants in total. The FGDs was conducted using the guides developed by the researcher prior to the field phase. The FGDs was conducted remotely via online communication platforms Zoom. Each discussion was audio recorded under the consent of the participants and transcribed at the later stage.

The table below summarizes the information about data collection and research participants:

Data collection method	Tbilisi	Regions
<i>4 FGDs were carried out throughout the research, including 25 participants in total. 10 participants were from regions and 15 participants were from Tbilisi.</i>		
2 FGDs with police	2 Law enforcement officers	2 district patrols
	2 Patrols	2 Patrols
	2 Investigators	2 Investigators
	1 Prosecutor	1 Prosecutor
1 FGD with state service providers	2 Tbilisi crisis center representatives	1 Kutaisi shelter and crisis center representative
	2 Tbilisi shelter representatives	1 Social worker from Achara
	1 Social worker from Tbilisi	
1 FGD with non-state service providers	2 AVNG representatives	1 GYLA representative
	1 PHR representative	
<i>15 IDIs were conducted throughout the research: 6 IDIs with state representatives and 8 IDIs with NGO representatives. 13 Respondents were from Tbilisi and 2 respondents were from regions.</i>		

6 IDIs with state representatives	1 MIA representative 1 SSA representative 1 Tbilisi shelter head 1 Public defender representative 1 Prosecutors representative 1 Tbilisi crisis center head	1 Kutaisi shelter and crisis center head
8 IDIs with NGO representatives	1 AVNG representative 1 Safari representative 1 GYLA representative 2 WISG representative 1 PHR representative 1 GASW representative	1 representative from Union of Azeri Women
<i>10 IDIs were conducted with survivors during the research. 6 survivors were beneficiaries of state services and 4 survivors were beneficiaries of non-state services.</i>		
6 IDI with state Service beneficiaries/survivors	5 survivors from Tbilisi shelter/crisis center	1 survivor from Kutaisi shelter and crisis center
4 IDI with non-state Service beneficiaries/survivors	4 survivors from AVNG shelter	

Data analysis

At this stage the researcher analyzed collected data and compiled with secondary data findings. In order to ensure appropriate integration of desk research with qualitative data analysis and allow for the triangulation of findings, a hybrid inductive and deductive thematic coding approach to qualitative analysis was employed. The hybrid coding approach allows for some flexibility in qualitative analysis by adding thematic codes as appropriate in order to capture new or unexpected phenomena not anticipated in the research design¹².

Ethical considerations

The ethical principles are critically important, especially for this study that involves and affects the lives of people of different ages, gender and social background that may have experienced violence rooted in gender. Ethical considerations help not only to protect the safety of respondents and interviewers, but also to ensure data quality. The study adhered the following ethical principles:

1. Informed consent for respondents

Each participant was informed about all aspects of the study that were expected to influence their willingness to participate. The individual informed consent procedures ensured that respondents understand the purpose of the research and that their participation was voluntary. The interview/FGD was conducted only after obtaining the verbal consent of the respondent. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis and no inducements were made.

¹² Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. [Available here](#).

2. Confidentiality

The researcher recognized that in VAW study, the safety and even the lives of respondents might be at risk. Therefore, protecting confidentiality was essential to ensure both participants' safety and data quality. For this purpose, the consultant ensured that confidential records were stored in a secure area with limited access. The respondents were informed clearly that consultant/data collector will keep the confidentiality. The recordings were destroyed as soon as transcribed. No record of the name and no identification note of the respondents were kept on the transcripts to ensure the confidentiality.

3. Minimizing harm to respondents

Respondents who have experienced violence either recently or sometime in their lives might be touched by the questions during the data gathering process. They became emotional given that the questions brought to their mind the experiences which have been painful. In such situations, the following actions were applied:

- Gave respondents time to gather themselves and ask them on whether they would like to continue.
- Terminate the interview if the respondent was displaying signs of much distress.

In the case of VAW measurements, the risks are potentially large, but so too are the risks of not knowing, and silence. The obligation of the researcher was to carefully weigh the risks and benefits and to take every measure possible to limit possible harm and to maximize possible benefit.

Limitations

- Due to the COVID-19 related restrictions the researcher avoided in-person meetings during the fieldwork, accordingly the interviews and FGDs were conducted online via Zoom platform. This especially impacted the process of interviewing the survivors, since consultant was unable to ensure the safe and trustful environment during interview at that level, as it could be done during in-person meeting.
- The survivors who participated in the research were the beneficiaries of state or non-state shelters and crisis centers. This means that these respondents already managed to access the services and shared successful stories in this regard. However, the research is missing the perspectives of those women who could not manage to get services, due to the various hindering factors.
- The data from official records of hotlines, restraining and protective orders, provided by service providers, were not detailed enough and in some cases, quality of the data was low to do in depth analysis.
- The research focused the period from March to September, maximum 7 months of pandemic. Accordingly, survey mostly focus on direct impacts of pandemic related restrictions, which might leave the long-term impact of pandemic beyond the analysis, this will need further assessment afterwards.

4. Georgia's response on violence against women and domestic violence

The first national law on domestic violence which was adopted in 2006¹³ was the first attempt of introducing legal mechanisms for prevention, identification and responding to domestic violence. Since then, Georgia has considerably progressed in terms of developing legislative response and social protection mechanisms towards domestic violence and violence against women. Criminalization of domestic violence in 2012¹⁴, ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in 2017¹⁵, establishment of Human Rights' Protection Department at Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2018¹⁶ and many other important measures to improve the response mechanisms on DV and VAW indicate that this issue is getting priority for the country. These efforts were reflected on the progressively increase reports of domestic violence cases and issued restraining orders by police. For instance, in 2019 almost four times more restraining orders were issued by police, compared to 2015¹⁷.

Simultaneously with the development of legal response mechanisms, services for social protection were being developed throughout the years. Specifically, in 2010 first shelter for domestic violence survivors and hotline were established.

Currently, the following mechanisms are available and functioning in Georgia in response to domestic violence and violence against women:

Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ "112" unified emergency number of the 24/7 hours ⇒ "112" application integrating chat function and SOS button ⇒ "116006" consultancy hotline providing information on 8 different languages
Legal Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Existing legal framework on violence against women and/or elimination of domestic violence, protection and support of victims of violence. ⇒ Restraining order issued by police based on risk assessment mechanism. ⇒ Protective order issued by the court. ⇒ Coordinator of victim and witness at prosecutor's office. ⇒ Human right's protection department at MIA monitoring the quality of investigations on DV and VAW.
Social Protection	<p>Under the Agency For State Care And Assistance For the (Statutory) Victims of Human trafficking the following state care services are functioning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ 10 shelters in different regions of Georgia, providing free 24/7 accommodation, legal, psychological and medical assistance. ⇒ 5 crisis centers in different regions of Georgia, providing legal, psychological and medical assistance.

¹³ Law on violence against women and/or elimination of domestic violence, protection and support of victims of violence. [Available here.](#)

¹⁴ Amendments in Criminal Code of Georgia. [Available here](#)

¹⁵ Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. [Available here.](#)

¹⁶ [Information available here.](#)

¹⁷ 2015 – 2722 restraining orders; 2016 – 3089 restraining orders; 2017 – 4370 restraining orders; 2018 – 7647 restraining orders; 2019 – 10266 restraining orders. Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs. [Available here.](#)

According to the national study on VAW commissioned by UN Women and Geostat, the awareness regarding the law and existing services on DV/VAW is quite high among Georgian society. Specifically, more than 70% of men and women knows that there is a law against DV/VAW, about the same share is aware about hotline and has recently seen or heard of advertising addressing campaigns against VAW; furthermore, more than 50% of men and women are aware about the shelters and more than 30% of men and women are aware about crisis centers¹⁸.

4.1. Government response on VAW and DV in the context of COVID-19

Government of Georgia (GoG) identified human rights protection as a core issue during the COVID-19 related crisis. As declared in the report on GoG measures to protect human rights during COVID-19 pandemic¹⁹ despite the crisis, violence against women and domestic violence remains priority issue for Georgia and the government continues implementing strict measures against it. As mentioned in the report of the Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence elaborated a Communication Strategy on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence during COVID-19 crisis, aiming at raising awareness on these issues, as well as spreading information on the alternative ways of reporting violence cases.

As the preventive measures, the information regarding the available services for domestic violence victims and ways to report the violence cases, was disseminated through different channels:

- In April, Ministry of Internal Affairs massively spread information via SMS, regarding the functioning alternative reporting mechanisms, such as 112 application and SOS button for violence victims. The information was disseminated in ethnic minority languages too.
- Information was also available in the pharmacies and grocery shops, as well as in quarantine hotels, as indicated in the report.
- Short videos were created and disseminated via social media and TV.

At the identification and responding stage, GoG implemented the following measures:

- The police were instructed not to fine persons who violated the curfew to escape domestic violence.
- The Agency of State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking re-structured service models for ten shelters and crisis centers. During the State of Emergency period, Tbilisi shelter was functioning as quarantine zone for new beneficiaries, while old beneficiaries living in Tbilisi shelter were referred to other regions temporarily.
- The personnel of shelters and crisis centers started working in shifts²⁰ and when possible, some parts of the services were carried out remotely. The personnel are consistently provided with the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE).

¹⁸ National study on Violence against Women in Georgia 2017, pg. 63-65, UN Women, Geostat. [Available here](#)

¹⁹ "Human Right Protection during COVID-19 Crisis" – Report on measures implemented by Government of Georgia, June, 2020, pg. 23-26. [Available here](#)

²⁰ The shelters introduced two-week long working shifts, as explained state care agency representatives. Worth noting that there was no publicly available information regarding the standard protocols of state care agencies operations adapted to COVID-19.

- Emergency assistance and consultation hotlines continued to work non-stop.

5. Findings

5.1. Changes in prevalence and severity of violence against women and domestic violence

The state and non-state service providers have inconsistent perceptions regarding the prevalence of VAW since the pandemic. Some of the respondents from the NGO sector mentioned that the cases of violence have been increased since the pandemic, while others, mostly from state sector, mentioned that situation has not changed in terms of prevalence of VAW.

The official statistics from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) shows that, the general trend of issuing restraining orders on domestic violence cases during March-August 2020 is being maintained similar, as it was during the same period of 2019 (Figure 1). However, the general trend of increase in issuing restraining orders on VAW, that has been started since 2019 throughout 2020, is obvious and this increasing pattern is similar during the same periods of March-August 2019 and March-August 2020. It is worth mentioning that in July and August the difference between the number of issued restraining orders in 2019 and 2020 is relatively high, compared to other months, which may indicate on increasing trend (Figure 2). Increasing trend is also apparent in the registered calls on 116006 hotline (Figure 3).

Figure 1: Restraining Orders Issued on DV during March-August 2019 and March-August 2020. Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs.

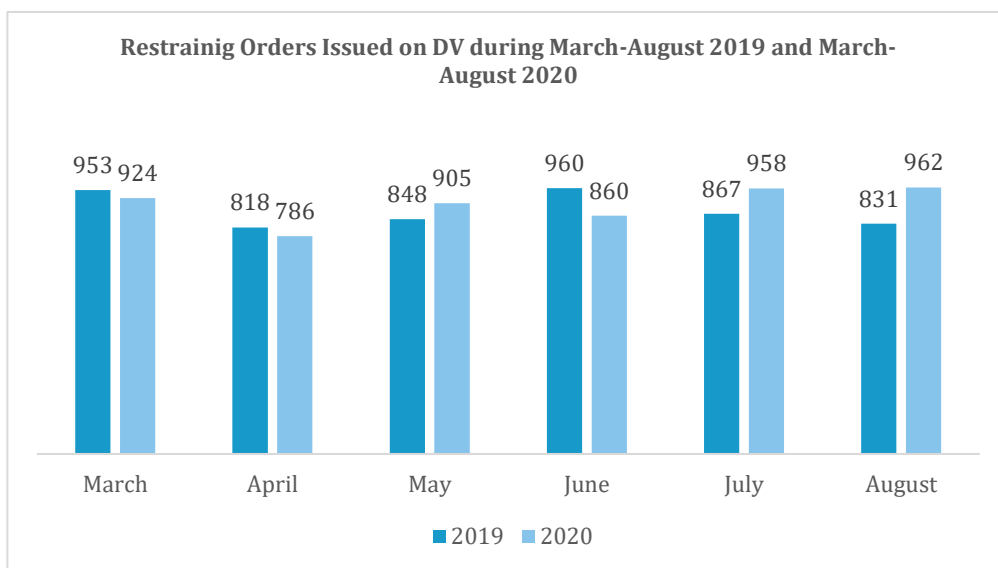


Figure 2: Restraining Orders Issued on VAW during March-August 2019 and March-August 2020. Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs.

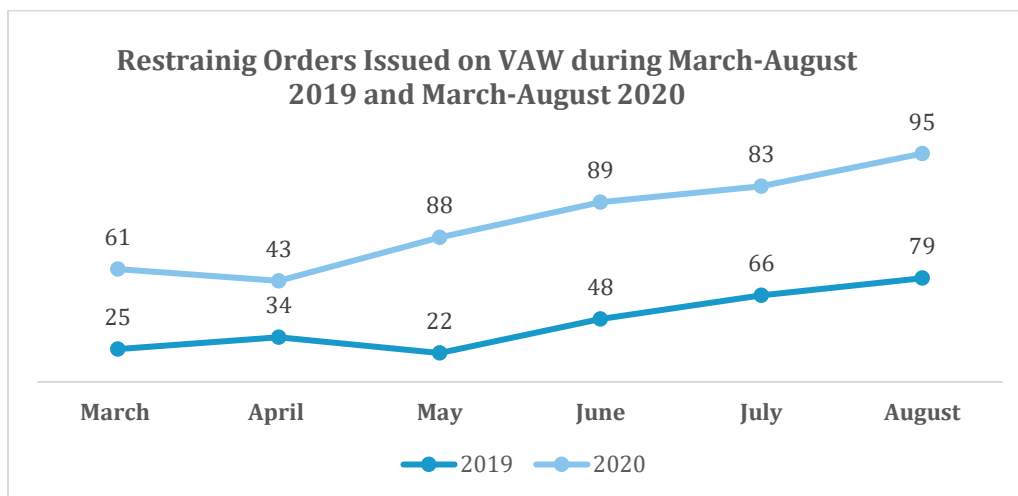
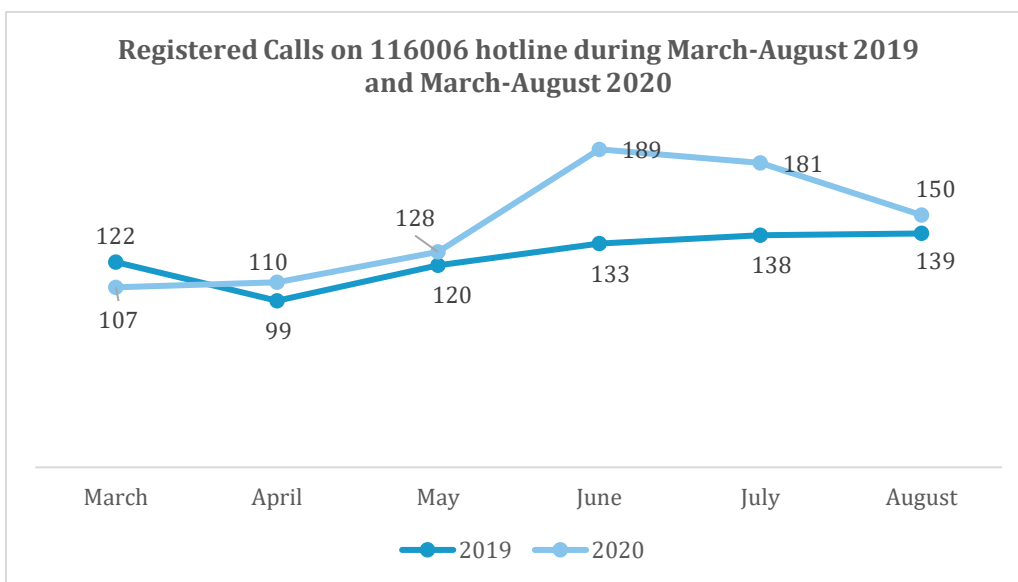


Figure 3: Registered calls on 116006 hotline during March-August 2019 and March-August 2020. Source: LEPL Agency For State Care and Assistance For the (Statutory) Victims of Human trafficking



According to both NGO and state representatives, the general increasing trend is associated with the raised awareness among people regarding the DV/VAW and it cannot be linked to the pandemic effects:

„Georgia has increasing trend every year, because we have not reached to the actual level of disclosed violence in numbers. There are countries were the disclosure is the close to the actual level of violence and they are able to talk on the trends of decrease or increase of violence, but we have almost 100% increase of violence cases every year, which makes

it impossible to link this to the pandemic or raised awareness of people.” (Public defender representative)

On the other hand, the general tendencies in the official statistics does not give grounds to conclude that the actual prevalence of domestic violence and violence against women has remained the same level during pandemic, as it was before. According to the NGO representatives, keeping the same tendencies in the statistics might be an indication that response mechanism to the violence cases might not work effectively during this period:

“This means that they do not have any kind of communication with women at all. [...] In my opinion [state agencies] work during last months is only mechanic and shallow, so that women are not being heard and understood properly [in this process].” (NGO representative)

Even though official statistics does not allow to analyze the direct impact of the pandemic on the prevalence of DV and VAW in Georgia, the slight drop in the numbers of restraining orders in April 2020 (lockdown period) might be an important indicator to assume that reporting and disclosing of violence cases might be associated with certain challenges while tightening the COVID-19 preventive measures in spring 2020. Specifically, COVID-19 preventive measures might create additional barriers for women to report the violence cases. These barriers will be discussed in the chapter 5.3.

The possible challenges in addressing domestic violence and VAW cases since pandemic, is even more visible from the official statistics of issued protective orders, while keeping in mind the increasing number of restraining orders. The data shows that compared to the same period in 2019, fewer protective orders were issued by the court during the April-September 2020 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Protective orders issued during April-September 2019 and April-September 2020. Source: Supreme Court of Georgia, research and analytic center



This data requires further in-depth analysis of the court cases. However, decreasing number of issued protective orders, while issued restraining orders are increasing might be an alarming in terms of the access to justice. In general, the procedure for obtaining protective orders is relatively complex, accordingly the practice shows that survivors tend to choose restraining orders over the protective orders. As a result, the number of protective orders is lower compared to the number of restrictive orders, in general. However, relying on the concerns shared by both state and NGO representatives, regarding the challenges at the litigation stage during the pandemic, might also be linked to this decrease in issued protective orders in 2020. These challenges will be discussed in more details in chapter 5.5.

The official statistics show that psychological violence is the most prevalent form of violence in Georgia throughout the years, which is followed with physical violence. The same pattern was maintained during the pandemic according to the issued restraining orders by MIA (table 1). Furthermore, as research participants from both, state and NGO sectors mentioned the violence become more intense and in many cases several forms of violence are in place.

Table 1: Issued restraining orders during March-April 2019 and March April 2020 by forms of violence. Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs

2019							
	March	April	May	June	July	August	Total
Physical	242	222	203	252	237	202	1358
Psychological	880	740	789	899	792	762	4862
Economical	35	13	17	25	19	24	133
Sexual	1	2	1	6	3	5	18
Coercion	11	5	10	5	23	9	63
Neglect	7	5	19	17	40	10	98
2020							
	March	April	May	June	July	August	Total
Physical	195	191	206	237	241	216	1286
Psychological	858	713	837	783	881	891	4963
Economical	20	31	10	5	18	16	100
Sexual	5	4	2	1	3	1	16
Coercion	5	5	5	4	9	8	36
Neglect	9	6	3	5	6	13	42

In general, it should be mentioned that available statistical data is not enough to do further analysis to understand how the pandemic impacted on the forms of violence. Moreover, according to the NGO representatives participating in the research, in many of the cases the police officers are not able to distinguish the different forms of violence, such as coercion or economic violence and classify them as psychological form, that is reflected in the official statistics.

The pandemic caused the drastic changes in people's everyday life, which impacted on the patterns of violence. Most importantly, as NGO representatives participating in the research mentioned, worsened

social-economic situation made violence as secondary issue for people, as much as people had to struggle for survival in everyday life due to poverty and other socio-economic problems. Furthermore, according to the research respondents, violence cases in referral became non-systematic single episodes of violence, however extreme in its form; meaning that if before the pandemic victims would seek for help even for less severe cases of violence, during the pandemic most of the referred cases requested urgent response and intervention. Since people had to stay at home during the lockdown, the presence of other people during violence episodes increased, as a result, VAW became more visible for neighbors and other family members, as they could observe the systematic episodes of violence more frequently:

“Non-systematic psychological violence cases increased since the pandemic started. A lot of single-time cases. This might be caused by the fact that most of the family members had to spend the whole time together and this triggered conflicts between them.” (FGD with state service providers)

Another important tendency that was observed, is decreasing the violence by the former partners during the lockdown and increase violence between family members, which is explainable with the changes in everyday life due to restrictions posed by government during the lockdown:

“One of the tendencies that was observed during the lockdown is that violence between the former partners has decreased, which could be explained by the fact that physical contact between people was restricted during the lockdown; while the violence between the spouses/partners, violence to parents and violence to children increased. This also has its explanation as the family members started to spend more time together during the lockdown.” (MIA representative)

To sum up, the available official statistics are not specific enough to talk about the impact of pandemic on the prevalence and forms of VAW, however, according to the experts and service providers the drivers of violence are obviously intensified during the pandemic, which results in the increased actual prevalence of violence, as well as intensified violence episodes. Moreover, although this statistical information does not provide information on the actual prevalence of violence, it can be used to discuss the challenges and gaps in the state response on DV and VAW particularly in the COVID-19 crisis period. The next chapter discusses the factors that intensified drivers for VAW and DV.

5.2. Main drivers of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic

Violence against women and domestic violence is a complex issue and structural gender inequality lays as a root cause of this problem. The evidence shows that global pandemic of COVID-19 has aggravated such inequality, through radically altering people’s lives and negatively affected in many ways²¹. Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) of the COVID-19 Situation in Georgia conducted by UN Women indicated that COVID-19 crisis worsened economic situation and livelihoods of families, due to “stay at home” policy unpaid

²¹ Rapid Gender Assessment of the COVID-19 Situation in Georgia. UN Women. 2020. [Available here](#)

domestic work and care work has disproportionately increased for women, isolation and economic crisis had negatively impacted on people's mental health and psychological wellbeing²². Furthermore, according to the latest analysis published by International School of Economics (ISET): "In Q2, 2020 of the 15.6 thousand "new" unemployed, 13.9 thousand (89%) were women, and only 1.7 thousand (11%) were men. In fact, the male unemployment rate increased by only 0.1 percentage points, while the female unemployment rate increased by 1.8 percentage points relative to Q2 2019."²³ All these negative effects results in the increased vulnerability of women, thus increased risks and intensified cases of domestic violence and violence against women.

Economic crisis and worsened financial situation of families were identified as a major driver of violence. Financial problems have been one of the main factors of violence before the pandemic, however, as mentioned above, the crisis have significant negative impact on economic situation at both, country as well as individual family level. According to the RGA by UN Women, approximately one third of men and women, who were employed before the pandemic lost their jobs or reduced working hours²⁴. Financial problems due to losing job caused more frequent conflicts in the families. As research respondents explained, losing the role of breadwinner and increased pressure on men might be an additional catalyst of domestic violence acts during pandemic. Managing households has become more challenging. Due to economic difficulties, many families have to survive on a much smaller income than prior to the pandemic.

"Tension among men because they lost jobs was directly reflected on their family situation and especially on their [relationship] with women. Many women said, they felt guilty because all the negative feelings were directed to them." (FGD with non-state service providers)

"Stay at home" policy required radical changes in peoples' everyday routine, people had to spend most of their time at home with family members. These changes were related to different factors that can be considered as drivers for intensified domestic violence and violence against women. The first factor that was mentioned by research respondents was challenges in time distribution. For those, who lost the job most of the time has been released that was linked to the application of unhealthy coping strategies, such as **increased consumption of alcohol** – which in turn was identified as a driver for intensified violence. Another important factor was related to the **increased domestic work and care burden**, especially for women who switched to the "work from home" mode. RGA conducted by UN Women indicates that women disproportionately experience an increased burden of domestic work, furthermore families with children have seen particularly large increases in domestic workload, due to school closures and children having switched to distance schooling.²⁵ This required from women to allocate additional time and effort to ensure their children's engagement during online learning. Another key factor behind the increased household burden for women relates to their responsibility to ensure that their family's additional needs for hygiene and sanitation, heightened due to the pandemic, are adequately met. Shifting to distance

²² Rapid Gender Assessment of the COVID-19 Situation in Georgia. UN Women. 2020. [Available here](#)

²³ Keshelava, D., Babych, Y. (2020) Sorry, You're Fired Due to COVID! Has COVID-19 Widened Gender Gap?. ISET Economist Blog. [Available here](#)

²⁴ Rapid Gender Assessment of the COVID-19 Situation in Georgia. Pg.21. UN Women. 2020. [Available here](#)

²⁵ ibid

work and distance learning modes caused challenges to the access to different resources, such as quality internet connection, essential electronic devices – laptops or smartphones and etc. Women needed more time to spend on the increased domestic burden and multiplied responsibilities, while they could allocate less time to take care of their husbands, that increased aggression among men. All these additional responsibilities, challenges and pressure triggered conflicts and violence among family members.

“[the violence has intensified] because schools are closed and [managing children’s school time] became women’s responsibility and that attention was taken from men. The situation is hardest for women because of inequality which is one step behind the violence.” (NGO representative)

„Because public transport movement was restricted during the lockdown, I had to use taxi to get to work. This caused big problems in our family, he did not want me to use taxi and he preferred to be hungry and poor, rather me going to work. He demanded from me to sit at home. But I do not have anyone who would help me to pay bank debt and I could not leave job at any cost [...] everything was getting more and more complicated, he was fighting with me and he was threatening me. I was leaving home with fear and I was returning home with fear, I was tensed every time. I had to call to social worker and s/he called police, I could not dare calling police alone.“ (Tbilisi shelter beneficiary)

Another important catalyst that is related to the changes in everyday life is **personal space factor**, which became extremely challenging and limited for many families especially during the lockdown. Family members had to stay at home and spend all day in one space, that increased the risks of conflicts. Furthermore, this factor is also related to losing escaping opportunities for victims.

“Problems in our relationship started together with the pandemic, in March, when we both stayed at home. My ex-husband was not working even before lockdown, I used to go out at work daily, but staying at home with him all day was unbearable for me to live. The biggest effect of pandemic was that he knew that I could not go out during the curfew and he used to start fighting exactly during the curfew hours. [...] He knew that I needed to call police if I wanted to escape during curfew, from which I refrained, and he was using this factor against me.” (State Crisis Center Beneficiary)

Space factor was especially problematic for LGBTQI+, especially for trans community. As discussed by the NGO representatives participating in the research, “stay at home” strategy was “luxury-based policy” and it did not consider the challenges that trans community face, since home cannot be considered as safe place for majority of trans people. Moreover, transgender women experienced economic crisis especially severely, as much as many of them, working in sex industry or in service, lost their income during the lockdown and consequently lost possibility to pay for rent. Such circumstances forced them to get back to their families, where they are not welcomed.

„The social and economic factors have been aggravated. The living space is already a problem for our beneficiaries. Many of them were renting the home because they did not have harmonious relationship with their family members and try to separate from the families, when possible. Majority of them work in service and low-income positions and paying rent is difficult for them, especially in the period of COVID-19. [Trans] community was especially affected economically during the pandemic.“ (NGO representative)

Strict lockdown, followed with drastic changes in people’s lifestyle and worsened social and economic wellbeing, unsurprisingly caused problems with people’s **mental health and psychological wellbeing** too. According to the RGA by UN Women, the pandemic has affected the psychological and mental health of almost half (47%) of the Georgian population. A further analysis shows that women are more likely than men to have experienced mental health issues during the pandemic²⁶. The research respondents from both state and NGO sectors, claim that worsened mental health could be considered as another important driver for increased and intensified violence cases.

To sum up, it can be concluded that COVID-19 crisis, accompanied with the lockdown measures aggravated structural inequality within the society. Specific drivers of violence against women and domestic violence, such as worsened economic situation in the families, increased domestic work and multiplied responsibilities for women, limited personal space and losing opportunity to avoid being in one space with abuser, worsened mental health and increased consumption of alcohol - have also been presented intensively in everyday lives of women. These circumstances made women even more vulnerable towards violence against them, as much as it deprived the opportunity to escape from violent situation.

“Victims who are experiencing violence have intensified feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, because of the worsened [social and economic] factors. If before they had a hope to live independently, to start work and had certain perspectives, these perspectives are deprived from them during the pandemic. Because the general situation in the country is worsened and it caused feeling of hopelessness especially in victims, feeling that now they cannot change anything, or changes now make no sense. This is important factor of aggravating violence cases.” (FGD with non-state service providers)

5.2.1. The most vulnerable groups of women

The most marginalized people are the hardest hit of the gendered disparities deepened as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. As discussed above, women and girls are at heightened risk of domestic violence, inadequate access of essential health care (both before and during the pandemic), economic insecurity, and the imposition of unpaid care work. This, combined with the stigma and intersectional discrimination that marginalized women and girls already face, put some group of women under extreme risk of violence during the pandemic and afterwards. The research respondents identified the most vulnerable groups of

²⁶ Rapid Gender Assessment of the COVID-19 Situation in Georgia. Pg.35. UN Women. 2020. [Available here](#)

women, as being under the highest risk of different forms of violence in Georgia due to the various vulnerability factors:

- ⇒ **Women employed in service and/or informal sectors** – these women turned out to be under the highest risk to lose the jobs during the pandemic. These are women employed in open markets, in precarious jobs, in service sectors such as restaurants, hotels and similar industries and self-employed women.
- ⇒ **Housewife’s and women with children** – the pressure related to the care work has increased for these women due to the pandemic, which increased the risk of domestic violence for these group.
- ⇒ **Women already experiencing violence** - for these women “Stay at Home” slogan meant to stay in the most unsafe environment, under the increased risk of violence.
- ⇒ **LBT women** – “Stay at home” is not safe for LBT women too, since many of them are not accepted by family members, while renting a room became difficult due to financial crisis. In addition, since most of the trans women are working in sex industry, during the pandemic these group lost all the income to survive.
- ⇒ **Women with health issues** - The pandemic created barriers in accessing to health service in general. At the same time, it worsened the health conditions of people with mental health issues, which put them under the highest risk of violence.
- ⇒ **Older women and women with disabilities** - besides the fact that these group of people were under the highest risk of COVID-19, due to the worsened socio-economic conditions of families during the pandemic, older people and people with disabilities become additional burden for family members and increased the risk of economic violence to them.
- ⇒ **Ethnic minority women** – this group faces barriers in accessing the information and services (e.g. 112 application) available in their own languages. Furthermore, cultural characteristics of these groups might make ethnic minority women more vulnerable towards the violence.

These women were the most vulnerable even before the pandemic, but the crisis aggravated the factors of their vulnerability. NGO representatives participated in the research, also identified two other groups of women, who turned out to be under the increased risks of violence specifically as a result of pandemic. These women are **teachers**, due the increased workload and **women living in urban areas**, who were locked in the smaller apartments with potential perpetrator during the pandemic.

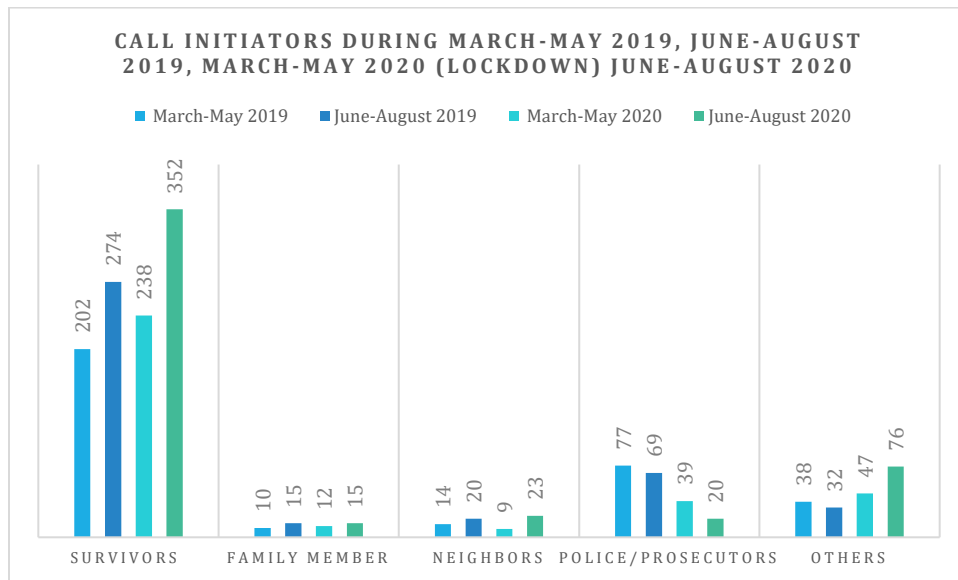
“There was an increase in the violence cases to women teachers, since they were conducting lessons online from their homes and we all know how disorganized was this process [...] The teachers especially in rural areas had to work the whole day, since some kids could attend lessons in the morning, others were able to do it in the evening, due to internet connection problems. This increased workload affected on teacher’s everyday life, meaning that they became unable to keep work life balance, which triggered conflicts in families.” (NGO representative)

5.3. The patterns of disclosure of violence during the pandemic

The research attempted to understand the potential impact of pandemic and related restrictions on the patterns of disclosure of violence. The official data from “112” indicate that although general trend of disclosing domestic conflict or violence via calls is maintained during the pandemic, using of 112

application to report violence case has increased noticeably in this period. Specifically, if during March-August 2019 only 13 people used 112 application to disclose the violence case, this number has been increased to 41 during March-August 2020²⁷. Definitely this data is not sufficient to conclude on the changes in the patterns of disclosure and requires further observation and analysis of trends for longer period. Similarly, no changes in the patterns of disclosure can be observed from the official data from 116006. The data do not show significant changes among the initiators of calls (Figure 5). According to the data, potential victims of violence dominate among the initiators of calls, which is followed with police/prosecutors and “others” - implying mostly NGOs working on these issues and this trend is mainly maintained throughout the observed period. The only significant changes that could be observed from the data is that in June-August, 2020 the number of call initiators among police/prosecutors has been decreased more than 3 times, while the number of call initiators among “Others” increased more than two times. It is important to mention that 116006 data do not provide the information on specifically DV or VAW report initiators, instead the calls concern not only the violence cases but other related issues too, such as general information on rights of survivors and information on available supporting programs and services, information on restraining and protective orders and other legal mechanisms and etc.

Figure 5: Call initiators during March-May 2019, June-August 2019, March-May 2020 (lockdown), June-August 2020. Source: LEPL Agency For State Care and Assistance For the (Statutory) Victims of Human trafficking



The research participant from MIA mentioned that slight increase in neighbors as a reporting initiator can be observed since the pandemic, that confirms the above-mentioned presumption that violence became more visible for surroundings:

“The changes have been observed in the initiators of report. If before the pandemic in most of the cases initiators of reports were victims themselves, followed with family

²⁷ Source: LEPL Public Safety Command Center “112” of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia

members, in the second part of the April [lockdown period] neighbors were mostly initiators of the reports. This could be easily explained since people were mostly at home, especially during the evening times, and they could see the violence episodes more than before.” (MIA representative)

Another important observed tendency mentioned by research participants from both state and NGO sectors, was increased number of teenagers as reporters of domestic violence. In general, younger generation tend to have more non-discriminatory and violence-condemning attitudes, as proved by the national study on VAW findings conducted in 2017²⁸. Since pandemic, due to the home-schooling, children became observers of violence more frequently, that pushed them to report the violence to the police. Although this finding is very promising, available secondary data do not allow to do further analysis of reporters in terms of age disaggregation and it needs further exploration.

“I would like to emphasize the reports from juveniles. During last months I have lots of cases when the call initiator is juvenile and sometimes, they are not able to specify the address and we have to identify them based on the previous reports. However, the main thing here is that juveniles’ involvement in this process [disclosing and reporting violence] has increased since pandemic and it was not such high in other periods.” (FGD with police officers, Tbilisi)

Although the official data regarding the changes in patterns of disclosure of VAW and DV, the research participants discussed potential factors affecting the disclosure patterns since the pandemic and especially, during the lockdown. As the research participant NGO representatives, as well as public defender’s representative discussed, the negative pressure on disclosure during the pandemic has intensified significantly, as much as additional barriers has been emerged for victims to make safe reporting of the violence cases. The most significant factor affecting the disclosure is **changes in communication forms and means**, i.e. in-person communication was replaced with distance communication mainly via online platforms, which require from the victim to have sufficient digital skills and access to internet and technologies. In addition, **eliminating the opportunities to leave home and restrictions of using public transport** also affected the disclosure patterns significantly:

“We can talk about the barriers related to disclosure. For example, access to communication means were restricted, reporting through secured disclosure means were inaccessible. Before the pandemic, in many cases victim came to us when she went out for taking kids to school or to kindergarten, since this was the only possibility for them to go out, but during the lockdowns those possibilities were deprived, they had to stay home. The only reason to go out was markets or pharmacies, that’s why our recommendation to government was to cooperate with private sector more actively in this regard.” (Public Defender’s representative)

²⁸ National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia 2017. Pg.59-60. UN Women, Geostat. [Available here.](#)

As some NGO representatives participated in the research mentioned, lockdown and other restrictive measures also decreased trust to police. Victims did not feel guaranteed that police would take their problems as a priority.

„There were several women who told to me, that since there was this lockdown and the state institutions were busy with fighting against the virus, they considered that police would not take care of them in this situation.” (NGO representative)

To sum up, available official statistical data is not sufficient to conclude how the patterns of disclosure of VAW and DV cases changed as a result of COVID-19 crisis. As observed by police officers and MIA representatives the reports from juveniles and neighbors has been slightly increased since the pandemic. Restrictions posed by the GoG created potential barriers for victims to disclose the violence. These barriers include inaccessible transportation, eliminated opportunities to escape and less affordable communication means for secured disclosure for victims. In addition to these barriers, in some cases victims of violence considered that VAW could not be a priority issue for police due to pandemic and they avoided to report violence unless it became unbearable.

5.4. Experiences of survivors in accessing the services

To capture the experiences of survivors in accessing the services, 10 interviews were conducted with domestic violence and violence against women survivors. It is important to mention that these respondents already managed to access the services, however those women who could not manage to get services were not included in the research. All survivor women who participated in the study, described successful stories of accessing the services, without any challenges. Furthermore, they evaluate received services very positively.

All survivors participated in the research, managed to call to the police during the violence incident by her own, or by other member of family. Only one survivor shared that a social worker reported the incident, because she was afraid to call the police by herself.

Although survivors participated in the research did not emphasized on this issue, State and NGO representatives identified **lack of communication means, and difficulties related to the safe reporting** of the violence case as the major potential barrier for the victims during the lockdown. These difficulties were related to different factors: 1) Calling police became difficult – being isolated in one space with the perpetrator, the victims were not able to make safe reports to the police; 2) Lack of access to the technologies – many victims do not have smartphones or internet that is required for 112 application to safely report the violence case; in addition, 112 application is not available on ethnic minority languages. 3) Movement restrictions – victims were not able to visit police stations or crisis centers due to transport restrictions during the lockdown.

“We had a victim with whom it took four days for us to do the same thing that we usually could do in one day. We needed four days to explain what services and procedures are available and to ensure her to leave the violent place. We talked to her in fragments, for two minutes she could take the phone and call us and then suddenly she was not able to continue talking [because of presence of abuser]. Finally, she promised us to call back in an hour and agreed to call the police, but she did not call back and she turned to phone off, her husband was at home. We took the risk and called the police, because she was a victim of physical violence and I was really afraid that maybe her husband saw our communication and killed her. Fortunately, this woman agreed to collaborate with us. If she had not agreed, the situation might get worse.” (Public Defender’s representative)

The survivors assessed police as adequate at the moment of the incident. Only one survivor shared that the police’s indifferent decision to issue restraining order could not be effective and sufficient measure in her case. Specifically, restraining order would not guarantee her and her children’s safety and protection from the perpetrator who was creating physically threatening environment to them. Accordingly, the survivor requested moving to shelter by herself.

“The investigator told me that they could issue restraining order to protect us from her. Could you please tell me, how can restraining order stop the abuser? How many died women have we seen throughout these years... how could these ‘pink papers’ stop the abuser? [...] and the police tried to calm me down by saying that there exists restraining order.” (Survivor from Tbilisi shelter)

The biggest barrier for the victims was to report the violence case safely and escape from the abuser. If they manage to do this, then accessing the supportive services was relatively easy. As most of the survivors participated in the research mentioned, the conditions and situation in both state and non-state shelters or crisis center was radically different from their expectations in a positive way. Accordingly survivors mentioned that it is important to show victims what is happening in the shelters and crisis centers in reality.

“I did not even know that we had such shelters in Georgia. I imagined that the shelters would have extremely bad conditions, I was not informed and initially I refused to come here. But then situation got very difficult for me, I had a child and could not leave the child anywhere, the kindergartens were closed, everything was closed. Then they offered to refer me to the shelter, explained that the shelter had normal conditions and I agreed. And when I came here the situation was 100% different from my imagination. The building is renovated, equipped with heating and clean. The most important for me is that welcoming attitude from the personnel. I was afraid, how will they meet and accept me, and everything was so positive. Then I became friend here with girls, we shared our stories with each other. Then we started working together and we left our children with each other, we helped each other. Now I have absolutely different impression on people living in the shelter.” (Survivor from AVNG shelter)

“I did not expect that they would take care of me so much. I feel strong support from everyone, and I feel peacefully here. When I come here, I am very calm, I sleep calmly. I notice that I am getting better and everyone mentions that how I was looking when I came here at first and how I am now.” (Survivor from Tbilisi shelter)

Survivors described the received support in the shelters and crisis centers very positively. They mentioned that psychologists and lawyers provided consultations very timely. Furthermore, the survivors who already left the services mentioned that they still have continuing support from the service providers, and they feel free to get back to them and ask for advice or support. Survivors who spend pandemic period in the shelters mentioned that the administration was very adequate in supporting the survivors to adhere the general regulations regarding COVID-19, by equipping the personnel and beneficiaries with the PPE and providing clear recommendations.

“Now, when the [COVID-19] cases are increased, the administration notified us that apart from the absolute necessity, we have to avoid going out. I am responsible on my behalf and me and my children are not going out. I have boys and I let them out in very rare cases, when they feel extremely tensed in one space. Otherwise, the administration introduced new recommendations from the Ministry of Health, and we try to adhere with these rules.” (Survivor from Kutaisi shelter)

“We spend whole lockdown period here. People were starving outside, and we did not miss anything here. I am extremely grateful for this, if not this I do not know where I would be, I would not be able to buy even a bread.” (Survivor from AVNG shelter)

The biggest challenge experienced by the survivors is leaving shelter. Many of them are not able to afford buying or renting a home and are depending on the possible aid from the local government to pay a rent for them. Although shelter staff provides support in procedural part to request such support, survivors leaving shelters still remains the big gap. Furthermore, as the non-state shelter administration representatives mentioned, empowering activities for survivors, such as improving employment skills were cancelled since the pandemic.

“Although I have a job, I am paying bank debt and my income is not enough to rent a normal apartment, plus pay for food and utilities. It is extremely difficult for me to afford this alone. I do not know how long I will stay in the shelter; we are not allowed to stay for too long and apartment is a problem after leaving. I have applied [for rent] to the local government and the decision will be in a month. I am very nervous; I do not know what I can do if the decision is negative.” (Survivor from Tbilisi shelter)

To sum up, all the survivors participated in the research did manage to report the violence case successfully and access the respective services for victims of violence. The study is missing the perspectives of those victims, who faced barriers in the process of reporting the violence incidents.

According to the NGO representatives, these barriers are linked to the factors such as restricted movement of public transportation and inaccessible communication means for safe reporting. If the survivor managed to report the violence incident and escape the situation, then accessing to the supportive services in crisis centers and shelters was easy. The survivors assess the experience of receiving the supportive services very positively. The biggest gap is related to the procedures of survivors leaving shelter.

5.5. Challenges experienced by service providers in addressing the problem during the pandemic

This chapter will discuss the challenges of service providers in addressing the violence cases at each stage of its response – prevention, identification and addressing. Although the government identified domestic violence and violence against women as a priority issue during the pandemic and respective services continued functioning even during lockdown, some challenges and gaps have been identified while reflecting on the provision of the services during lockdown and afterwards pandemic period.

Challenges at prevention stage

As mentioned above, as the preventive measure, the Government of Georgia took specific actions to distribute information in different languages about ways how to report the violence cases: SMSs were sent massively on the mobile phones, short videos were prepared and shared via television and social networks and etc. However, as the research participant NGO representatives mentioned, although these measures were essential, only these actions could not be sufficient for effective prevention. Furthermore, NGO representatives emphasize the need of more holistic and in-depth approach of prevention, which will be addressed to the root causes of violence and efforts should be directed to the empowerment of women.

“Government communication was quite defective, in general. One direction in Government’s communication should be related to these severe problems, which we already knew that would be inevitable as a result of crisis. Government should have clear message to the society that VAW is a priority.” (FGD with non-state service providers)

The proactive dissemination of the information by service providers was obstructed due to lockdown during March-May 2020. Although the police continued nonstop work during this period, the biggest effort of police officers was directed to control the enforcement of lockdown measures. The law enforcement officers in Tbilisi were not able to conduct regular visits in families and use the opportunity to introduce information regarding available measures against domestic violence. Similar challenge was faced by social workers when their working routine was shifted to the remote mode and monitoring visits were almost canceled due to lockdown measures. Such regular visits of law enforcement officers and social workers in the families could serve as a strong preventive function, by monitoring and exploring the situations in the families.

Preventive activities became challenging for non-state service provider organizations too during the pandemic. Their preventive activities, such as visits in the regions, schools, trainings and other awareness raising campaigns – either cancelled or shifted to the online format. Activities in online format could not cover as much beneficiaries as it was possible during in-person visits. Moreover, service providers were not able to conduct monitoring visits in psychiatric institutions, where the risk of violence is especially high towards women with mental health problems.

NGO representatives participated in the research, especially emphasized the gaps in the services for trans community. Worth mentioning that LBT-focused organizations had several meetings with Human Rights Secretariat representatives to raise the issue of gaps in government response for trans community, however as research participants mentioned, *trans community was left behind to the anti-crisis plan* elaborated by the GoG in response to the pandemic.

“The huge experience that we already have accumulated, helped us to predict that the biggest hit would be on transgender women, the most vulnerable group. Based on this experience since March we started working in emergency mode. We started monitoring of our beneficiaries, assessing their needs, and fundraising to address these needs. We did this because we already knew that the Government would miss out trans community and in fact, the anti-crisis plan approved by state confirmed [that trans community was missing from plan]. We made several public announcements and publicly referred to the government, participated in several online meetings to somehow address this gap in government’s approach. We do have some progress, but I could not say that these changes are fundamental.” (NGO representative)

Challenges at early identification stage

Challenges and gaps have been identified at the identification of violence cases stage too. As mentioned above, the police continued working however the law enforcement officers had to stop proactive visits in the families, that could work as a preventive, as well as an effective mechanism to early identify the violence cases.

Monitoring visits of social workers is also an effective identification mechanism for potential violence case, however based on the official regulation elaborated by the ATIPFUND, social workers shifted to the distance working mode, i.e. the monitoring visits were replaced with the monitoring calls via phone. The in-person visits could be done only in emergency cases. Distance mode of work turned out to be quite challenging for the social workers, as much as phone communication could not provide thorough understanding of the situation in the family, accordingly phone-based assessments might be ineffective and incomplete for identification of violence cases.

“In general, social workers and psychologists significantly rely on not only verbal, but also non-verbal emotions. When we had phone communication with beneficiaries, we did not have information about other actors who might be with the beneficiary in that moment,

also we did not have information about the potentially influencing factors on her. Identification via phone communication was extremely difficult, because we did not know maybe the abuser was standing next to her...” (Atipfund Representative)

The absence of adjusted referral mechanism for pandemic situation and especially for quarantine zones is another gap in identification of violence cases. In particular, the respondents mentioned that the role duties of third parties should be specified and strengthened in addressing the violence cases. For example, the role of healthcare worker is essential in identification and referring the violence case. The demand on medical emergency help has never been such high as it is during the pandemic. Accordingly, the healthcare workers might be the first who gets the information about the potential violence act in the family. The research participants from both state and NGO sectors, especially emphasized the role of doctors working in quarantine zones. Since the quarantine zones are isolated and visits are limited, it is essential that doctors or other personnel working at quarantine zones has a defined responsibility in the identification and referral process of violence cases. Teachers were also identified as an important party in the identification of domestic violence cases, as much as online teaching process gives them opportunity to better understand what is happening in the families and existing violence might be more visible for them.

“Teaching process is online since the pandemic. Teachers and healthcare workers had the contact with people most frequently in this period. Police is the last instance when the report is already done. In case of health concerns – medicine workers were in direct contact with people, also [teachers/lecturers] were in direct contact with pupils or students. Accordingly, it is essential that these two agencies [ministry of education and ministry of health] are coordinating appropriately in this regard and are paying sufficient attention to violence issues.” (MIA representative)

Challenges at addressing and management of violence case

At the addressing of violence and case management stage different agencies are involved with different functions. All these agencies had to adapt to the pandemic situation and either change or limit the format of their response to the violence case, that consequently affected on the quality of the case management.

The biggest challenge that police faced was at investigation stage. As the police representatives mentioned, direct contact with the victim, that is essential for quality investigation, was limited due to pandemic-related factors. People tend to avoid visiting the police stations and the investigators had to collect most of the necessary information remotely, that had certain limitations and resulted in less effective investigative experiments.

“Communication with the victim, bringing them to the police office and conducting inquiry became quite difficult. Collecting evidence from people, apart from the victim’s information is essential for effective investigation. It was extremely difficult to get this evidence because people refused to come to the police during the pandemic and we have

left only information collected via phone, which in most cases was not sufficient.” (FGD with police officers, Tbilisi)

Prosecutor’s office has significant role in accessing justice by victims. The coordinator of victim and witness has a specific role to support the victim during the investigation and court trial processes. Due to the lockdown and further pandemic situation the direct communication between the coordinator and victim was also limited due to the distance communication, via phone or online, accordingly the victims were not able to get the sufficient support, that in some cases resulted in victims withdrawing their lawsuits.

Court processes also shifted to distance mode, that was linked to the serious challenges as described by the research participants from both state and NGO sectors. According to them, the quality of the court processes worsened significantly. The biggest gap was the unavailability of the isolated space for victim to testify at court trial. As shared by the research participants, in most cases it was done remotely via online platforms, that could not ensure the neutral environment and created additional barriers for the victim. For example, many of them do not have access to the internet and technologies, or do not have sufficient skills to use the technologies. Furthermore, the online format of the court processes was especially challenging for the lawyers defending the victims, as much as engaging in arguing process adequately was not possible during distance communication. All these challenges could have led the court decisions being loyal and to the increased number of acquittals for perpetrators.

“When I requested to allocate separate room for victim in [Tbilisi] court, it was not possible due inadequate resources and conditions. Distance communication cannot replace in-person communication and whenever it is essential, in-person communication should take place following with the safety recommendations. This is associated with the technical resources, such as isolated room but this is crucial, especially in the court. [...] Ensuring that the victim has opportunity to testify in neutral conditions is critical and represents the biggest gap related to human rights and definitely needs to be eliminated.” (FGD with police officers, Tbilisi)

“The court decisions became very loyal during the pandemic, very often verdict was not imprisonment and the perpetrators were returned back to the families. The explanation was that during the pandemic the state cannot maintenance of the prisoners. This does not make any sense and creates huge problems, especially when the extreme form of violence is in place [...] Another important problem related to the courts is distance processes. It is really suffering. Victims do not have access to internet and computer, they come to me or I go to them in the regions. It is not possible to keep distance and avoid contacts [...] I cannot hear half of the communication; I can understand intuitively and try to reply adequately. This is truly suffering, and it disrupts me to communicate certain points effectively during the process.” (NGO representative)

Supportive services such as crisis centers and shelters continued to work during the lockdown and further pandemic period, however the services provided in the agencies have been adapted to the official

restrictions imposed by the government. For example, as mentioned above some services, such as consultations with psychologists and lawyers switched to the distance mode. This process was associated with different difficulties, e.g. remote consultations could not replace in-person interaction with the beneficiary, accordingly the quality of the consultation was relatively low. Some beneficiaries, who were not using 24/7 services had to use distance consultation from their home, that was related additional barriers, such as inaccessibility of technologies and internet, absence of personal space which is essential for receiving psychologist consultations, lack of digital skills to engage in distance services and many more. **This automatically meant the decrease in accessing to the supportive services for the survivors.**

“The consultation provided via Zoom or Webex can never been as effective as in-person. It is not possible to work effectively with the beneficiary on stress and trauma and to help in psychological rehabilitation if I am not looking in her eyes and cannot understand her reactions. Service provision was really difficult. Moreover, many NGOs closed their services and did not accept new beneficiaries, while state shelters were overloaded, and it was extremely difficult to refer new beneficiary in the shelter.” (Atipfund representative)

Another important challenge that shelters faced during the lockdown was related to the restructuring process. As mentioned above, Tbilisi shelter was prepared for isolation zone where newly accepted beneficiaries spend quarantine period. For this reason, beneficiaries who were living in Tbilisi shelter had to move to the shelters located in the regions. This process meant that all the ongoing consultations and rehabilitation services (such as psychological service, or legal aid) should be handed over to the regional staff and in many cases had to be interrupted due to difficulties related to the process.

Limited infrastructure and technological equipment created additional barriers during the pandemic for support services too. For example, as the ATIPFUND representatives mentioned, only Tbilisi shelter has a space where newly accepted beneficiary can spend their isolation days before joining with other beneficiaries. Other shelters in the regions are lacking such space, that creates serious risks of infection, considering the fact that there is no measure in place to ensure all new beneficiaries being tested on COVID-19 before getting in the shelter, even though shelter staff and beneficiaries are on the mandatory testing list²⁹. Testing of beneficiaries and shelter staff was identified as an important gap that puts functioning of shelters under major risks.

“It is essential that beneficiary is already tested [on COVID-19] before admitting to the shelter; however, I cannot oblige police to ensure beneficiary’s testing and also, I cannot refuse to admit new beneficiary. The police directly says – ‘I do not know where to take beneficiary to test’ [...] I think it is crucial to have some regulations to ensure that when the police takes beneficiary to test, they should be allowed first, without queue. It is not possible now; I do not know why and I have to admit them without test results. I was trying

²⁹ #975 decree of Government of Georgia on the approval and conduct of the list of priority persons subject to mandatory testing for coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) infection (COVID-19). Issued on 15.06.2020. [available here](#)

to find out today, because we are on mandatory list of testing, I called on NCDC hotline, they referred to regional center, but I could not find anything.” (Atipfund representative)

Difficulties with managing beneficiaries is another factor that increases the risks of spreading infection in the shelters. In particular, although limiting mobility and abiding the protective rules (wearing masks, washing/disinfecting hands, keeping distance) is strongly recommended by the shelter administration, in many cases it was still challenging to ensure that all beneficiaries follow the recommendations, especially after spring lockdown, when the restrictions had been released. As mentioned by the shelter staff, it was especially challenging to communicate with the beneficiaries with mental health issues.

Lack of technologies and devices, as well as low quality internet, created additional challenges for the shelters, as much as many beneficiaries are accompanied with school-aged children, who needed to be involved in the online learning processes. Beneficiaries themselves do not possess laptops or other devices and shelter administration had to allocate their laptops for children beneficiaries, which in many cases was not enough to sufficiently involve in the online lessons.

“If we have another lockdown, I do not know whether we will be able to deal with it. Learning process is really problematic for us, some children even use my personal phone to attend the online lessons. Only listening lessons in the phone is not effective at all, if child is not able to sit at the computer and see the materials.” (Atipfund representative)

Risks for service providers

Since state service providers continued functioning during the lockdown and pandemic, their health was put under the high risk. Although they were following the strict rules of personal safety – using masks and keeping distance, it was not possible to protect the frontline service providers from the virus. Furthermore, social workers participated in the research, were not aware whether they were included in the list of mandatory testing³⁰ or not and identified regular testing procedure as an important gap in their working routine.

“Social workers are not being tested [...] we always have this demand and I hope it will be taken into account. We have to meet with lots of people and it will be really good if we will be tested. With this we will be more secured.” (FGD with state service providers)

“When [Social workers] have to visit the families, they try to explore the situation in advance in terms of virus. Sometimes there are cases when people do not reveal [that they are infected] and social workers are facing the fact during the visit. In this regard, social workers are very vulnerable.” (FGD with state service providers)

³⁰ #975 decree of Government of Georgia on the approval and conduct of the list of priority persons subject to mandatory testing for coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) infection (COVID-19). Issued on 15.06.2020. [available here](#)

In addition, the workload of service providers has been increased and, in some cases, they had to spend more hours on working from the offices during the lockdown. This was caused by different factors, e.g. victims lacking the capacity of distance communication and needed support from the service providers to help in communication or organization of documents. For this reason, in many cases the service providers still had to physically meet with the beneficiaries. As the shelter staff mentioned, although they had internal regulations regarding working in shifts during the state of emergency period in spring, in many cases it was not possible to follow these regulations.

“We do have a schedule of shifts, but very often we could not follow this schedule, because when new beneficiary was admitted, who had different needs, we were required to go to the work physically. Apart rare exceptions, we were not able to work remotely.” (FGD with state service providers)

Communication and coordination with different sectors and agencies

Gaps in communication and coordination with different agencies was identified as a significant factor that needs to be improved for successful provision of the services for beneficiaries. The lack of communication was especially emphasized by non-state service providers. As they mentioned, the proactively disseminated information how the state services were functioning during the lockdown was not available, accordingly they were not able to provide information to the victims, who approached to them first.

Communication with the society was identified as a gap as well by NGO representatives. In particular, as mentioned above, information only regarding 112 and respective application was disseminated by the government, however active information campaigns regarding functioning crisis centers and shelters was not available for citizens, that might be a factor to refraining from reporting violence case.

“When the state of emergency was announced and the restrictions were imposed, the information was not available on how shelters and crisis centers were functioning, what kind of services were available if any and whether the shelters were admitting the beneficiaries. This information was not available even for us – NGOs, unless we obtained it through personal contacts.” (NGO representative)

Competence of service providers

Competence and in-depth understanding of the problem is crucial to effectively address the violence against women and domestic violence cases. The study showed that service providers’ sensitivity towards problem, as well as proper perspective in understanding the case is still a serious challenge for the system. As NGO representatives mentioned, domestic violence and violence against women is not perceived as a complex and structural problem by service providers, instead each case is seen as a local problem. Accordingly, in many cases domestic violence cases is not an interesting case for the police and is perceived as a routine burden, which is resulted in incomplete investigation of the circumstances.

“[police] has huge workload and [violence cases] is part of unwanted job. It is really rare case when police officer is motivated and feels the responsibility towards the victim. Very often ‘male solidarity’ is so much obvious that talking about empathy towards victim is absurd [...] We often have recommendations to MIA that police officers working on VAW cases should have strong responsibility, especially when issuing restrictive orders, they need to explore the circumstances more responsibly and comprehensively.” (NGO representative)

The narratives from the FGDs with service providers and police representatives also indicate that the proper understanding of the VAW issue is still problematic. The discussions showed that in some cases, the reported violence case is perceived as a minor problem that does not need to be reported. Such attitude is directly linked to the ineffective response from the police and consequently pushing the victim to refrain from the reporting.

“I do not even look in the statistics, I do not trust them, but I know that a decent woman will refer to 112 or police only in the extreme case. Usually active women refer to police for every single case and this 112 is that instrument for them to make more pressure on their husbands. They are holding the phone and saying, ‘if you do not do this, I will call to police’. Of course, it is not happening in 90%, but in 10% poor men are oppressed, believe me.” (FGD with police officers, regions)

To sum up, the pandemic and respective restrictive measures affected all aspects of the state response of violence against women and domestic violence. The government’s approach to continue applying existing procedures routinely was not effective. Changes in communication form, i.e. distance mode of communication created barriers on one hand for victims to establish the communication with the police or service providers due to the lack of access to the internet and technologies, on the other hand service providers were not able to provide quality support in online format. This approach is lacking perspective on increased risks of domestic violence and violence against women and proactive measures to address these risks are missing in the approach. Accordingly, it is essential that proactive measures against domestic violence and violence against women is being emphasized in the state anti-crisis plan, together with the measures for women empowerment to eliminate the inequality intensified as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. In addition, increased workload for service providers and obscure regulations regarding the testing procedures increased the risks for their health, which in turn creates risks for the adequate functioning services.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

According to the international human rights standards during the health-related crisis it is critical that human rights approach is applied. This means that governments must comply with certain core human rights obligations while planning response to COVID-19 related crisis. Government should assess and address the needs of women and girls in all their diversity who are experiencing the impact of the crisis

disproportionately. Government should consider how women and girls are affected by crisis responses and integrate specific measures to eliminate gender inequalities and its negative consequences, including violence against women and domestic violence³¹.

This study aimed to assess how the COVID-19 crisis affected on the violence against women and domestic violence problem in Georgia, in terms of its prevalence, forms, severity and drivers. Furthermore, the study attempted to capture the major gaps and challenged in the service provision for VAW since the pandemic. The results show that although no tangible changes in prevalence could be captured in the official statistics on VAW and DV, the severity of the problem has been increased. Aggravation of gender inequality as a result of the COVID-19 crisis has amplified specific factors, that in turn accelerated violence against women. Maintaining trends without increased cases in the official statistics could be interpreted as an indication to gaps in the response mechanism, which could not manage to ensure the provision and proper communication of secure reporting mechanism for victims living in the isolation with abusers. At each stage of the response the existing mechanisms were routinely adapted to the crisis situation, without considering the perspective and the actual needs of women and girls. Accordingly, potential barriers have been emerged for the victims to safely report the case. The study identified critical gaps at the stage of court processes too, that creates additional barriers for victims in accessing to justice. Lacking personal space, restricted movement, as well as limited access to the communication means technologies and proper digital skills created the major barriers for women to make adequate use of the response mechanism to escape from the violent environment. Victims who managed to report the violence, also managed to access to the support services easily. However, distance consultations were not as effective as in-person meetings, furthermore many empowering activities for women have been cancelled.

Based on the international practice and recommendations provided by research participants, following recommendations were developed for each responsible agency to address the gaps in VAW response mechanism and supportive services functioning amid COVID-19 crisis. Recommendations present 4 key areas of combating violence against women and girls in all their diversity during the COVID-19 pandemic - prevention, identification, addressing and monitoring of VAW.

Prevention of VAW

The study revealed that the proper communication regarding VAW issues during crisis was missing from the GoG. Specifically, more clarity was needed from the government emphasizing that despite the crisis combatting of VAW remains as priority issue for the country. Based on this, at the prevention stage several key issues need to be addressed by different agencies to prevent discrimination of women, including marginalized groups and to prevent VAW:

³¹ Six concrete measures to support women and girls in all their diversity in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. UNAIDS. 2020. [Available here](#)

Intensive media and information campaigns needs to be carried out to proactively communicate existing VAW response mechanism and functioning supportive services amid COVID-19 crisis. This can be accomplished through several ways:

- ⇒ Active media campaigns need to be conducted to provide information on hotlines as well as existing supporting and rehabilitation services. This also concerns the information to the functioning of shelters, to show how they work, how the safety and security of beneficiaries are ensured, especially during the pandemic. “Story from inside” would work effectively, as the survivors mentioned during the interviews, even though some of them had information about the shelter, they did not have information how it works, that would help them to seek for help earlier.
- ⇒ Information on hotlines and supporting services should be promoted by public figures such as government representatives and others with high credibility among society.
- ⇒ Information brochures on hotlines and existing services needs to be disseminated in public transports, markets, pharmacies etc.
- ⇒ All the information on hotlines as well as existing services should be disseminated in all the minority languages.
- ⇒ Information on the regulations for potential victims during the curfew needs to be disseminated via media outlets or any other information means, since as the interviews with survivors revealed, they did not have information that even in case of curfew they could leave the house to seek for help and they would not be fined by police

Human rights approach needs to be integrated in COVID-19 crisis response. As mentioned above, according to the international human rights standards, during the health-related crisis human rights approach needs to be applied as most effective approach. Accordingly, a guiding document for government would be useful to help to integrate human rights approach in the preventive measures against spreading virus, as well as in government programs on crisis response. It is essential that specific focus is done on the LGBTQI+ community and other vulnerable groups’ needs during the crisis and is reflected in the anti-crisis plan. Furthermore, as recommended by the LBT focused organizations, it is critical that the services and assistance introduced by the government specifically for these groups, should not employ such mechanism that makes the LGBTQI+ people force coming out to benefit from this service.

Coordination mechanism between NGO and state sectors on VAW during COVID-19 crisis needs to be defined. As service providers mentioned, the context has changed drastically, thus there is a need to define coordination mechanism how to deal VAW in the context of pandemic, where the functions of different agencies will be defined. The coordination framework also needs to cover prevention mechanisms of violence in quarantine zones.

Identification of VAW

The study revealed that VAW has been intensified in different ways during the pandemic, however the negative pressure on disclosure of the cases increased even more, that emerged difficulties in identification of cases.

VAW referral mechanism should be elaborated according to the crisis context. It is important that the VAW referral meets the requirements of the crisis context and reflects the emerging needs as well as new opportunities.

Specific regulations for identification of VAW needs to be elaborated for quarantine zones: The risk of violence in quarantine zones are high due to isolation and escaping the violence is much difficult for potential victim. According to the research findings, the procedures to identify or prevent VAW in quarantine zones are not defined properly. Accordingly, it would be recommended to elaborate specific regulations on prevention and identification of violence in quarantine zones. This could be accomplished in several ways:

- ⇒ Regulations should be elaborated regarding the interviewing passengers in airports before sending them to the quarantine zones. For example, women and men should be interviewed separately. That would help to identify the risks of violence and avoid placing potential victim and perpetrator together.
- ⇒ Guideline on identification and monitoring of VAW could be integrated in the regulation of daily check of health conditions in the quarantine zones.
- ⇒ Brochures providing information on VAW and supportive services needs to be proactively disseminated in quarantine zones.
- ⇒ Staff working in quarantine zones as well as healthcare workers should be trained in the identification of potential violence cases during their daily work.

Teachers' role should be emphasized in reporting of VAW: Teachers represent an important party in early identification and reporting of violence. In the context of pandemic teachers become the ones who are the closest to the families, through online teaching they can better observe situation in the families and identify the risks of violence easily. Accordingly, the role of teachers in the referral of VAW needs to be emphasized.

The role of law enforcement officers should be intensified in identification of VAW cases. The negative pressure on disclosure is increased during pandemic, potential victims are reluctant to report the violence due variety of reasons. In this context, the role of law enforcement officers is extremely important to proactively communicate with families, especially to those under the high risk to identify cases at the earliest stage possible.

Alternative reporting mechanisms should be introduced and promoted: The research participants mentioned that the phone as reporting mechanism become less effective during the lockdown. Accordingly, the need of alternative reporting mechanism became urgent. International experience proves that the cooperation with private sector is useful to create alternative sources for reporting. Specifically, other countries' experience shows that most effective reporting alternatives could be markets or pharmacies, since in many cases those were only places where potential victims are allowed to go during pandemic. Furthermore, market and pharmacy staff need to be trained and involved in the referral procedure. While "staying at home" with abuser limits the opportunities to report the case safely, in the markets and pharmacies victims might find safer place to report.

Addressing and monitoring of VAW

Research revealed that pandemic and related restrictions created many barriers in everyday routine for service providers as well as law enforcement officers. Their workload has been increased which puts their health under the increased risks.

The role of Coordinator of a Witness and a Victim should be promoted and used meaningfully. The research identified that COVID-19 crisis aggravated the factors that create barriers for victims to fight for their rights to the end and push them to withdraw their lawsuits. The role of Coordinator of a Witness and a Victim is critical in addressing this problem. Accordingly, it is recommended to promote the role of the coordinator and emphasize the need meaningfully work with victims before the courts.

Special attention should be directed to the equal access to justice by victims during the COVID-19 crisis. Due to the pandemic court processes shifted to the online format which emerged barriers for victims to attend and adequately participate in the process because usually victims lack access to the internet and technologies and do not have proper digital skills. These circumstances deprive the opportunity to participate in the court process and testimony from the neutral environment. Accordingly, it is critical that justice system ensures the proper participation of the victim in the court process and supports her in accessing to justice.

Facilities to address the needs emerged due to COVID-19 should be available in all shelters. Only Tbilisi shelter has isolated space for new beneficiaries to spend isolation days. It is essential to ensure that all shelters have sufficient facilities to address the safety needs related to COVID-19 and to ensure uninterrupted provision of the services in the shelter.

Atipfund should elaborate standard operating procedures specifically for agencies' operations amid COVID-19: The research participants from the state service could not provide information regarding existing and functioning standard procedures for their operations. Although shelter staff and beneficiaries are on mandatory list, they are not being tested on COVID-19 regularly because of the obscurity of the instructions regarding this procedure. However, the increased cases of COVID-19 emerge the need to have more standardized procedures of testing of staff and beneficiaries. Social workers are not identified for mandatory testing, however the practice showed that regular tests for them is also critical.

Annex 1: In-Depth Interview Guide for service providers

Introduction

Thank you for participating in the interview. We are conducting research on impact assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic vis-à-vis violence against women and domestic violence. We have invited you here today to discuss this issue with you, and to seek your advice about how we can improve government response and services to best help women and their families during the pandemic. Your responses will be used to help develop resources and services to assist women experiencing violence in Georgia.

Our discussion will be kept strictly confidential. We will be producing a report on our findings but will not quote anything you say by name.

If you don't mind, we would like to tape our discussion. This is to help us record what has been said. The tape will not be played to anyone. Once notes have been taken from the tape, it will be destroyed.

Do you agree to be interviewed? *Yes / No*
Do I have your permission to record our conversation on tape? *Yes / No*

Thank you.

We hope that you will all feel free to discuss your opinions openly. There are no right or wrong answers, and we would like to hear your honest opinions about the issue.

1. Introductory Questions

- What are your key roles and responsibilities in the process of addressing VAW cases?
- How the cases of VAW are reported to your service? Please describe the details.
- How do you normally respond when they come to seek help?
- Do you have a policy or protocol to protect the service user from further subsequent violence?
- Do you offer medical/legal/counselling/shelter services? If not, is a referral made on behalf of the service user? If not, why? If referrals are made, are they followed up? Please provide the specific examples.
- What safety and quality assurance mechanisms are in place in your organization to protect the needs of survivors?

2. changes in prevalence and severity of violence against women and domestic violence, from the perspective of service providers and law enforcement and the patterns of disclosure of violence to service providers and law enforcement before and during the pandemic:

- Based on your experience has the prevalence of violence against women increased/decreased during the pandemic? What extent? how it was different from the previous periods? Please, specify.
- Speaking from your experience did you observe any changes in the forms of violence against women during the pandemic? Please, specify the forms of violence mostly observed during the pandemic and how it was different from the previous periods. Also, please, specify if any new trends have been observed? *[ask about specific statistics/evidence that they might know and share, which can be used for desk review]*
- Based on your experience/observation which group of women (domestic workers, victims of violence, IDPs, migrants, older women, girls, health workers, persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, LBTQ women, etc.) were under the highest risk of violence during the pandemic? By whom? Please specify for each group.
- Comparing to the same period of 2019, how the Lockdown (March-May 2020) effected to the disclosure of violence to service providers and law enforcement? Increased/ decreased? Please explain.
- Do you observe any changes in the patterns of disclosure of violence to service providers and law enforcement during (March-May 2020) and after (June-August 2020) lockdown? What are the changes? Please, specify. Elaborate on who were the reporters of the cases mainly (victims, family members, neighbors)? What mechanisms did they use to report the violence case (hotline, 112, other)? What were the most commonly reported forms of violence against women during the lockdown? following period? How would you explain these changes in the disclosure pattern during the lockdown and following period?
- Based on your experience what were/are the main obstacles in disclosure of violence to service providers and law enforcement during the lockdown? After the lockdown? Please, specify. Are there any changes before and after pandemic in this regard? Please, specify and explain.

3. Main drivers/catalysts of violence against women and domestic violence before and during the pandemic. Linkages to the lockdown and other preventive measures:

- Based on your experience what were the main drivers/catalysts of violence against women and domestic violence before the pandemic? Were those drivers/catalysts changed during the pandemic? How? Please specify.
- Based on your experience how did the lockdown and other preventive measures such as curfew, quarantine etc, effect on the prevalence and intensity of violence against women and domestic violence? How? Please specify.
- Did you have cases of violence against women/domestic violence from the quarantine zone? Who notified the authorities about the violence? How was the case handled? Please, describe the process step by step in details.
- Is there any officially recognized guidelines to handle the violence cases in quarantine zones? If yes, by which authority? If no, do you think it will be helpful for you?

5. Challenges experienced by the state and non-state service providers in addressing the problem during the pandemic:

- How did the pandemic and lockdown period affect on your working routine? Were you able to maintain fully functioning role in addressing VAW cases? If no, how did you manage your work and responsibilities?
- What are the main challenges in prevention of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic? Please specify.
- What are the main challenges in identifying cases of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic? Please specify.
- What are the main challenges in responding cases of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic? Please specify.
- What are the main challenges in monitoring cases of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic? Please specify.
- Were there any services for victims of violence inaccessible during the lockdown? Which services? Why? Please, specify.

6. Recommendations

- What would be your recommendations for the state authorities to improve preventive actions of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic and after pandemic? Please specify.
- What would be your recommendation for the state authorities to improve responding mechanisms of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic and after pandemic? Please specify.
- Can you remind any measures in preventing/responding violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic, conducted by state authorities, or non-state actors which you consider as successful and/or innovative? Please, specify.

Annex 2: Focus Group Discussion Guide for service providers

Introduction

Thank you for participating in the discussion. We are conducting research on impact assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic vis-à-vis violence against women and domestic violence. We have invited you here today to discuss this issue with you, and to seek your advice about how we can improve government response and services to best help women and their families during the pandemic. Your responses will be used to help develop resources and services to assist women experiencing violence in Georgia.

All of our discussions will be kept strictly confidential. We will be producing a report on our findings but will not quote anything you say by name.

If you don't mind, we would like to tape our discussion. This is to help us record what has been said. The tape will not be played to anyone. Once notes have been taken from the tape, it will be destroyed.

Is everyone happy to participate in this discussion?	Record response	Yes / No
Is there anyone who would like to leave now?	Record if someone leaves	

Thank you.

We hope that you will all feel free to discuss your opinions openly. There are no right or wrong answers, and we would like to hear your honest opinions about the issue.

1. Introductory Questions

- What are your key roles and responsibilities in the process of addressing VAW cases?
- How the cases of VAW are reported to your service? Please describe the details.
- Mostly who reports the cases? (victims, family members, neighbours?)
- What are the most commonly reported forms of violence against women?

2. Changes in prevalence and severity of violence against women and domestic violence, from the perspective of service providers and law enforcement and law enforcement and the patterns of disclosure of violence to service providers and law enforcement before and during the pandemic:

- Based on your experience has the prevalence of violence against women increased/decreased during the pandemic? What extent? how it was different from the previous periods? Please, specify.
- Speaking from your experience did you observe any changes in the forms of violence against women during the pandemic? Please, specify the forms of violence mostly observed during the pandemic and how it was different from the previous periods. Also, please, specify if any new trends have been observed? *[ask about specific statistics/evidence that they might know and share, which can be used for desk review]*
- Based on your experience/observation which group of women (domestic workers, victims of violence, IDPs, migrants, older women, girls, health workers, persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, LGBTQ women, etc.) were under the highest risk of violence during the pandemic? By whom? Please specify for each group.
- Comparing to the same period of 2019, how the Lockdown (March-May 2020) effected to the disclosure of violence to service providers and law enforcement? Increased/ decreased? Please explain.
- Do you observe any changes in the patterns of disclosure of violence to service providers and law enforcement during (March-May 2020) and after (June-August 2020) lockdown? What are the changes? Please, specify. Elaborate on who were the reporters of the cases mainly (victims, family members, neighbors)? What mechanisms did they use to report the violence case (hotline, 112, other)? What were the most commonly reported forms of violence against women during the

lockdown? following period? How would you explain these changes in the disclosure pattern during the lockdown and following period?

- Based on your experience what were/are the main obstacles in disclosure of violence to service providers and law enforcement during the lockdown? After the lockdown? Please, specify. Are there any changes before and after pandemic in this regard? Please, specify and explain.

3. Main drivers/catalysts of violence against women and domestic violence before and during the pandemic. Linkages to the lockdown and other preventive measures:

- Based on your experience what were the main drivers/catalysts of violence against women and domestic violence before the pandemic? Were those drivers/catalysts changed during the pandemic? How? Please specify.
- Based on your experience how did the lockdown and other preventive measures such as curfew, quarantine etc, effect on the prevalence and intensity of violence against women and domestic violence? How? Please specify.
- Did you have cases of violence against women/domestic violence from the quarantine zone? Who notified the authorities about the violence? How was the case handled? Please, describe the process step by step in details.
- Is there any officially recognized guidelines to handle the violence cases in quarantine zones? If yes, by which authority? If no, do you think it will be helpful for you?

4. Challenges experienced by the state and non-state service providers in addressing the problem during the pandemic:

- How did the pandemic and lockdown period affect on your working routine? Were you able to maintain fully functioning role in addressing VAW cases? If no, how did you manage your work and responsibilities?
- What are the main challenges in prevention of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic? Please specify.
- What are the main challenges in identifying cases of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic? Please specify.
- What are the main challenges in responding cases of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic? Please specify.
- What are the main challenges in monitoring cases of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic? Please specify.
- Were there any services for victims of violence unaccessible during the lockdown? Which services? Why? Please, specify.

5. Recommendations

- What would be your recommendations for the state authorities to improve preventive actions of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic and after pandemic? Please specify.

- What would be your recommendation for the state authorities to improve responding mechanisms of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic and after pandemic? Please specify.
- Can you remind any measures in preventing/responding violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic, conducted by state authorities, or non-state actors which you consider as successful and/or innovative? Please, specify.

Annex 3: In-depth Interview Guide with Survivors of Violence

Introduction

Thank you for participating in the interview. We are conducting research on violence against women in Georgia. We have invited you here to learn about your experiences, and to seek your advice about how we can best help other women who may be having similar experiences to your own.

All of the information that you choose to provide is voluntary and will be kept strictly confidential. You are free to stop the interview at any point, or to not answer any of the questions that we ask. I will not write down your name.

Your answers will be used to draw Government attention to the problems faced by women in Georgia, and to develop better services for women, especially during pandemic. Again, I would like to assure you that everything that you say will be kept secret.

Do you agree to be interviewed? Yes / No

If you don't mind, I would like to tape our discussion. This is to help me accurately record what you say. The tape will not be played to anyone, and once I have taken notes from the tape, it will be destroyed. If you would prefer that we do not tape the interview, I can take notes instead.

Do I have your permission to record our conversation on tape? Yes / No

Thank you.

Note: Questions written in *italic* are follow up questions. It is not necessary to ask exactly as it is formulated. It is essential that follow up question logically continues the story; accordingly, the interviewer might change it throughout the flow of the conversation.

Interview guideline

- Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself?
 - *Where do you live now?*
 - *Do you have any children?*
 - *How do you normally spend your days?*
 - *What things do you like to do?*
- Tell me about your story, how did you end up in the shelter?
 - *When did your problems with your husband/partner/family member start?*
 - *How long has this continued?*
 - *Are there times when this has improved or gotten worse?*

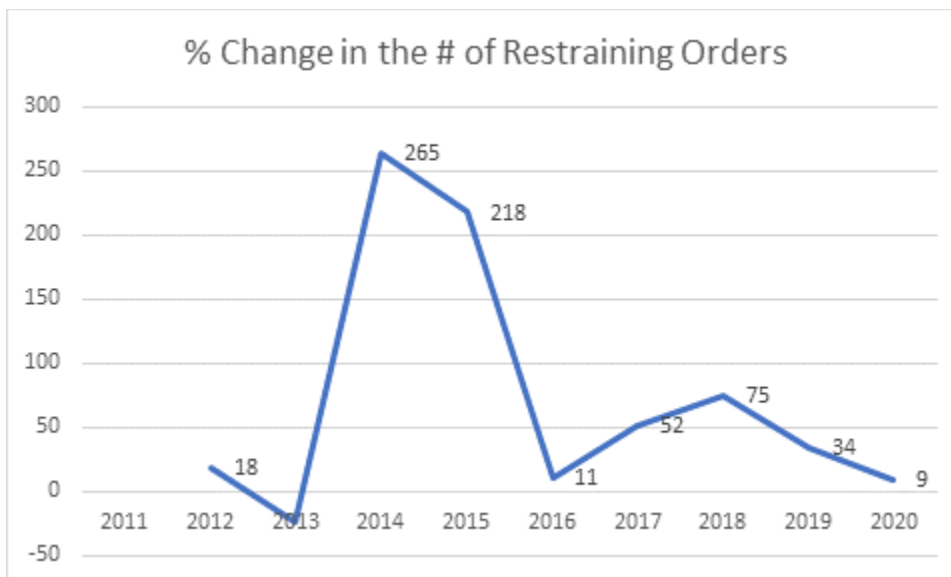
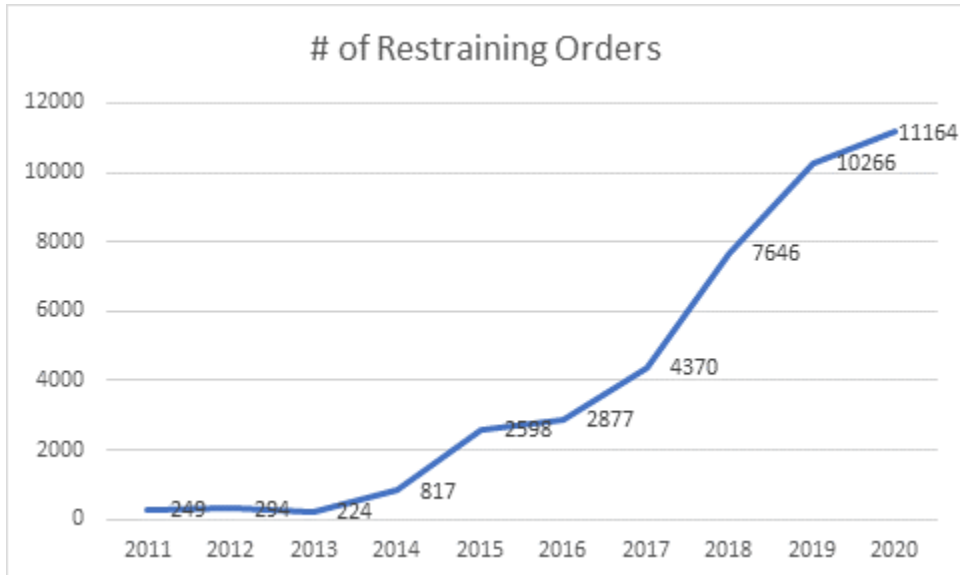
- *What were the situations in which the violence happened?*
- *[Ask if the survivor is from March-August 2020]* Some studies show that during emergency situations and lockdown, women are at increased risk of experiencing domestic violence. Would you agree on that? Why is that?
- How did the lockdown effect on the situation and relationship with your husband/partner?
 - *Did your partner/husband change his behaviour? How?*
 - *Did he use violent behaviour before lockdown? Or did he start getting violent during and after the lockdown?*
 - *What were the situations in which violence happened? Is there any difference in this regard before and during pandemic?*
- How had it impacted on your physical health and psychological well-being?
 - *How has it affected your feelings about yourself?*
 - *Has it affected your ability to provide for the family or go to work?*
 - *Has it made it difficult for you to meet friends or relatives?*
 - *(If she has children) Do you think that it is having an effect on your children?*
- (If she has children) Can you tell me about the relationship between your husband and children.
 - *Can you explain to me what your husband or partner does to your children when he thinks they need discipline or when he is angry with them?*
 - *Do you feel you are ever able to intervene? If yes, what do you do?*
 - *Have you ever seen injuries on your children that you know, or suspect have been caused by your husband's/partner's treatment of them? What kind of injuries?*
 - *Have your children ever had to miss school or other activities due to injuries or because of your husband's/partner's treatment of them?*
- Before receiving the service, have you ever discussed your problems with others?
 - *If yes, who did you talk to?*
 - *How did they respond?*
- Did you ever seek help? How? What did you do?
- How did you decide to seek help/how did you came to the shelter?
 - *Did you do it alone, or someone advised/supported you? If yes, who was that person?*
- Could you please describe the details of the process, from reporting to receiving the service? Which actors/service providers were involved in the case? What was the role of each?
- How would you evaluate the process? Was it easy or challenging? Why?
 - *Do you have information about the existing mechanisms on DV (law, restrictive and protective orders)? Did you have such information before coming to the shelter?*
 - *What sort of support do you think would have been helpful?*
 - *What barriers did you face in accessing any of the services and support mentioned above? For example, money, transport, or fear of negative consequences?*
- *[Ask if the survivor is from 2020 May-August]* Has the lockdown and pandemic somehow influenced your decision to seek for help? If yes, how?
- How did the pandemic and lockdown effect on your access to the services? Did you face any challenges and barriers in accessing these services because of the pandemic, or lockdown? If yes, what kind of challenges?

- Were the actors involved in addressing your case functioning effectively during the lockdown/pandemic? If no, what challenges did you face in this regard?
- How do you think, to what extent do the other victim women have information about the existing services and mechanisms against VAW?
- Looking back at your situation, what advice would you give another woman who has just started to have these sorts of problems with her husband/partner?
- What should the state do to support women in situations like this (covid-19 pandemic)? Please be as specific as possible? What can be done by NGOs?

Annex 2B

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2020

Dynamics of Restraining Orders in Georgia



Statement of Political Parties on Preventing Violence against Women in Politics and Elections

We, the representatives of political parties undersigned below,

Acknowledge that full and effective participation of women in political life is key to achieving democracy, sustainable development and peace, and that political parties and their members have their solid share of responsibility to create meaningful change towards the full realization of women's rights and ending violence against women in all spheres of life, including in politics;

Acknowledge that gender-based violence against women affects the foundations of democracy interfering with women's right to fully and equally participate in political life, holds back women from accessing leadership positions and directly impacts the political participation of women, further hindering progress in achieving gender equality;

Recognize that gender-based violence against women in politics and elections is any act of, or threat of, gender-based violence, resulting in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women, that prevents them from exercising and realizing their political rights whether in public or private spaces, including the right to vote and hold public office, to vote in secret, to freely campaign, to associate and assemble, and to enjoy freedom of opinion and expression. Such violence is exercised with an intent to impact the realization of women's political rights, be it women's participation as candidates, voters, activists, party supporters, observers, election workers or public officials, and constitutes a major impediment to achieving women's full and effective participation in political life;

Commit to adopt a policy of zero tolerance for all forms of gender-based violence against women, including sexism and sexual harassment, that undermine women's participation in politics and their guarantee to free and equal participation in political life;

Reaffirm the commitments to the Istanbul Convention and, as part of its implementation, regularly report to the Convention monitoring body on violence against women in politics, including in political parties, in parliaments and in the context of the electoral process, in light of the overarching general obligations in the area of preventing violence against women set out in Article 12 and taking measures for its prevention and elimination.

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Name	Political Party	Designation
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