



**Spotlight  
Initiative**  
*To eliminate violence  
against women and girls*

Central Asia and Afghanistan

# Annual Narrative Programme Report

01 January 2022 – 31 December 2022

Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations:



**Programme Title & Programme Number**

Programme Title: Alliances for Change – Ending Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Practice in Central Asia  
MPTF Office Project Reference Number:<sup>[1]</sup> 00119463

**Recipient Organization(s)**

UN Women, UNFPA, and UNDP

**Programme Cost (US\$)**

**Total Phase I budget, and (where OSC approved) Phase II budget as per the Spotlight CPD/RPD:** 5,392,708 USD

**Phase I and (where OSC approved) Phase II Spotlight funding:**<sup>1</sup> US\$5,309,297

**Agency Contribution:** US\$283,898

**Spotlight Funding and Agency Contribution by Agency:**

Name of RUNO	Spotlight Phase I+II (US\$)	UN Agency Contributions (US\$)
UN Women	2,907,398	96,049
UNFPA	1,001,568	86,459
UNDP	1,400,351	101,390
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,309,297</b>	<b>283,898</b>

**TOTAL: \$5,593,195**

**Priority regions/areas/localities for the programme**

Central Asia and Afghanistan Regional Programme

**Key Partners**

Governments, civil society, activists, survivors, youth, men and faith-based leaders from the five Central Asian states.

**Programme Start and End Dates**

**Start Date:**  
24.07.2020\*

**End Date:**  
31.12.2023

\* Pre-funding approved as of 1 October 2019. Approval of programme by OSC on 24 July 2020. Actual delivery started on 01 December 2020 upon receipt of funds.

**Report Submitted By:**

Michaela Friberg-Storey, UN Resident Coordinator, and  
Natia Gabelia, Spotlight Regional Programme Coordinator

<sup>1</sup> The Spotlight Contribution refers to the amount transferred to the Recipient UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).

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## ACRONYMS

<b>AUCA</b>	American University of Central Asia
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>COVID-19</b>	(Coronavirus) pandemic
<b>CS-NRG</b>	Civil Society National Reference Group
<b>CS-RRG</b>	Civil Society Regional Reference Group
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>DV</b>	Domestic violence
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EVAWG</b>	Elimination of violence against women and girls
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GEF</b>	Gender Equality Forum
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender equality and women's empowerment
<b>GGGI</b>	Global Gender Gap Index
<b>GRB</b>	Gender-responsive budgeting
<b>GTG</b>	Gender Theme Group
<b>HP</b>	Harmful practices
<b>LNOB</b>	Leave no one behind
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and evaluation
<b>MSR</b>	Multisectoral response
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental organizations
<b>PID</b>	People who inject drugs
<b>RUNOs</b>	Recipient United Nations Organizations
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and gender-based violence
<b>SI</b>	Spotlight Initiative
<b>SI RP</b>	Spotlight Initiative Regional Programme
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard operating procedures
<b>SW</b>	Sex worker
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNAIDS</b>	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>UoM</b>	University of Melbourne (Australia)
<b>VAWG</b>	Violence against women and girls

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Spotlight Initiative (SI) Regional Programme for Central Asia and Afghanistan (henceforth 'SI RP') has made remarkable progress, achieving significant results across all of its pillars (1, 2, 3, 5 and 6). The SI RP has demonstrated its commitment to the elimination of violence against women and girls (EVAWG) in the region and has made a notable impact on the lives of women and girls.

*Pillar 1* entailed comprehensive analyses and identified gaps in national legal frameworks and the broader architecture of response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The SI RP partnered with civil society actors, government representatives and other regional groups advocating for legal reform and contributing to the development of amendments of various legislative policies and regulations in the region to strengthen legal protection against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), in particular: five analytical reviews and a regional report with specific recommendations on aligning SGBV legislation with international norms and standards.

Four national discussions engaging over 100 national experts, gender and women's rights activists, representatives of crisis centers, and leaders of women's CSOs on country-specific results of the study were organized by the SI RP to follow up on the Architecture of Response against GBV study. Ten experts have improved their capacities on gender-focused research.

- **70 experts** trained on GRB regulatory frameworks and gender principles in state planning and budgeting
- **529 feminist and women's rights movements** engaged in developing a vision for CSO participation in ending SGBV
- **25 Central Asian police representatives** trained on SGBV knowledge management and exchange via meetings and study visit
- 16-day campaign on women's role in **police** with over **30 participants** in Tashkent
- **Regional knowledge products** available in Russian for health, social, and police sectors on the multisectoral response to **SGBV** implementation
- **85 representatives from three key sectors in five Central Asian countries** received training on coordinated provision of services and use of SOP model, including needs of people with disabilities

*Pillar 2* focused on institutional strengthening and has achieved significant success in enhancing the institutional capacity of state and non-state actors involved in eliminating SGBV. This has been achieved through various capacity-building initiatives, including training programmes and technical support. The SI RP has made a significant impact on the institutional capacity of service providers and civil society organizations (CSOs), improving the effectiveness of the response to SGBV in the region.

*Pillar 3* made significant progress in dismantling harmful gender norms, promoting positive masculinity and empowering women and girls to challenge SGBV. The Regional Programme involved youth, men, religious leaders and journalists in awareness-raising campaigns and advocacy initiatives, leading to positive changes in attitudes and behaviors towards SGBV. The Regional Programme has created a youth alliance to prevent SGBV, trained girls through an online Media Academy, and used social media to raise awareness on gender stereotypes and SGBV. It also raised issues on the role of women and girls in Central Asia through an online forum and supported media initiatives of women and girls from the region on SGBV. The Regional Programme also organized a regional workshop to discuss the situational analysis, strategy and communication plan developed to engage men in Central Asia, resulting in the development of national action plans for each Central Asian country. Additionally, a HeForShe Central Asia campaign was launched, supported by collaboration with TikTok house and HeForShe advocate, Kazakhstan native Rinat Balgabayev, public relations specialist, producer of 'Run' movie on domestic violence (DV) and 'Don't touch' on harassment, raising awareness on gender equality and healthy masculinity.

- Created informal **Central Asian Youth Alliance** on the prevention of GBV
- Trained **245 girls** in an online Media Academy
- **130** journalists from **6 countries** trained on gender-sensitive writing to raise awareness about EVAWG
- Reached **200,000** people through **15** TikTok bloggers on gender stereotypes and GBV
- Raised issues on the role of women and girls in Central Asia with **159** participants in the online forum, "Like a girl"
- Supported **17 media initiatives** of women and girls from Central Asia on the topics of GBV
- Raised awareness of men and gender equality in the Central Asia region through a regional workshop with **57** representatives
- Over **10,000** people in Central Asia gained awareness on gender equality and healthy masculinity within the HeForShe Central Asia campaign

*Pillar 5* focused on data collection and analysis to develop evidence-based policies and programmes that more effectively respond to and address SGBV.

- **kNOwVAWdata** course launched, adapted to the Central Asian reality, taught at the American University of Central Asia with **53** participants from Central Asia enrolled in the four-month online course in Russian.
- **Research** conducted on the prevalence of GBV in Central Asia with statistics in each country.
- **Two research studies** launched on men's perception and use of VAWG and data gaps on intersectionality and SGBV in Central Asia, including women with disabilities, persons living with HIV, older persons, sex workers, LGBTIQ+ community members, and migrants.
- **Spotlight Digital Challenge "IT vs. Violence"** received **832** applications, welcomed **200** participants in attendance at an educational bootcamp, admitted **73** teams, and ultimately had **14** winning teams across three nominations.

The kNOwVAWdata course was adapted and delivered to participants from Central Asian countries over a four-month period. A research study, entitled 'The Mapping of Existing Data on SGBV in Central Asia', resulted in publication of statistics on SGBV prevalence in each Central Asian country. Two primary studies were launched during the reporting period: one on men's perception and use of violence against women, and the other addressing data gaps on intersectionality and SGBV in Central Asia for specific groups. The second study focused on specific challenges in relation to SGBV faced by women living with disabilities, women living with HIV, elderly women (65+ years), sex workers, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and women with migration experience.

*Pillar 6* has continued its effective partnership with CSOs, establishing the Regional CSOs Network uniting CSO actors and strengthening the national and regional women's movement; supporting the establishment and technical support of the regional grant-making mechanism, based on the mapping of 125 active CSOs from all five countries conducted in 2021; and strengthening the capacity of some CSOs through small grants.

- **529** CSOs, activists, and women's rights defenders participated in **25** national CSO meetings
- **40** CSOs attended the Regional CSO Forum 2022
- **6** members established Regional Coordination Group to coordinate CSOs network
- **21** local trainers from **11** CSOs created Regional Network to strengthen skills of **3,000** CSO members and gender activists
- **31** CSOs awarded **USD 544,228.43** in small grants
- **3** crisis centres continued their work with support worth **USD 29,198** from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan
- **62** CSO representatives trained to monitor and advocate for alignment with international standards

The SI RP has successfully supported learning opportunities, the development of gender-sensitive policies, and implementation of programmes by CSOs, which have significantly contributed to the organizations' institutional and programmatic capacities in addressing SGBV. Visibility and communication efforts were also enhanced to promote greater awareness and understanding of SGBV, which has resulted in significant progress and measurable achievements.

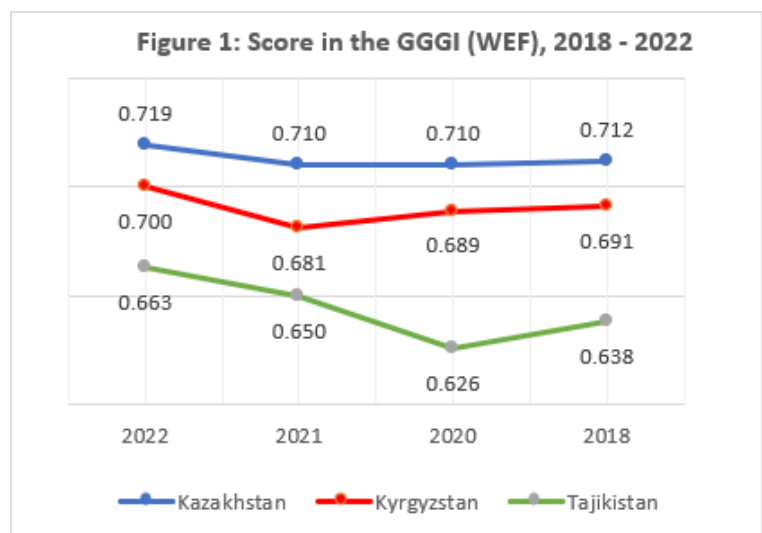
- **226000** reached via discussions on ending violence against women and girls on radio stations in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan
- HeForShe Central Asia Instagram reached **414000** accounts
- @spotlightcentralasia Instagram reached **118000** accounts
- In partnership with @manshuq\_media **505000** accounts reached through the Prevention of discrimination against women living with HIV campaign

In summary, the SI RP has made a significant contribution, achieving positive progress across all of its core areas. The initiative has brought about tangible improvements in the lives of women and girls in the region, making strides towards reducing GBV. The achievements of the SI RP are a result of the hard work and commitment of all stakeholders involved. Going forward, the project aims to establish a sustainable plan to ensure the progress made to date can be sustained and built upon.

## CONTEXTUAL SHIFTS AND IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Shifting harmful social norms related to violence against women and girls (VaWG) remains a significant challenge in Central Asia and Afghanistan. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the region in the first part of the year, affecting the lives of women and girls, in particular.

The Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), which is compiled annually by the World Economic Forum, offers a useful tool to measure the status of women and men in Central Asia with respect to basic rights (health, education, economic participation, political empowerment). The GGGI

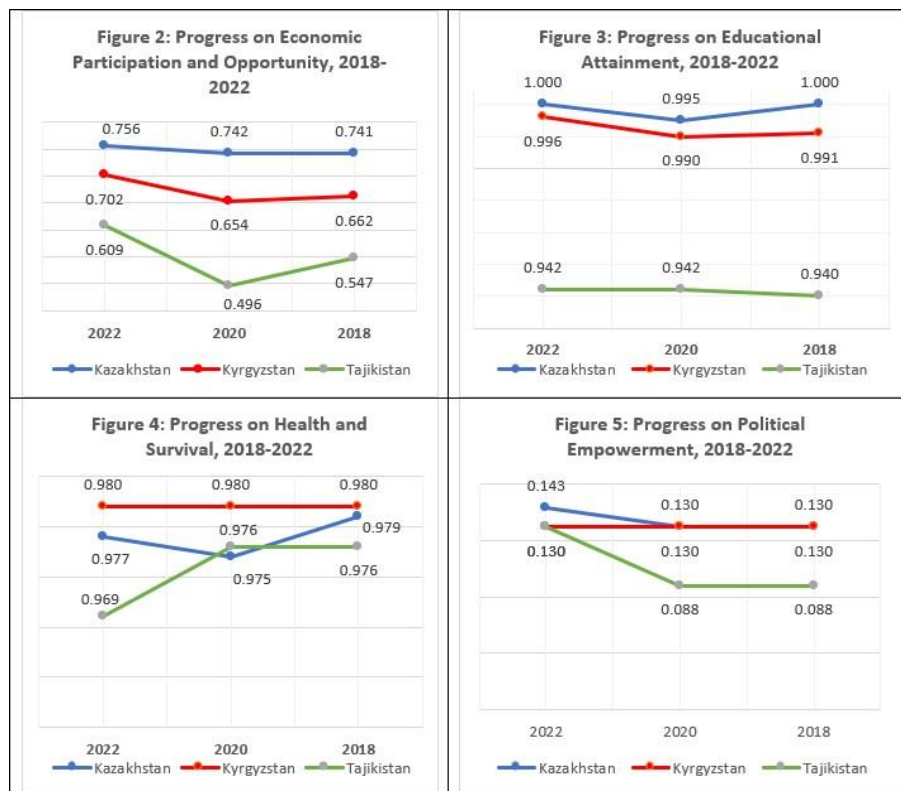


Source: Global Gender Gap Report 2022



dynamics show positive trends in closing gender-based gaps in resource and opportunity access for women and men in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan not included in the index. Although progress varies among the three countries, all have seen improvements in their overall GGGI scores (Figure 1).

In 2022, Kazakhstan reduced its gender gap by 0.9 percentage points, reaching 71.9%, following two years of stagnation. Kyrgyzstan improved its performance by bridging 70% of its gender gap, an increase of 1.9 percentage points after three years of declining performance. Tajikistan closed 66.3% of its gender gap in 2022, compared to the global average of 68.1%, showing an increase of 3.7 percentage points compared to its 2020 score. These developments demonstrate that, despite the COVID-19 crisis, these countries are working towards reducing gender inequality and discrimination. All three countries outperform the global average in the Economic Participation and Opportunity sub-index (Figure 2), with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan reporting an increase in the proportion of women in senior positions, and Tajikistan reporting a decrease in the gender gap in the labour force participation rate in 2022, and each achieving near gender parity in the Educational Attainment sub-index (Figure 3).



Source: Global Gender Gap Report 2022

Kyrgyzstan is the top performer in the Health and Survival sub-index (Figure 4); however, progress has not been recorded in three consecutive years. Kazakhstan showed modest improvement, while Tajikistan's score fell by 0.6 percentage points, a concerning shift as this sub-index includes violence that affects the life expectancy of women and men. These countries need to accelerate their efforts to reverse this trend.

The Political Empowerment sub-index (Figure 5) remains the area with the widest gender gap in all three countries, with the global average calculated at 22%. Kazakhstan has made marginal progress in 2022, Kyrgyzstan has stagnated for three consecutive years, and Tajikistan has closed between 13% and 14.3% of the gender gap in this area. However, Tajikistan has seen a 4.2 percentage point growth from 2021, indicating the need for sustained efforts to address this issue.

The resistance from various actors towards legislative reforms in the area of criminalizing DV and preventing workplace harassment has impeded the promotion of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) agenda in Central Asia, despite official commitments by the Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan governments to advance this agenda through the Generation Equality Forum. This resistance has resulted in stronger emphasis on patriarchal values masquerading as traditional values, thus hampering progress on the GEWE agenda.

In January 2022, Kazakhstan experienced widespread demonstrations that resulted in the approval of 33 constitutional amendments during the 5 June 2022 referendum. As part of its commitment to advance human rights and promote the rule of law, Kazakhstan has eliminated the List of Prohibited Occupations for Women, drafted a Social Code, and enacted Constitutional laws related to the Human Rights Commissioner, the General Prosecutor's Office, and the creation of a Constitutional Court.

In April 2022, Kazakhstan updated the Concept of Family and Gender Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030 with its Action Plan. Observers have noted that gender issues must be addressed separately from family policy. The President of Kazakhstan instructed the Government to enhance national legislation to prevent and address DV more effectively.

In October 2022, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan proposed to amend the Law on DV of 2009<sup>2</sup>, to allow law enforcement officers to act without a victim's statement to the police in DV cases. Other proposals include: limit to one the number of times that arguing parties can reconcile; increase the incarceration time for DV offenders from 20 to 25 days and introduce the possibility of

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<sup>2</sup> [Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan of December 4, 2009 No. 214-IV ZRK about prevention of domestic violence, amended in 2021.](#)

replacing administrative warnings with community service. While bride kidnapping, early marriage, and rape are criminalized<sup>3</sup>, DV as a separate form of SGBV is not criminalized in the Criminal Code<sup>4</sup>. The country has developed sectoral protocols for dealing with DV cases in the police, health and psychosocial<sup>5</sup> sectors. None of these documents contained disability-inclusive provisions and strategic actions for victims/survivors of SGBV who have different types of disability.

Kyrgyzstan revised the Law on DV (2017)<sup>6</sup> as part of the legal inventory initiated by the President of Kyrgyzstan. A new Criminal Procedural Code and a new Code on Offenses were enforced in 2021. According to the latest amendments to the Criminal Code, perpetrators who committed serious crimes (rape, bride kidnapping) are eligible for probation; reconciliation is permitted for crimes, such as rape and bride kidnapping. The Criminal Code defines family violence as a qualification element in several forms of SGBV, such as forced marriage, polygamy, rape and sexual violence, sexual violence against children, and forcing to engage in sexual relations. The latest Criminal Code amendments (2019) do not define rape and sexual assault according to international standards, while bride kidnapping is noted as a highly prevalent form of harmful practice (HP). A Gender Equality Plan<sup>7</sup> (1998) reviewed every four years covers issues related to the prevention and protection of DV, but it does not qualify sexual violence as a form of violence that may be committed in the context of DV. In addition, the country developed sectoral protocols for DV, including an umbrella multisectoral coordination protocol. However, implementing those protocols is challenging in the absence of legal obligations for such coordination in the DV law.<sup>8,9,10</sup> Tajikistan's Law on DV (2013)<sup>11</sup> defines different types of DV, including physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence.<sup>12</sup> The Tajik Criminal Code<sup>13</sup> criminalizes some forms of violence

<sup>3</sup> [Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Kazakhstan, CEDAW Committee 2019.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Criminal Code, Kazakhstan no 62-VII, 2021.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Standard for the provision of special social services to victims of domestic violence, order of the Minister of Health and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan](#), 21, 2016 No. 1079. Registered with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan on January 20, 2017, No. 14701.

<sup>6</sup> [Law on protection and defense against domestic violence no 63](#), 2017 As amended by the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic of April 15, 2020 No. 41.

<sup>7</sup> [National Action Plan on the achievement of gender equality in the Kyrgyz Republic](#) for 2015–2017.

<sup>8</sup> [Legal response to Domestic Violence in Kyrgyzstan](#), 2021.

<sup>9</sup> [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Kyrgyzstan](#), CEDAW Committee 2015.

<sup>10</sup> [Order on interaction of state bodies that carry out the protection and prevention against family violence](#), Official Journal no 390, 1 of August 2019, degree of the Government of Kyrgyz Republic.

<sup>11</sup> [Law on the Prevention Against Family Violence](#) (Family Violence Law), No. 954, March 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Under the Family Violence Law, DV is defined as the intentional and unlawful act of physical, mental, sexual or economic abuse committed within the family/household by a spouse or a family member towards a spouse or family member. The victim is a person who suffers from physical pain or injury to his/her health or experiences a threat causing such harm, and ultimately has his/her human rights and freedom violated.

<sup>13</sup> Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, 1998, amended 2020, [Tajikistan - Criminal codes - Legislationline.](#)

against women and children, including kidnapping, early marriage, rape, and sexual abuse but not as forms of DV. The adopted State programme on prevention of DV (2014–2023)<sup>14</sup> and an action plan envisages strengthening protection mechanisms against DV and assigns roles and responsibilities of government agencies responsible for enforcing the DV Law. Furthermore, the country developed sectoral protocols for dealing with cases of DV covering health and psychosocial sectors. However, the laws, strategy<sup>15</sup>, and sectoral protocols do not stipulate procedures dealing with victims/survivors of violence with various forms of disability.

In Turkmenistan, Civil and Criminal Codes do not define DV, but violence in general, early marriage, sexual violence, and forced marriage are criminalized in the Criminal Code.<sup>16</sup> The gender equality agenda in Turkmenistan is being implemented through the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021–2025<sup>17</sup>). Sectoral SGBV standard operating procedures (SOPs) covering the health, psychosocial, and police sectors are prepared but pending approval of a new law on DV. In 2022, the first-ever national sample survey, entitled Health and Status of a Woman in the Family in Turkmenistan was published. The survey draws on data from 3,500 households across the country and is based on WHO methodology, making the results internationally comparable.

Uzbekistan’s Law on Violence (2019)<sup>18</sup> addresses sexual, physical, economic, and psychological violence. Although DV is cited in this law and by-laws, the definition of DV is absent, and the law does not consider multiple vulnerabilities of victims/survivors, such as disabilities. The Ministry of Justice proposed draft amendments to the main law and the Criminal Code, which increased the criminal liability for driving women to suicide. A growing concern over DV was a reason for increasing the punishment against DV perpetrators.<sup>19</sup> The law criminalizes forced marriage<sup>20</sup> but does not encompass crimes related to bride kidnapping. The Government developed the Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality in Uzbekistan – 2030. In May 2021, the Government approved a decree on rehabilitation measures for women victims/survivors of VAWG and DV, regulating

<sup>14</sup> State programme according to the prevention of violence in family in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014–2023, Order of the government of the Republic of Tajikistan No. 294, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> [National strategy of activation of role of women in the Republic of Tajikistan](#), Order of the government of the Republic of Tajikistan no. 269, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Criminal Code of Turkmenistan, 2010. See: <https://minjust.gov.tm/>.

<sup>17</sup> National Action Plan on Gender Equality in Turkmenistan 2021–2025, Decree of the President of Turkmenistan, 04 December 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Protection of women from harassment and abuse, adopted by the legislative chamber on 17 August 2019 and approved by the Senate on 23 August 2019, LRU-561-coh 02.09.2019. [On protection of women from harassment and abuse \(lex.uz\)](#).

<sup>19</sup> [Sixth periodic report submitted by Uzbekistan under article 18 of the Convention](#), due in 2019.

<sup>20</sup> [Report of the implementation of the Beijing declaration and platform for action Uzbekistan](#), UNECE, 2019.

intersectoral cooperation on VAWG and DV, and leading to the development of sectoral SOPs (pending approval) as well as referral pathways.

The Lower Chamber of Parliament in Tajikistan passed the Law on Equality and Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, a significant accomplishment for human rights protection in the country. This law establishes the legal framework for implementing equal rights and opportunities for all citizens, as well as preventing and addressing all forms of discrimination. It introduces new concepts, including discrimination (Article 1), direct and indirect discrimination (Article 5), sexual harassment (Article 6), segregation (forced separation of people into racial, ethnic, or other groups in everyday life - Article 8), protection from victimization (a social process in which a person becomes a victim of a crime - article 10), and others. However, the Committee noted that the law prohibits discrimination based on "other circumstances," but it is concerned about its effectiveness in addressing discrimination not expressly included, such as discrimination based on criminal records or sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (art. 2 (2)).

The Government of Kazakhstan, as part of its Gender Equality Forum (GEF) commitments, has supported the establishment of a Regional Virtual Community of Practice, a new web platform developed to foster public access to GEWE information in Central Asia and support a regional digital interactive dialogue in the GEWE area.

In Central Asia, punitive laws, policies, and practices against sex workers (SW) and people who inject drugs (PID) increase their susceptibility to HIV and negatively affect their access to, uptake of, and retention of services. Civil society reports indicate that women, including sex workers, women who use drugs, those living with HIV, and in prison, face various forms of discrimination. Women with HIV have limited access to shelters for DV victims, and women who use drugs report police brutality. Additionally, HIV+ status increases the likelihood of discrimination in health care, including receiving recommendations against having children.

Her Excellency Amina Mohammed, the United Nations (UN) Deputy Secretary-General, visited Central Asia from 19 to 25 June 2022, with



*H.E. Ms. Amina Mohammed in Kazakhstan  
Photo credit: UN RCO Kazakhstan*

a focus on advancing gender equality and EAWG in the region. During the visit to Almaty, the Deputy Secretary-General highlighted the need to address the ‘silent pandemic’ of VAWG, emphasizing it as a global issue that must be tackled with urgency. She met with government officials, CSOs, and women’s rights activists to discuss ways to improve laws, policies, and services to better protect women and girls from violence and to advance their rights and opportunities.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS BY OUTCOME AREA

Spotlight Initiative – Outcome areas	Implementation progress as of 31 December 2022
<b>Outcome 1: Legal and Policy Framework</b>	94%
<b>Outcome 2: Institutions</b>	85%
<b>Outcome 3: Prevention and Norm Change</b>	75%
<b>Outcome 4: Quality Services</b>	N/A
<b>Outcome 5: Data</b>	91%
<b>Outcome 6: Women’s Movement</b>	83%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87%</b>

The SI RP is making satisfactory progress and is ‘on track’ with its implementation hastened towards the conclusion of Phase 1.

In 2022, the proposed regional studies were predominantly completed by the Programme. The expected outcomes, learnings, and knowledge-based products have been disseminated, authenticated, and substantiated on various occasions. As a consequence, the utilization of Phase I funding has been noteworthy, exhibiting both high utilization and good value, which has facilitated the Programme’s application for Phase II funding. This has paved the way for the attainment of results envisioned in the final stage of the Programme.

## PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION

In 2022, the implementation of the Regional Programme continued to be guided by the overall coordination and leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator. The three Recipient United Nations

Organizations (RUNOs) continued to effectively cooperate in the spirit of UN Reform, with a focus on enhancing coherence, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and communications functions to deliver on joint commitments.

As the Programme approached the end of Phase I this year, the SI team embarked on the development of Phase II, making the process truly participatory. The Programme then undertook broad consultations with all regional stakeholders, conducting a total of eight rounds, including five Gender Thematic Group meetings in all Central Asian countries with the participation of UN Country Teams and European Union (EU) Delegations, and the CSO network, as well as the Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CS-RRG) meeting, RUNOs technical leads meeting, and consultations with the Afghanistan Country SI programme team.

### ***National Steering Committee***

The SI Regional Steering Committee (RSC) held its second meeting on 13 June 2022. The UN Resident Coordinator in Kazakhstan chaired the meeting, and the Regional Steering Committee members and observers attended online. Regional programme and budget utilization updates were provided, and the Annual Report 2021 and Annual Work Plan 2022 were presented for approval.

“Violence against women and girls is not normal. Attitudes and mindsets are not eternal. Raising public awareness and shifting mindsets around violence is possible. At the Spotlight Regional Programme, we are working closely with the key actors, from the governments to the civil society, the private sector, development partners, men and boys, women and girls. We must all get involved. To paraphrase the UN Secretary General, by coming together we can begin to ensure that the next generation of girls will not be expected to live with fear simply because we didn’t act.”

© Ms. Michaela Friberg-Storey, UN Resident Coordinator to Kazakhstan RSC, 13.06.2022

### ***Civil Society National or Regional Reference Group (CSRG)***

In 2022, the SI team attempted to re-establish the CS-RRG, with the intent to conduct individual discussions with the CS-RRG members to identify their expertise, expectations and needs and, subsequently, develop a plan to build capacity of the CS-RRG members. However, of 12 CS-RRG members, few expressed interest in taking part in the capacity-building activities and committing to the Programme as CS-RRG members while others preferred to continue developing their own networks and organizations.

The RRG-Spotlight meeting was held in April and the two capacity-building events were held in October and November 2022. In October, with support from an international consultant and SI Monitoring and Reporting Officer, the CS-RRG was trained to further strengthen CSOs' monitoring skills. Webinar sessions were facilitated by representatives from the SI Country Programmes in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and the respective Civil Society National Reference Group (CS-NRG) members who shared their experience in conducting joint PME and offered recommendations for the role of CS-RRGs and CS-NRGs in scaling up regional cooperation within the Central Asia Alliance (anticipated to be in place in 2023), serving as a facilitating multi-stakeholder platform to end SGBV in the region. In November, a webinar on strategic communications was provided to the CS-RRG, including members from Afghanistan, and SI CS-NRG members from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

### *Inter-agency coordination, technical committees and other governance mechanisms*

The Regional Open Coordination Group on Small Grants for CSOs (ROCG), established under Pillar 6 of the SI RP to support the CSO small grants programme, was consulted in 2022 during calls for proposals to build CSO capacity and the women's movement in the region.

Regular consultations with Gender Theme Groups (GTGs) were used to strengthen programme implementation. A draft Phase II proposal was widely discussed with United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) in all five countries through their respective GTGs. The SI RP will continue to coordinate programme activities with GTGs in the region.

Coordination among participating UN Agencies/RUNOs and their country offices in Central Asia is undertaken through the RC system. In countries such as Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan where UNCTs do not have representation of UN Women, the RC Offices uptake their roles.

At the regional level, coordination is realized through meetings with regional technical leads. In 2022, the second regional meeting took place in July, during which the team highlighted strategic priorities for Phase II and the regional technical leads offered suggestions for CSO engagement, social norms change and regional cooperation.



## Use of UN Reform inter-agency tools

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) was integrated into SI via joint work plans and programming. The Resident Coordinator plays a crucial role in strengthening the partnership between the EU and the UN via the SI RP where the RC acts as a focal point for implementation of the programme at the regional level providing strategic and programmatic oversight and coordination while liaising with the Programme Coordinator.



Photo credit: UN Women Kazakhstan/ screenshot from the Official #HeForSheCentralAsia account

The SI RP facilitated networking and established partnerships with a wide range of state and non-state stakeholders, including international, national, local/grassroots, and feminist organizations. In particular, it laid the foundation for informal professional networking between the police, and actors representing the social protection and health sectors engaged with the multisectoral response to GBV (MSR to GBV) issues and GBV data collection and processing. The SI RP helped youth organizations in Central Asia unify and establish an informal network in

the region to prevent GBV.

The SI RP, in partnership with one of the regional leaders in mass communications, communication agency Tainyi Sovetnik, launched the regional solidarity movement on gender equality, HeForShe Central Asia, engaging men and boys in the movement, supported formation of the Regional CSOs Network, strengthened the national and regional women's movement, helped establish the formal Regional Coalition of NeMolchiCentralAsia (DoNotBeSilent CentralAsia) uniting civil society actors and government institutions, worked with violence survivors, and facilitated peer-to-peer knowledge transfer.

The SI RP partnered with the Government of Indonesia and National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) to gain capacity-building support to organizations working with Muslim religious leaders. As a result of this partnership, 10 representatives of regional theological institutions learned how to engage Muslim Religious Leaders in discussions on reproductive health, family planning, and the prevention of GBV and child marriage.

## Government

In 2022, the Government of Kazakhstan represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued its commitment to advance gender equality resulting in a **USD 20,000** contribution (in addition to **USD 50,000** in 2021) to the SI RP for building awareness on types of VAWG in Kazakhstan.

During Phase I, a strong partnership was established with the Government of Kazakhstan, which committed to the Generation Equality Forum<sup>21</sup> Action Coalitions on GBV and on Economic Justice and Rights.

One of Kazakhstan's commitments within the GEF Action Coalition on GBV is to establish a Central Asian Regional Knowledge Platform to amplify regional exchange of knowledge, experience, innovative solutions on VAWG prevention, response expertise and women's empowerment. This platform will be launched in 2023.

The regional events of the SI Programme on MSR to GBV and Data (May 2022), engaging men (November 2022) and 'Law Enforcement Agencies to Protect the Rights of Women Subjected to Gender-Based Violence: Experience of the Countries of Central Asia' (November 2022) engaged representatives of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Prosecutor's office, Gender Machineries, Statistics committees and departments of five Central Asian countries.

## Civil Society

In 2022, the SI RP partnered with a wide range of CSOs, including the East European Institute for Reproductive Health (EEIRH), a long-standing partner of one of the RUNOs with extensive experience in the area of multisectoral response (MSR) to GBV issues and respective data collection and processing.

<sup>21</sup> The Mexico Forum launched six Action Coalitions: GBV; Economic justice and rights; Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); Feminist action for climate justice; Technology and innovation for gender equality and Feminist movements and leadership. The Action Coalitions represent innovative models of multi-stakeholder partnerships, involving governments, civil society, private sector, parliamentarians, trade unions and other stakeholders, who share a common goal to accelerate action on a critical thematic area of concern. Each Action Coalition developed a set of concrete, ambitious and transformative actions that the members of the Action Coalition will take, with time and resource commitments, for implementation between 2020 and 2025 in order to achieve immediate and irreversible progress towards gender equality. This accelerated action agenda is taking on the following cross-cutting issues, in order to deliver tangible results: financing; transforming gender norms (including by engaging men and boys); law and policy reform; Education; gender data and accountability; addressing intersectional discrimination; and focusing on systemic change by addressing structural inequalities.

Applying the leave no one behind (LNOB) principle, the SI RP selected CSOs lacking technical capacities to access funding via more traditional funding channels and/or were less known as grassroots organizations representing the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, including those in hard-to-reach and rural areas.

Partnerships included 3 NGOs operating at the regional level, feminist organizations, Fathers' Union (Kazakhstan-based but the only organization of this kind in the entire region), and 43 (or 60% of the total) local and/or grassroots organizations representing vulnerable populations, and 25 national CSOs (or 35% of the total) representing various groups, including:

- (i) adolescents, elderly (65+) and rural women,
- (ii) girls and women living with disabilities,
- (iii) those living with HIV/AIDS,
- (iv) LGBTIQ+ persons,
- (v) sex workers,
- (vi) migrant women and girls, and
- (vii) women using drugs

The SI RP supported establishment of



Photo credit: UNFPA Kazakhstan

the Regional CSO Network uniting 529 representatives of CSOs, activists and feminists in Central Asia strengthening capacities and developing a collective vision of CSOs engagement and collaboration with the Central Asian Alliance on ending SGBV and HP. In addition, the SI RP supported establishment of the formal Regional Coalition of NeMolchiCentralAsia (DoNotBeSilent CentralAsia) uniting over 2,000 civil society actors including grassroots organizations as well as government institutions.

### **Schools, universities and young people**

The SI RP has partnered with around 28 youth-led and youth-serving organizations in Central Asia, which constitute the Regional Alliance of Youth Organizations, Nur. This cooperation is helping engage young people in the region on the elimination of violence against women and girls (EVAWG). (See: [https://www.instagram.com/nur.alliance/.](https://www.instagram.com/nur.alliance/))

A vibrant partnership was established with the University of Melbourne (UoM, Australia) and the American University of Central Asia (AUCA, Kyrgyzstan), for the adaptation and translation of the kNOwVAWdata course to the Central Asian context, and the delivery of the course to Central Asian practitioners, researchers, and statisticians.

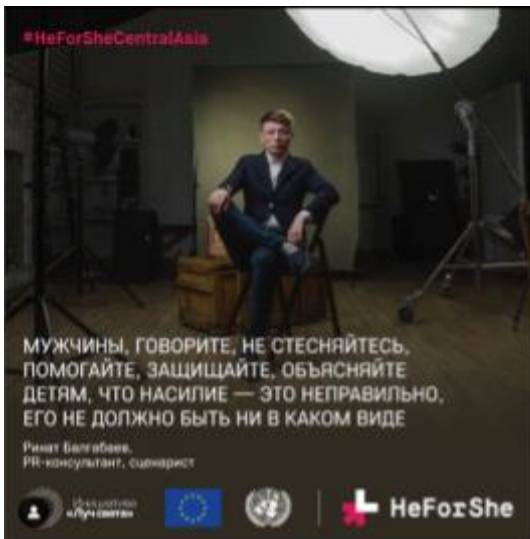


Photo credit: UN Women  
Kazakhstan/screenshot from the Official #HeForSheCentralAsia account

During the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (henceforth 16 Days of Activism), the SI RP cooperated with different universities in Central Asia to organize various types of events, including I-Talks, national debates, guest lectures, discussions on VAWG prevalence and EVAWG, as well as a photo exhibition.

As part of the global campaign, 16 Days of Activism, with the support of members of the Regional Alliance of Youth Organizations, Nur, I-Talks were held in three countries: Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; and Uzbekistan. At each I-Talk, female role models discussed topics on overcoming GBV against women, economic empowerment of women, and the provision of accessible, quality education for all girls. All events were held at universities to encourage student participation in overcoming GBV. During the I-Talks, the SI RP also encouraged solidarity among girls in Central Asia

through a puzzle activity. A total of 144 participants from three Central Asian countries (43 Kazakhstan, 74 Kyrgyzstan, 27 Uzbekistan) attended the I-Talks.

In addition, 240 young people from five universities (in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan), discussed and challenged stereotypical gender norms generating content on social media. AVON Kazakhstan supported the SI RP's collaboration with Kazakhstan's students, and Rinat Balgabayev, HeForShe advocate, PR-specialist, and producer of documentaries ('Run' on DV, 'Don't touch' on harassment) facilitated a live discussion with students from Qyzdar University in Kazakhstan via the 16 Days of Activism campaign.

Furthermore, as part of the 16 Days of Activism, the SI RP held the Youth Debates Tournaments 'Non Violence Cup' in each Central Asian country. This regional initiative brought together 272 girls and boys from 60 schools and universities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and

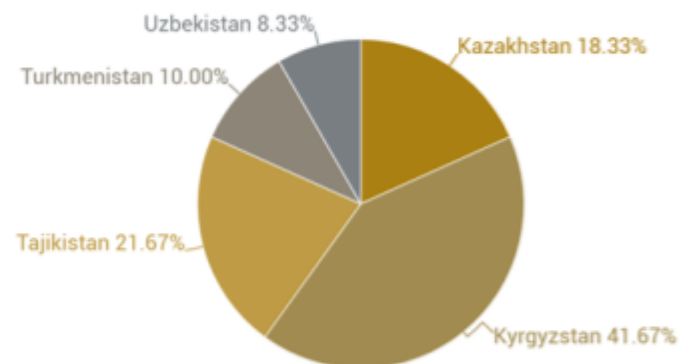


Chart description: Central Asian countries participated in Youth Debates Tournament "Non-Violence Cup"

Uzbekistan, to raise awareness of gender equality and EVAWG strategies. During the five national debates, participants learned how to protect women's rights and influence positive societal change.

## Media

The SI RP worked with Tik Tok bloggers from Central Asia to encourage them to raise awareness of, and advocate against, gender stereotypes and gender discrimination issues in their videos and articles. At least 200,000 people viewed 15 TikTok videos on topics, including gender violence, harassment, and gender stereotypes and discrimination. The videos were produced by five influencers from five Central Asian countries and widely distributed on social media platforms (e.g. TikTok, Instagram).



Photo credit: UNFPA Kazakhstan

"I wanted to support this initiative, as problem of gender-based violence is very relevant in our region. I have about 4 million followers on Tik Tok and I think it's very responsible to be able to speak to such a large audience. Social networks are important tool in our time, and a great platform from which one can and should talk about such things. It's great that the Spotlight Initiative and IDEA Central Asia are finding such creative ways to draw attention to the issue of harassment."

© Alan Dyusheev (@stengiee), blogger from Kyrgyzstan.

In November 2022, 130 media professionals, independent journalists and social media influencers from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated in an event with training on how to prevent and address SGBV. As media and advertising can perpetuate discriminatory stereotypes through exposure to SGBV and aggressive behavior, this event promoted positive gender roles, and presented ways to foster inclusive and diverse social norms and avoid harmful stereotypes while using media and advertising to create a culture of intolerance of violence in society.

Jointly implemented by the four SI programmes in Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan (see photo below), as well as other actors, like ACTED, Medianet, human rights protection activists and feminists, the event was held simultaneously in Almaty, Bishkek, Tashkent, Ashgabat, Dushanbe, and Kabul. At the end of the event, a contest was held inviting participants to identify the best media product for GBV prevention and challenging participants to create media content that would inspire survivors of violence to speak up and find solutions to their problems.



Photo credit: UN RCO Kazakhstan

The master class was anchored in gender-transformative approaches to media coverage of VAWG, creating a pool of journalists specialized in gender journalism who aspire to end GBV and HP in Central Asia and Afghanistan and who are expected to proactively engage in all SI RP-supported advocacy and communications events in 2023.

"During the event, there was a heated discussion between the journalists. In particular, new ideas of young journalists were supported and fundamental views on gender equality were put forward. The goal of the impressive event is to improve the lives of the people in our society. A prosperous life, of course, begins with caring for humankind. "Wherever there is progress, there is growth"

© Mr. Suleyman Hangeldiyev, journalist, Newspaper "Neutral Turkmenistan"

As part of the 16 Days of Activism, over 226,000 people strengthened their understanding of DV issues, its prevalence and the importance of women's empowerment in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan following programming on [Qazaq Radiosy](#), [GovoriTV](#) and [Anhor.uz](#).

### **European Union Delegation**

The SI RP is anchored under the partnership with the EU, through which the UN and the EU coordinate strategies, share relevant information, and provide leadership. The EU Delegation in Kazakhstan and the Head of Cooperation have been duly informed, as focal points for the SI RP,

of all events organized under it. Regular newsletters were circulated to the EU Delegation and international community in the region.

At the Plenary Session of the European Parliament on 24 June 2021, the UN Secretary-General underlined how, through the Spotlight Initiative, the EU represents one of the UN's most important partners in our commitment to end violence against women and girls by 2030.

The Ambassador of the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan participated as a voting member in the SI RP Steering Committee meeting, and has been consistently invited to related high-level events. The Ambassador participated in the joint EU Delegation and SI RP plans for the 16 Days of Activism campaign. The film, 'Her Job', was screened on 7 November in Astana and 28 November in Almaty, Kazakhstan as part of the European Film Festival. The event was co-hosted by the EU in Kazakhstan and the Private Foundation 'Korgau-Astana', which provides services to survivors of violence in seven cities across the country. Following the film screening, an interactive discussion was facilitated by the SI RP with the audience to explore ways of preventing and responding to SGBV, drawing from the themes and experiences depicted in the film. The events in Astana and Almaty were attended by 80 youth representatives, creating a platform for meaningful engagement on SGBV issues in Kazakhstan.

The Ambassador of the EU delegation in Kyrgyzstan participated in the [launch of kNOwVAWdata course](#) at the AUCA, Bishkek. The Head of the EU delegation made an opening speech at the Regional Workshop and Training to Strengthen National Capacities in Engaging Men in Prevention and Response to Violence against Women and Girls in the Central Asian region organized 8–9 November 2022 in Kazakhstan.



Photo credit: UNFPA Kazakhstan

The Head of EU Delegation in Uzbekistan cheered the winners of the Spotlight Digital Challenge in Tashkent during the award ceremony. In 2022, during the 16 Days of Activism, she addressed representatives of police and justice at the regional roundtable, 'Protecting the rights of survivors of gender-based violence: Law Enforcement Practices in Central Asian countries'.

### ***Cooperation with other (non-RUNO) United Nations agencies***

As previously mentioned, as the SI RP was developing the Phase II proposal, it undertook broad consultations with all regional stakeholders including Gender Thematic Groups in five Central Asian countries represented by all RUNOs and non-RUNO agencies. During the 16-days of Activism campaign, the SI RP collaborated with UNESCO and UNDGC on gender-sensitive information.

In 2022, during the 16 Days of Activism campaign, the SI RP united with two other regional programmes (US-led WAGE and French-led ACTED initiatives against SGBV) to celebrate the achievements of women’s rights activists, leaders of women’s rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and gender equality advocates. The programmes pursue mutually reinforcing approaches addressing gaps in national SGBV legislation and the institutional capacity of stakeholders, strengthening the women’s movement and empowering women through economic opportunities.

### ***Other partners and resource mobilization***

During the 16 Days of Activism, three universities in Central Asia – Teams University in Uzbekistan, American University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan, and AlmaU University in Kazakhstan – provided their premises for I-Talks. The purpose of these talks was to foster discussions among young people on the issues of SGBV and gender equality, which are critical to sustainable development.

(Please see section, [Government](#), for the financial contribution of the Government of Kazakhstan to the SI RP.)

## **RESULTS**

### **Pillar 1. Legal reform**

The SI RP conducted a robust assessment of the existing legal frameworks addressing VAWG and examined legal frameworks related to discrimination against women and girls and gender equality overall in all five countries in Central Asia. This was based on the unified methodology developed in 2021 in partnership with gender activists and CSOs. The findings and recommendations led to the development of the regional report with an evidence-based Central Asian Roadmap, which aims to strengthen the scope and application of SGBV legislation, harmonize it with international



norms and standards, and recommend actions for criminalizing SGBV. These assessments and the developed roadmap are important steps towards advocacy and legal reform.

None of the countries in Central Asia has explicitly recognized violence against women as an intersectional form of discrimination.

Until now, the focus of Central Asian countries has been on DV, although the existing definitions of this form of violence in laws are gender-neutral. Despite this, no country has taken a comprehensive approach to prohibit all forms of discrimination against women and violations of women's rights, such as VAWG in all its forms, in line with CEDAW and other international human rights instruments. In this regard, the main strategy of Central Asian countries is to fully regulate all forms and types of VAWG, including HP and their criminalization, as a basis for further consolidation of efforts of states to eradicate SGBV. Such recognition would expand the procedural and substantive provisions of laws and protections for survivors, especially for non-violent offenses.

Similarly, none of the countries in Central Asia has explicitly recognized violence against women as an intersectional form of discrimination. At a minimum, the SI RP advocates for identifying girls and women living with disabilities, girls and women living with HIV, and LGBTIQ+ persons, and providing for their eligibility for services based on their needs and protection measures, given their vulnerability and level of dependence on others. Moreover, Central Asian states have not yet included online or digital VAWG in their legislation.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a study was undertaken on the architecture of the response to GBV in Central Asia. This produced five country reports and a regional summary with recommendations.

4 national discussions engaged over 100 national experts, gender and women's rights activists, representatives of crisis centres, and leaders of women's CSOs on country-specific results of the study were organized by the SI RP to follow up on the study of the architecture of response to GBV.

A regional analysis of national systems that explored gaps between the international standards of SGBV services and existing practices was prepared and disseminated among national stakeholders to increase awareness of international standards and help governments and civil society address those gaps. The research team of 10 regional experts from Central Asia who led the study improved their capacities on gender-focused research through exposure to the Essential Service Package, the internationally recognized

standard of normative guidance for supporting national systems to respond to SGBV, and other international instruments. Four national discussions brought together over 100 national experts,

gender and women's rights activists, representatives of crisis centres, and leaders of women's CSOs on country-specific results of the study. A two-day regional event convened 25 national counterparts and 10 national experts<sup>22</sup> from five countries (representing the protection sector, crisis centres, CSOs and development community). Participants shared evidence-based knowledge of the gaps in the SGBV response and legal frameworks in their respective countries and generated ideas to improve prevention and response to SGBV and address the gaps in the response, resulting in strengthened social services, improved access of marginalized and vulnerable groups to services, reduced costing of services for survivors of sexual violence and DV, strengthened engagement with police to improve security services and support the criminalization of DV.

### ***Pillar 2. Institutions***

The institutionalization of the Central Asian Alliance on EAWG and HP was the focus of participatory consultations that brought together over 500 actors across feminist and women's rights movements, as well as local and grassroots CSOs. The goal was to foster dialogue and draft a collective vision for civil society engagement and participation in the Central Asian Alliance.

The SI RP prioritized a comprehensive assessment of progress in implementing gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), as well as current government programmes and relevant initiatives aimed at introducing gender principles into the state planning and budgeting system in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan over the past 10 years. While these Central Asian countries are in the initial stages of implementing GRB, the process demands the development of step-by-step roadmaps to integrate gender perspectives into the budget process in the region.

Practical application of GRB tools is only possible if the procedure to apply these tools is enshrined in the normative legal acts governing the budgeting process. Unfortunately, the relevant legislation in the region does not yet contain provisions requiring the use of GRB tools in the planning of national or local budgets, nor are there any provisions in the mandatory assessment of the impact of expenditures on gender equality. A key challenge in the region is that the use of GRB tools is situational, meaning that gender analysis of individual budgets is conducted only in some pilot projects and in some sectors, but there are no examples of the integration of a gender perspective in the budgeting process on a systematic basis. Therefore, relevant legislation is required.

The SI RP advocates for strengthening interaction between the state and civil society on issues of gender equality through the development of participatory budgeting. Existing mechanisms of participatory budgeting can be successfully used to promote women's interests in the formation of

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<sup>22</sup> An additional 30 participants joined online.

local budgets. Civil society actors are essential to monitor national budgets and ensure EVAWG efforts are adequately budgeted and funded. The SI RP developed recommendations on building the monitoring systems with indicators and recommendations for further promotion of GRB tools and models in the prevention of SGBV, targeting survivors of sexual violence. Through this, the SI RP contributed to strengthening the capacities of over 70 civil society actors.

#### **Case study on budgeting of services provided to SGBV survivors in Kazakhstan:**

*A wide range of civil society actors contributed to the analysis of the budgeting of services provided to SGBV survivors in Kazakhstan. A VAWG prevalence survey in Kazakhstan was conducted twice (2016; 2022). However, the results of surveys cannot be applied to assess the needs in crisis centres as crisis centres are financed by city budgets, and survey data is available only at the oblasts (regional) level. In Kazakhstan, local budgets allocate an average of KZT 5,400 (\$11) per bed per day in a crisis centre. To ensure all residents of Kazakhstan (population: 19,666 thousand people / KZT 159), have access to special social services in SGBV cases at least comparable to services provided in 2021, at least KZT 3.13 billion would be required per year, which is three times less than the budget allocated. To ensure equal access to services of the same quality for all SGBV survivors regardless of place of residence, a methodology needs to be developed to calculate the standards of costs for the services of crisis centres. The SI RP will prioritize its development in Phase II.*

Evidence shows that transformative change happens from the bottom up, over time, and is driven by organizations and progressive social movements closest to those directly impacted by violence. The pandemic also highlighted the importance of locally driven solutions, and civil society can play a vital role in ensuring the voices of marginalized women are heard and included. The 'Knowledge created by NGOs for NGOs' component featured grant competition for Central Asian NGOs to identify organizations with unique experience in working with victims of violence and willing to arrange exchange and knowledge transfer to interested partners.

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan were represented by three applications each in this contest. Although the Turkmenistan application lacked a necessary thematic focus and Uzbekistan's application was successful but withdrawn due to regulations on external grants, proposed applications offered a strong mix of advocacy, educational, direct support, and capacity-building experience, which were documented and shared among peer NGOs. Examples were provided of coordination mechanisms, the engagement of local communities and self-governance entities in prevention and response to violence. Target groups included

(rural/urban) women in difficult life situations, women in need of specialized social services, legal advice and other related services, youth and students, local communities, and rural communities.

As a result of this exercise, grantees documented their experience and practices and disseminated them among peer CSOs. Participants of the competition created networks, telegram chats and safe spaces for women (often at schools) to share essential information on GBV, access legal, medical and other support services, and develop skills to sustain their livelihoods. A network of participants in the grant competition formed a regional alliance, and grantees reported having greater influence and agency to work towards EVAWG and being able to identify areas requiring improvement in their own work.

#### NGOs in Central Asia Bring Glimmer of Hope to Victims of Gender-Based Violence | UNDP in Kazakhstan

A regional study and knowledge products, which focused on the participation of health, social and police sectors in the Multi-Sectoral Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (MSR to SGBV), was made available in Russian for Central Asia including:

- situation analysis on SGBV and the institutional environment for MSR to SGBV implementation in the region, with best practices applicable to the region;
- regional SOP models for SGBV case referral and case management for health, social and police sectors; and
- sectoral training packages for professionals in the health, social and police sectors on the provision of coordinated sectoral and one-stop-shop services for SGBV survivors.



*Photo credit: UNDP Kazakhstan & UNFPA Kazakhstan*

Three sectors – police, health care, and social support – received a regional SOP model, which helps them coordinate the provision of services to survivors of violence and refer SGBV survivors within and outside each sector. The sectors also received training on providing services to SGBV survivors, which was coordinated among police, health care, and psychosocial support organizations. The training emphasized the importance of gender sensitization, a survivor-centered approach, and the needs of persons with disabilities.

The workshop and a follow-up training were organized for representatives of police, health and social sectors, statistics committees and departments, state and non-governmental specialized

organizations providing services to survivors of violence. The two events gathered respectively 85 and 56 participants to build the knowledge and capacity of sector professionals on multi sectoral response to SGBV and collection, analysis and usage of SGBV data in line with international and regional standards to inform laws, policies and programmes, and train them on the provision of coordinated services to survivors of violence.



Photo credit: UNDP Kazakhstan & UNFPA Kazakhstan

The regional meeting, ‘Law Enforcement Agencies to Protect the Rights of Women Subjected to Gender-Based Violence: Experience of the Countries of Central Asia’, organized in November 2022, featured topics related to police response to SGBV, namely, collecting data on DV cases, assessing needs of departments on the protection of women against violence, increasing gender awareness of police officers and training on working with survivors of violence, and correctional programmes for perpetrators. The results of national and regional legal reviews, as well as recommendations on the alignment of legal frameworks, were discussed, as well as ways to better organize knowledge management and the location of expertise responding to SGBV among law enforcement and NGOs (non-governmental crisis centres, legal advice, training outlets).

As a result, the core group of 10–15 law enforcement representatives (from all Central Asian countries) formed an informal Community of Practice (CoP), which participated in regular capacity-building activities by all the RUNOs, including training on regional SOPs model for three key sectors, discussion of gaps in service delivery for survivors of violence, case management and referral, and training on the SOP model for coordinated service provision.

### **Pillar 3. Prevention and norm change**

In 2022, a situational analysis was conducted of youth organizations in Central Asia and their involvement in SGBV issues. The analysis demonstrated that there were not many youth organizations dealing with GBV in Central Asia. A strategy and communication plan for the informal regional youth alliance on SGBV prevention were developed to

Over 200,000 social media users were reached via 15 Tik Tok videos on topics including gender violence, harassment, gender stereotypes and discrimination produced by 5 influencers from 5 Central Asian countries.

increase the capacity of a regional youth alliance, Nur. The alliance gathered in the second youth forum (the first was held in 2021) resulted in a validated mission, operational plan, and strategy on SGBV prevention.



Photo credit: UNFPA Kazakhstan

and the 16 Days of Activism campaign, aimed at more than 200 young activists whose awareness and knowledge increased. The members of the youth informal Alliance, Nur, were engaged in the preparation of I-Talks in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, as part of the 16 Days of Activism.

During Gender Awareness week, which was organized for youth participants from Central Asia on 8 March 2022, 43 young activists raised their knowledge on gender issues in three online two-hour meetings (over three days).

The two-day virtual online forum, 'Like a Girl', raised awareness among 159 participants from five Central Asian countries about the current challenges faced by women in the region, as well as opportunities for development and self-realization in the modern world.

In 2022, the SI RP continued to engage men, including government representatives, religious leaders, journalists and other male activists to address SGBV. A situational analysis, regional strategy and communication plan for engaging men and boys in ending VAWG in Central Asia were presented to 57 participants from five countries during a regional workshop. As a result, national action plans on engaging men were developed for each Central Asian country.

The Media Academy's online course training young women and girls to produce high-quality media products, such as articles, blogs and podcasts addressing gender stereotypes and VAWG issues, was translated and placed IDEA Central Asia's web portal ([Курсив | УЧИТЬСЯ ПО-НОВОМУ \(cursive.id\)](https://cursive.id)). At least 245 girls from the region increased their capacity to work in online media, 17 media initiatives were conducted, and the best products were posted on social media during the 16 Days of Activism.

The awareness-raising initiatives also included online and hybrid events for International Women's Day



Photo Credit: UNFPA Kazakhstan/screenshot from Official Instagram of IDEA Central Asia

Ten representatives of Central Asian theological institutions strengthened capacities on strategic partnership and understanding of the Islamic perspective on improving reproductive health, family planning, SGBV prevention and child marriage through participation in the SSTC (South-South and Triangle Cooperation) International Online Training on Strategic Partnership with Muslim Religious Leaders (MRLs) in reproductive health, family planning, and the prevention of SGBV, facilitated by Indonesian experts.



*Photo credit: UNFPA Kazakhstan*

The SI RP successfully launched the first HeForShe Central Asia communication campaign in 2022 during the 16 Days of Activism reaching over 10,000 people within the first weeks and raising their awareness on the importance of engaging men and boys to challenge social stereotypes and promote healthy masculinity.

The HeForShe Central Asia campaign launch was supported by a collaboration with TikTok, which offered the promotion of hashtags to increase visibility of the SI RP 16 Days of Activism campaign. A TikTok H5 page (in-app landing page) was used with tailored content as well as a HTC branded hashtag to promote HeForShe Central Asia and inform users on how they can take action towards EVAWG.

Overall, HeForShe Central Asia aims to reach at least 7.6 million young men, including recent fathers and husbands aged 16-40 years, and secondary audiences with key messages on the importance of gender equality, and healthy masculinity including mental health. The online mobilization communication strategy is based on: 30 in-depth interviews with activists, civil society actors, businessmen and businesswomen, gender experts, journalists, film makers; analysis of an online survey reaching 1,000 Central Asian men and focus groups in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as an analysis of men's comments on high-profile YouTube SGBV documentaries, social media posts and podcasts.

### **Pillar 5. Closing data gaps**

The SI RP was successful in increasing awareness and knowledge on the challenges in collecting and disseminating data on SGBV prevalence, in line with international standards. In 2021, a mapping of existing data on SGBV in Central Asia was completed and translated into Russian. The results were presented at a workshop attended by 85 representatives from statistical offices, and health, psychosocial, and police sectors in the region. The workshop aimed to strengthen knowledge on the collection and dissemination of SGBV prevalence data in line with international and regional standards, to inform laws and policies. The study showed that all sectors collect administrative data on SGBV, including information on the victim and, to a lesser extent, the

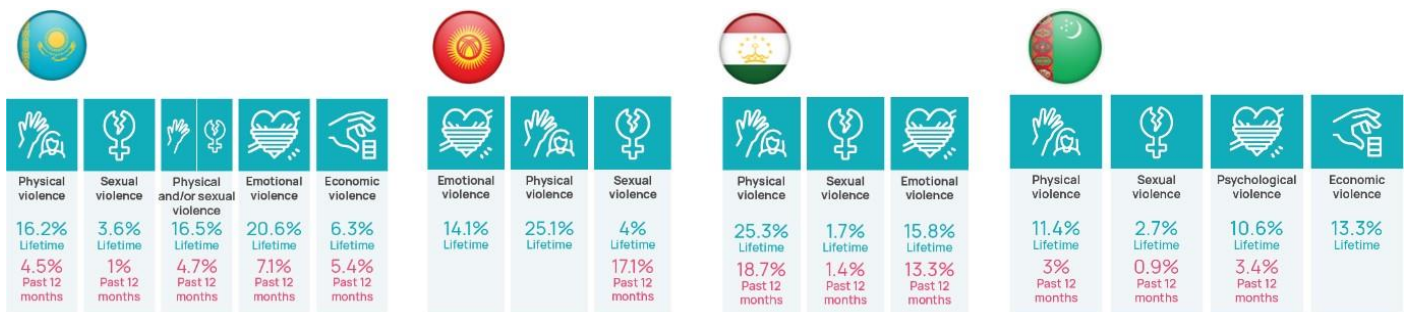
offender. Data on the sex, age, place of residence, and the relationship between the victim and offender are frequently collected. Physical and sexual violence, by an intimate partner or a non-partner in the context of domestic abuse, are more commonly registered than psychological and economic abuse. However, data on the types of violence are not always disaggregated, and HPs are substantially less recorded. Data on the age of first marriage is often not collected, and there is scarce data being collected on bride kidnapping. The study also demonstrated that there is a significant gap in administrative data compilation, analysis, and publishing. The mapping resulted in the development of a number of recommendations for all Central Asian countries.

The kNOwVAWdata course on measuring VAW was launched in September 2022 at the AUCA. The course was developed by the University of Melbourne (UoM) and UNFPA, adapted to the Central Asian context and translated into Russian in collaboration with AUCA and UoM. Out of 320 applications from the region, 53 participants from Central Asian countries enrolled in the four-month online course.

*“Through the kNOwVAWdata course, endorsed by the Spotlight Initiative of the United Nations which has received generous support from the European Union, we expect to see more **local researchers and gender experts enhance their skills and knowledge to provide reliable statistics on violence against women and girls.** Only with reliable data can decision-makers develop and implement adequate policies and practices to protect and support the victims and, importantly, to end gender-based violence in Kyrgyzstan and in the region”*

© Ms. Antje Grawe, UN Resident Coordinator in the Kyrgyz Republic

The first publication on the prevalence of SGBV in Central Asia was developed and published in English and Russian and disseminated among relevant stakeholders (governments, civil society, academia, experts) in five Central Asian countries.



The Spotlight Digital Challenge provided an initial intensive educational programme (bootcamp for two days) for over 200 online participants to learn about the issues of gender-based discrimination



and violence, including online violence, and created a space for young people to make headway on preventing, responding to and collecting VAWG data. The competition initially received 835 registrations, 73 mixed teams from five Central Asian countries were admitted to the competition and, in 48 hours, participants developed and presented 58 ideas for solutions in three categories – prevention; collection and visualization of data on violence; and assistance to survivors of violence.

The challenge improved young people’s understanding of gender inequality and discrimination, as well IT-facilitated violence and online safety measures. The community of young people formed a self-sustained network to share information on opportunities and accelerate their ideas. Out of nine winners, seven continued working on their idea. Uzbekistan’s ‘Made to Top’ team was invited to work with the Association of Journalists of Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan’s ‘God is a Woman’ team participated in the Digital Knowledge Week at the end of 2022 in Astana.

### **Pillar 6. Women’s movements**



*Photo credit: UN Women Kazakhstan*

The SI RP has taken a central role in the work with CSO and feminist organizations, and it has continued to build on partnerships established with its launch. A total of 529 representatives of CSOs, activists and women’s rights defenders across Central Asia and Afghanistan were engaged in 25 national CSO meetings between March and June 2022 and developed recommendations for the Regional CSOs Network as well as mechanisms for long-term cooperation and sustainability of the Central Asian

Alliance on EVAWG and HP. Over 40 CSOs from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan continued offline discussions on coordinated women’s movement for joint advocacy, activism and accountability during 1–2 November 2022 at the CSOs Forum in Turkestan.

The SI RP built further on the results of the 2021 mapping of 125 active CSOs from all five countries working in the area of gender equality, women’s rights, EVAWG and, based on the results of the institutional assessment, the Public Fund ‘Civic Participation’ was recommended as a grant-making mechanism due to its strong human resources, networking throughout the country both at the national and community level, as well as its



*Photo credit: UN Women Kazakhstan*

experience and policy to administer grants. The SI RP prepared and fulfilled a comprehensive capacity-building plan for the Public Fund ‘Civic Participation’ from Kyrgyzstan, selected on a competitive basis as a grant-making mechanism to act as the leader on resource mobilization and as a capacity-building entity for grassroots organizations in the region that lack the technical capacities to access funding from regional and international donors.

To further coordinate the Regional CSOs Network and the grant-making mechanism and their work with the Central Asian Alliance in 2023, the regional Coordination Group was established with six members representing active CSOs from five countries. The grant-making mechanism is expected to provide regional leadership and influence policy making in addressing SGBV in Central Asia.

To continue building the capacity of the regional CSOs, the SI RP organized the training of trainers on the Guide for Facilitators Gender, Policy Analysis and Strategic Communication, having created a regional network of 21 local trainers from 11 regional CSOs. These trainers strengthened the capacity and skills on gender, policy analysis and strategic communication of nearly 3,000 CSO members and gender activists and built coalitions to further tackle SGBV issues in Central Asia.

From its inception, the SI RP has advanced the small grants component for CSOs in Central Asia. The primary objective of these grants is to exclusively finance a limited range of eligible activities aimed at supporting the development and strengthening of the institutional capacities of grassroots organizations working in areas related to SGBV, gender equality, and women’s empowerment.



*Photo credit: UN Women Kazakhstan*

These eligible activities include the introduction or improvement of organizational systems, tools, and processes, workforce training in technical and managerial skills, and the purchase of adequate equipment (copiers, computers, laptops, printers, and scanners). With a focus on strengthening the capacities of grassroots organizations working on EVAWG in the region, it identified eligible NGOs to receive the small grants. These grants were intended exclusively to strengthen the CSOs’ institutional capacity, with a focus on skills needed for SGBV prevention and EVAWG. Small grants were awarded to 31 CSOs from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, totaling \$544,228.43 from the inception of the SI RP. As a result of this support, civil society operated efficiently and gained capacities needed to access additional funding sources to sustain their activities and meaningfully engage in joint advocacy for progress towards ending SGBV. The grant-awarding mechanism was based on analysis, mapping and a regional consultation with

CSOs that identified priority areas for the institutional development of grassroots organizations in Central Asia.

In addition, the three crisis centres supported with \$29,198 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2021 continued their work.

The organization, The World of Law, in Tajikistan offers a good practice, having successfully defended a young rural woman, who had been raped and severely beaten by a young man. Stigmatization and victim-blaming adversely impacted the woman's daily life in the village. The NGO lawyer filed at least six complaints about the refusal to initiate a criminal case by the regional prosecutor's office and the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Tajikistan, and repeatedly sought justice with convincing arguments, which were ultimately taken into consideration. The perpetrator was condemned and sentenced to eight years in prison.

The SI RP commissioned development of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Tool for CSOs. It is expected that this tool will be used by CSOs and active women leaders in Central Asia and Afghanistan to monitor and advocate for progress on the roadmap to align national laws and regulations with international standards and conventions.

The SI RP organized a training series for 62 representatives of CSOs in Central Asia including members of the CS-RRG to strengthen their capacity to monitor (e.g. use of participatory M&E techniques), based on the developed Monitoring and Accountability Tool for CSOs. The tool may be used for data collection (checklist), compilation and analysis of indicators to support advocacy and influence SGBV prevention and response and promote GEWE.

## CAPTURING BROADER TRANSFORMATIONS ACROSS OUTCOMES



*Photo credit: UN Women Kazakhstan*

Over the reporting period, the SI RP completed a robust assessment of the existing legal frameworks addressing VAWG and those related to discrimination against women and girls and gender equality overall in all five countries, using the unified methodology developed in 2021 in partnership with gender activists and CSOs. The findings and recommendations led to the development of the regional report with the evidence-based Central Asian Roadmap, which aims to strengthen the scope and application of

SGBV legislation, harmonize it with international norms and standards, and recommend actions for criminalizing SGBV. These assessments and the developed roadmap are important steps towards advocacy and legal reform. Since none of the countries in Central Asia has explicitly recognized VAW as an intersectional form of discrimination, the SI RP advocates for identifying women and girls living with disabilities, women and girls living with HIV, LGBTIQ+ persons, and providing for their eligibility for services based on their needs and protection measures. These efforts are supported by regional research within Pillar 5 on *Addressing Data Gaps on Intersectionality and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Central Asia*, engaging community women, service providers and CSOs advocating for women living with disabilities, women living with HIV, sex workers, women with experience of migration, elderly women (65+), LGBTIQ+ persons. (Please refer to the section [Results Pillar 1. Legislation](#).)

In August 2022, the regional study of the architecture of response to SGBV in Central Asia completed a series of national expert meetings to validate the findings for each participating country. The study compiled a regional snapshot of national systems of SGBV prevention and response, including key actors, coordination arrangements, availability and accessibility of services to survivors of violence, barriers for reporting violence and data on violence.

The conclusions pointed at the insufficient number of police officers trained to handle SGBV cases, a general shortage of crisis centres providing safe accommodation to victims/survivors of violence and their children, and the severe deficit of staff with required qualifications in crisis centres. Expert discussions further emphasized the lack of capacity among existing shelters in all Central Asian countries to accommodate women with disabilities and the denial of services and safe accommodation to women living with HIV who are subjected to violence.

Invited experts, practitioners and officials representing law enforcement and justice sectors, state and non-state crisis centres, research institutions, gender activists and the international community from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan emphasized issues in strengthening: interaction between the key sectors providing essential services to survivors of violence; availability and accessibility of services to vulnerable groups; and the culture of zero tolerance towards VAWG. The participants produced a set of priority actions to enhance the architecture of response to SGBV, opening new dimensions for EVAWG work through the next generation of programmes

Participants in discussions on the architecture of response against GBV emphasized the following issues:

- **strengthening** interaction between the key sectors providing essential services to survivors of violence;
- **improving the** availability and accessibility of services to vulnerable groups; and
- **nurturing** the culture of zero tolerance towards VAWG.

by the states, CSOs, local communities, and international organizations. Examples are provided below:

- Separate the gender equality agenda from family and demographic policy.
- Include the definition of sexual harassment in the Labour Code to address SGBV in the workplace.
- Revisit existing practices and procedures of medico-legal examination to help render the experience of survivors of violence less painful and traumatic and services of forensic expertise more available and accessible to women.
- Address insecurity surrounding inheritance and other rights of women and their children in religious marriage and the age of marriage.
- Introduce performance indicators for police officers.
- Revisit existing standards on the provision of services to survivors of violence by crisis centres.
- Initiate the work on regional declaration on fight against SGBV.

Five country reports and a regional summary with recommendations on the architecture of response to SGBV in Central Asia were produced. A regional analysis of national systems that analyzed gaps between the international standards of SGBV services and existing practices was prepared and disseminated among national stakeholders to increase awareness on international standards and help governments and civil society address the identified gaps.

Over 70 civil society actors from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan strengthened capacity on how to build monitoring systems with indicators and recommendations for further promotion of GRB tools and models in the prevention of SGBV survivors, including participatory budgeting of services provided to SGBV survivors. The comprehensive assessment of the progress in implementing GRB, current government programmes and relevant initiatives to introduce gender principles into the state planning and budgeting system implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan over the past 10 years showed that Central Asian countries are at the initial stage of implementation of GRB demanding development of detailed step-by-step/roadmaps for integration of gender perspectives into the budget process in the region.

The case study on the budgeting of services provided to SGBV survivors in Kazakhstan analyzed the standard for the provision of special social services to DV survivors, funding rules and procedures of services to persons affected by SGBV, services providers and how local budgets reflect spending on these service providers, costing of the services at the crisis centres, assessment of the needs for financing and the effectiveness of the distribution of available funds,

recommendations on normative per capita funding of crises centres, monitoring system and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on budget spending.

Practical application of GRB tools is possible only if the procedure for applying these tools is enshrined in the normative legal acts governing the budgeting process. The relevant legislation of the countries does not yet contain provisions requiring the use of GRB tools in the planning of national or local budgets. There are also no provisions on the mandatory assessment of the impact of expenditures on gender equality. Hence, development of relevant legislation is required. (Please refer to the section [Results Pillar 2. Institutions.](#))

Although the government approach towards CSOs varies across the countries, there is an increasingly restrictive civic space in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Women rights organizations in the region have expressed growing concerns about a backlash against human rights defenders and social change activists. In response to CSO needs, the SI RP provided regular regional discussion forums for CSOs working on SGBV (particularly women' organizations) to come together, share information and discuss potential opportunities for collaboration resulting in the establishment of the Regional CSOs Network with over 500 civil society actors, the regional network of 21 local trainers from 11 regional CSOs, NeMolchi Central Asia Coalition (Don't Be Silent Central Asia) uniting over 2,000 CSOs and state institutions, which will ultimately join the Central Asian alliance on EVAWG and HP. (Please refer to the section Results Pillar 6. Women's Movements.)

## **CAPTURING CHANGE AT OUTCOME LEVEL**

### ***Outcome 1: Legal reform***

The Central Asia region lacks comprehensive legislation prohibiting all forms of SGBV and providing effective responses to it. National laws do not always include a definition of family, all types of violence, types of family relationships and, in some cases, the definition of gender equality needs to be refined. In addition, there is a lack of clarity in laws regarding enforcement, the division of roles, the legal justification for the use of protection orders, and the comprehensive consideration of steps and measures necessary for a multisectoral, survivor-centred response to SGBV. The SI RP developed the regional report and evidence-based Central Asian roadmap to strengthen the scope and application of SGBV legislation, harmonizing it with international norms and standards, and recommending actions for criminalizing SGBV based on five comprehensive national reviews of legal frameworks and law enforcement practices. These assessments and the developed roadmap are important steps towards advocacy and legal reform.

In August 2022, the regional study of the architecture of response to SGBV in the countries of Central Asia completed a series of national expert meetings and validated the findings of the study for each participating country. Expert discussions further emphasized that existing shelters in all Central Asian countries are not adequately equipped to accommodate women with disabilities and deny services of safe accommodation to women living with HIV subjected to violence. HIV-related discrimination and stigma have devastating impacts and contradict the leave no one behind (LNOB) principle and human-rights based approach driving the SI. As a follow-up action, the SI RP, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), supported interactive training for specialists and activists working with women living with HIV. Activists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan shared their experience during the pandemic. They received peer-to-peer support and counseling from reputable HIV consultants and coaches on how to cope with stress and prevent professional burnout, and physical and emotional exhaustion. The training also took stock of ongoing efforts to ensure that human rights of women living with HIV are respected and their needs in access to health care, social protection and justice are met. The discussion demonstrated commitment at the community leadership level to advocate against ignorance about HIV transmission and stigma and to lead the dialogue with key government agencies and legislators to address existing legal and institutional barriers in access to specialized social services.

### **Outcome 2: Institutions**

Twenty-five police representatives from the region exchanged experience and practice in SGBV response and are better equipped to develop and deliver response measures through a series of four practice-sharing meetings and a study visit to Kazakhstan (10 participants). This work contributed to the engagement of two experts from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RK in the development of a training programme for Kyrgyz police. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are studying the existing practice of specialized police units in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on the protection of women against violence and view such units (and more women police officers) as an effective addition to the system of police response to VAW. An informal core group of 10–15 representatives of law enforcement, representing all Central Asian countries, was formed which consistently participated in capacity-building activities by all the RUNOs, including training on regional SOPs model for three key sectors, discussion of gaps in service delivery for survivors of violence, case management and referral, training on the SOP model for coordinated service provision.

During the two-day workshop held 23–24 May 2022, followed by a three-day training 25–27 May 2022 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, 85 participants discussed an enabling institutional environment for MSR to SGBV implementation in the region, including best practices applicable to the region.

Participants also learned about the use of a regional SOP template, training packages on service provision to SGBV survivors by health, psychosocial, and police sectors, as well as sources of SGBV data and provided further recommendations for a coordinated MSR to SGBV.

Fifty-six representatives from the health, social support, and police sectors of the five countries received comprehensive training on a coordinated approach in the provision of services to survivors of violence. Participants from Turkmenistan joined these events online due to closed borders. Consequently, Tajikistan is in the process of updating its national SOPs based on the regional model, and Uzbekistan is using them to develop a training module on providing disability-inclusive services to SGBV survivors, making progress towards creating a safer and more inclusive environment for all.

The SI RP advocates for strengthening interaction between the state and civil society on issues of gender equality through the development of participatory budgeting. The existing mechanisms of participatory budgeting can be used to promote women's interests in the formation of local budgets. Civil society actors are essential to monitor national budgets and ensure EAWG efforts are adequately budgeted and funded.

The SI RP performed an exhaustive evaluation of the advancements made in integrating GRB, current governmental schemes, and pertinent initiatives to introduce gender principles into the state's planning and budgeting system. The analysis was carried out in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan during the last decade. Furthermore, a detailed analysis of the budget allocation for services catering to survivors of SGBV in Kazakhstan was conducted, and recommendations were formulated for establishing monitoring systems with indicators. These recommendations also aim to promote GRB tools and models further, with a focus on SGBV prevention targeted at survivors of sexual violence. Through this, the SI RP helped strengthen the capacities of over 70 civil society actors.

### ***Outcome 3: Prevention and norm change***

Six national experts from Central Asian countries collaborated with local networks and youth to develop a situational analysis of the work of youth organizations in Central Asia on SGBV issues, as well as a strategy and communications plan for the youth alliance of Central Asia on the prevention of SGBV in Russian. These documents were utilized by youth alliance members to develop the operational plan and other activities of the network.

The institutional capacity of the regional youth network, Nur, to prevent SGBV was strengthened during the second regional forum of youth, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan 12–14 October 2022, with



approximately 30 participants. During the forum, representatives of youth organizations across the region formulated and validated their mission, developed an operational plan, and planned further actions of the informal youth alliance, Nur, based on the situational analysis, strategy and communications plan. As a result, members of the youth alliance actively participated in the preparation of 16 Days of Activism activities, as well as the organization of three I-Talks at universities in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on SGBV, gender equality, economic empowerment, and the importance of education for young women and girls in Central Asia.

Four modules of the online Media Academy, translated into Russian to increase access and participation, were placed on IDEA Central Asia's web portal with the aim of training young women and girls and to produce engaging and high-quality media products, such as articles, blogs, and podcasts, that address gender stereotypes and VAWG.

A total of 659 girls from the region registered for the Media Academy initiative: 245 girls were trained in the online Media Academy, resulting in 17 media initiatives with the best media products shared on social media during the 16 Days of Activism.



Photo Credit: UNFPA Kazakhstan/screenshot from Official Instagram of IDEA Central Asia

Five influencers from five Central Asian countries produced 15 TikTok videos on topics, such as gender violence, harassment, and gender stereotypes and discrimination. As a result, the TikTok videos were widely distributed on TikTok, Instagram and other social media channels, reaching at least 200,000 social media users.

A two-day regional workshop on engaging men, conducted with 57 representatives of government, CSOs, male activists, religious leaders, and journalists from Central Asia, raised awareness and facilitated discussion on the situational analysis of men and gender equality in the Central Asian region, a regional strategy, and communications plan for engaging men and boys in ending VAWG in Central Asia. National action plans for each Central Asian country on engaging men were developed during the workshop.

Ten representatives of theological institutions, working with religious leaders improved their knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and SGBV prevention by participating in a three-day SSTC International Online Training on Strategic Partnership with Muslim Religious Leaders in Reproductive Family Planning and Prevention of SGBV that took place in March 2022. The SI RP successfully launched a solidarity movement on gender equality under HeForShe in Central Asia within the 16 Days of Activism, reaching over 10,000 people within the first weeks of its launch and raising awareness on the importance of engaging men and boys to challenge social stereotypes and promote healthy masculinity. Influencers from different sectors provided support to promote HeForShe values, resulting in a fruitful partnership. The private sector expressed interest in collaborating with the SI RP within HeForShe Central Asia advocating for gender equality and EFAW.

### Outcome 5: Closing data gaps

In 2022, the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) launched the four-month online kNOwVAWdata course, aimed at measuring VAW, which was initially developed by the UoM and UNFPA. The course was adapted to the Central Asian context and translated into Russian in collaboration with AUCA and UoM, resulting in 53 participants enrolling from Central Asian countries for the weekly meetings. In addition, the course was also offered in English to students of AUCA in the Spring 2022. As a result, seven AUCA students (four of whom were Afghan students) participated in the course and five completed it. Although some targeted countries experienced Internet access issues, it is expected that the course in Russian will be completed by 25 participants.



Source in Central Asia mapped existing data on SGBV and presented findings during the Central Asian workshop on MSR to GBV and data during 23–24 May 2022 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. This was a significant step towards enhancing

data collection and management in the region, providing critical insights to stakeholders who can work towards reducing SGBV.

To raise awareness of the prevalence of SGBV in Central Asian countries, a publication was developed in English and Russian and disseminated among relevant stakeholders, including government, civil society, academia, and experts in five Central Asian countries. The dissemination of this publication has been an effective way of ensuring that key stakeholders are informed and engaged in the fight against SGBV. The publication is a useful tool in advocating for prevalence data in Central Asia and demonstrates how easily data can be understood if visualized in a reader-friendly manner while also reflecting the limited availability of representative and comparable data.



Photo credit: UNDP Kazakhstan

Hackathons are becoming powerful drivers for change, generating solutions that contribute to more equitable societies. In April 2022, the first regional Spotlight Digital Challenge brought together students, recent graduates, and experts on EVAWG in a collective effort to explore the potential of digital technologies in the prevention and response to violence, including data



Photo credit: UNDP Kazakhstan

collection. The Spotlight Digital Challenge welcomed newcomers to the EVAWG community, provided an intensive educational programme for participants to learn about the problem and a space for participants to make headway on problems of VAWG. Educational Bootcamp welcomed over 200 participants who learned about gaps, divides, and inequalities sustained through social norms and practices leading to gender-based

discrimination and violence from the leading experts and practitioners representing academia,

CSOs and crisis centres for women subjected to violence. Participants also met innovators from Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan who had already taken part in hackathons and were able to join with like-minded people to develop tech-based solutions to help others.

The Spotlight Digital Challenge culminated in the online 'IT vs Violence' Challenge. It provided an environment for problem-solving, creative thinking, and collaborative skills among young people from Central Asian countries in their attempts to create concepts of technology-based solutions in support of EAW in their home countries and in the region. 7 out of 9 winners continue working on their idea. 'Made to Top' team from Uzbekistan is now collaborating with the Association of Journalists of Uzbekistan. 'God is a Woman' team from Kazakhstan participated in Solutions Expo during the Digital Knowledge Week – 2022 in Astana. 'Kyzdar+1', the all-girl winning team from Kyrgyzstan, is working on a documentary on engaged men supporting their daughters.

### **Outcome 6: Women's movements**

The SI RP united over 500 representatives of CSOs, activists and women's rights defenders across the five countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan establishing an informal Regional CSOs Network through the consultative process. The Coordination Group will continue the coordination of the informal Regional CSOs Network and Civic Participation Fund from Kyrgyzstan to act as the



*Photo credit: UN Women Kazakhstan*

regional grant-making mechanism on resource mobilization and capacity-building entity for grassroots organizations in 2023 and will link them with the Central Asian Alliance.

The SI RP fostered the creation of the Regional Network of 21 local trainers from 11 regional CSOs. Nearly 3,000 members of CSOs and gender activists from all countries in the region strengthened their capacities and further

developed skills on gender, policy analysis and strategic communication and built coalitions to further tackle SGBV issues in Central Asia.

The SI RP continued supporting CSOs via its small grants programming. Based on the results of the Calls for Proposals in 2022, a total of 16 CSOs and grassroots organizations were selected across the region – four in Kazakhstan, four in Kyrgyzstan, five in Tajikistan, and three in Uzbekistan, for the Small Grants awards within Pillar 6, valued at \$132,668. The SI RP has been empowering these organizations to effectively contribute towards achievement of the objectives of the SI in the region. For example, the centre, 'Kalb Nuri', in Djizak region, Uzbekistan developed

an educational tool, 'Gender and Media', for journalism faculties of universities in Uzbekistan. The educational tool intended for students of journalism faculties, practitioners, bloggers, and researchers in this field. Currently, the tool has been introduced into the educational process of the Faculty of Media and Communication of the Uzbek State University of World Languages, as well as into the academic curriculum of the University of Journalism and Mass Communication of Uzbekistan. The manual was published in 300 copies. As there are 11 faculties of journalism in Uzbekistan, an interest in this course is growing. The principles of gender equality are being introduced into all spheres of society. One of the authors of this tool, Ms. Kosimova, Doctor of Philology, Associate Professor, has taught this course for four years at the Faculty of Media and Communication. Ms. Kosimova, and the director of the Kalb Nuri Center, Ms. Alimova, conducted training on gender equality among journalists, bloggers, mahalla activists and civil society.

## RIGHTS HOLDERS (Spotlight Initiative programme beneficiaries)

Indicative numbers	Direct for 2022	Indirect for 2022	Comments/Explanation
Women (18 years and above)	24,378	145,059	<p><b>The number of direct beneficiaries is fixed according to the following:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is an internal report of each specialist on beneficiaries. Statistics on the list of beneficiaries are broken down by: age; distribution; and region of residence.</li> <li>2. The lists of beneficiaries are filled in by psychologists and lawyers when they provide group and individual consultations and provide assistance.</li> <li>3. Each expert keeps a log of consultations. Consultations were held on the provision of psychological, legal and social assistance and support.</li> <li>4. Those with access to a hotline, as those with hotline access can obtain advice.</li> <li>5. Seek advice through messengers.</li> <li>6. There were infections in criminal cases (murder, rape, pedophilia, serious bodily harm), as well as in the protection of children's rights.</li> <li>7. Consultations on the provision of shelter, assistance in the restoration of documents, registration, documentation, participation in training offline and online.</li> <li>8. Support and protection of rights in courts, in government agencies, when attached to clinics, registration of EDS, benefits, queuing for housing, employment, placement in a kindergarten.</li> <li>9. Logs are kept where women receiving shelter services stay.</li> <li>10. Field consultations were held in the region.</li> <li>11. Lectures were held offline and online for students alongside an open lecture held on the city radio.</li> <li>12. Within the framework of the project, trainings and conferences were organized offline and online.</li> </ol> <p><b>The number of indirect beneficiaries is fixed according to the following:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Everyone who found out through coalitions, social networks and posters</li> <li>2. All structures (Department of Internal Affairs, Public Education System, Mahalla Department and the mahalla committees, Health System, etc.)</li> <li>3. Handouts and programmes on television, articles, posts and social videos on facebook, instagram, telegram channels</li> </ol>
Girls (5–17 years)	600	4,549	
Men (18 years and above)	353,481	61,758	
Boys (5–17 years)	366	1,564	
Total	378,825	212,930	

## CHALLENGES AND MITIGATING MEASURES

As pandemic-related restrictions gradually reduced, the SI RP returned to 'normal' business with the return to the office, organization of meetings, and traveling, which has been a challenge for the staff, partners and management team after two years of distant work.

Unlike neighboring Central Asian countries, Turkmenistan retained most of the COVID-19 restrictions throughout 2022, which affected most international and national travel. This made it challenging for Turkmen stakeholders, including CSOs, to participate in programme events, and it did not allow for the verification of the SGBV situation in the country or otherwise assessing the respective trends and commitments.

In Afghanistan, engaging with relevant stakeholders remained challenging throughout Phase I, particularly in 2022, given the country's recent developments, including the curtailment of fundamental rights and freedoms of Afghan women and girls despite promises to protect their rights within sharia laws.

In 2022, the Communication Officer and the Finance and Administrative Assistant transitioned increasing the workload on programme officers. The recruitment process was launched but appears challenging due lengthy procedures and difficulty finding a candidate for the remaining part of programme life. Hiring a national UN volunteer (UNV) for the Finance/Administrative Assistant position and an Individual Consultant to fulfill the duties of Communication Officer seems plausible.

The Central Asian Alliance on EVAWG and HP will be a key enabler for the sustainability of the SI RP. Key challenges in launching the Central Asian Alliance include the lack of an existing forum as a coordination mechanism in Central Asia (intergovernmental or UN) to engage all five countries in Central Asia. The SI RP has sought to fill this gap to a degree and support related interventions, including the Central Asian Alliance.

Reviving and operationalizing the CS-RRG appeared to be a formidable task with a lack of commitment, needs and expectations, and clear ToR, budget, workplan, and incentive for its members.

A programme of this scale requires elaborate coordination mechanisms within and across participating UN Agencies and country offices. Coordination predetermines the complementarity of action between regional and country SI programmes, and between the SI and ongoing programme

activities at the country level by each recipient and other UN agencies working on gender equality and EAW. This influences how collective ownership is built to address VAWG through continuous engagement of national state and non-state partners and participatory approach.

Another key dimension is information management. With three more SI country programmes being implemented in the region simultaneously, the volume of data produced is significant. It is challenging to keep track of all studies, assessments, tools and knowledge products and other information generated in Central Asia. Effective use of this data requires a strong knowledge management system to identify, organize, store, and share this collective information across the regional and country programmes, national counterparts and stakeholders. While the SI Secretariat expands its knowledge management efforts, the SI RP needs to strengthen its knowledge management component and foster more active information-sharing with other SI programmes in the region.

Implementation as 'One UN' calls for innovative and flexible approaches, more effective use of programme and procurement instruments. Whenever an opportunity arises, the RUNOs tried to coordinate across agencies on programme activities and processes, and lay the ground for a new way of working, especially in the absence of a comprehensive set of harmonized procedures. UNFPA and UNDP joint work with the same implementing partner on SOPs and MSR to SGBV is an example of such an approach.

Logistics and long country procedures on nomination of the participants (e.g. at least 2 months in Turkmenistan) in the region present an additional challenge to the organization of events with in-person participation. While Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have good connections by air and road transport, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and, to a lesser extent, Uzbekistan require extra effort to ensure economic and direct routes for participants by RUNOs. Similarly, problems with electronic bank transfers, availability of bank cards or currency regulations often make it difficult to transfer travel entitlements to the participants and increase organizational workload.

### ***Social media platforms for Central Asian countries***

In August 2022, the Secretariat agreed to open shared Instagram and Facebook accounts for Central Asia to be jointly used by the SI RP as well as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan country programmes. This decision was positively accepted by the community and partners. Currently, all partners are actively engaging with the SI RP by tagging, reposting and mentioning it. This also enhanced EU visibility on social media by tagging the official pages of the European Commission in the region. Additionally, availability of the SI RP Instagram account in Russian makes it possible

to develop joint publications and collaborate more actively with the target audience. The page also can be used further to showcase all programme activities and engagements starting from August 2022.

The HeForShe Central Asia Instagram account launched during the 16 Days of Activism in November 2022 and has reached over 414,000 accounts (85% men).

## **LESSONS LEARNED AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES**

Throughout the reporting period, the SI RP has considered new avenues to deliver concrete advantages that can incentivize stakeholders and recipients to collaborate and build on established and effective innovative interventions and initiatives in Central Asia. Implementing innovative methods may require time to establish, institutionalize, and maintain beyond the timeframe of the SI RP.

All the countries in the region lack specialized services for SGBV victims/survivors, including psychosocial support to victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Most countries offer crisis support and shelter through state institutions or NGOs; however, these are not available country wide, often do not cover rural or remote areas, and do not reach specific categories of SGBV victims/survivors, such as women with disabilities. All of the Central Asia countries reported a lack of state financial support for psychosocial services to victims/survivors of SGBV, these services mainly depend on donor financial support, and their sustainability is often jeopardized.<sup>23</sup>

There are few youth organizations in Central Asia working in the field of SGBV prevention. The informal youth network established within the SI RP will allow young people to be more engaged in VAWG prevention.

There is a lack of national experts on positive masculinity and engaging men. For the development of the situational analysis, strategy and communication plan, an international expert with extensive expertise in this field was hired and this work was supported by the work of the national experts.

There is a significant gap in administrative data compilation, analysis and publishing. There is little evidence of large-scale SGBV prevalence studies and systematic assessments of knowledge and attributes towards SGBV. Large-scale surveys, such as Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and Demographic and Health Surveys should continue to be used as tools to collect data on

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<sup>23</sup> Situational Analysis of the participation of the health, psycho-social and law-enforcement sectors to multi-sectoral response to sexual and gender-based violence in Central Asia, 2022.



SGBV. It is also recommended that SGBV topics (e.g. prevalence, use of services, attitudes) be included in other national-level surveys that might be regularly repeated, as a less costly alternative to specific surveys, to collect such data at more regular intervals.<sup>24</sup>

In 2022, the SI RP attempted to revive the CS-RRG with the aim to identify the individual areas of expertise of its members, assessing their needs and expectations, and developing a plan to build their capacity. However, only four or five out of 12 members expressed their interest in joining the capacity-building activities and demonstrated commitment to the programme. To address this issue, the SI RP proposes to re-elect the entire CS-RRG based on initiative and commitment and to develop clear terms of reference, budget, workplan, and incentives for individual members. This will help build a vibrant, effective, and enthusiastic CS-RRG that can support multiple initiatives where civil society involvement is critical.

As part of Phase II, the SI RP will establish the Central Asia Alliance on ending SGBV and HP, a CSO-driven platform that will facilitate multi-stakeholder participation, pooling of resources, mutual reinforcement of outcomes, and sharing of good practices in the region. To effectively support this alliance, the SI RP will consider revising the CS-RRG composition and building its capacity to provide gender expertise across all Pillars and to engage in collaborative advocacy efforts with the CS-NRGs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. By proactively engaging with the revamped CS-RRG, established CSOs and Youth Network, the Central Asian Alliance will be able to provide technical guidance, act as a conduit among a wide range of cross-functional stakeholders, and promote a regional advocacy agenda based on the fundamental criteria of political will and national commitments towards GEWE, and a recognized regional leadership role in promoting the GEWE agenda.

## **INNOVATIVE, PROMISING OR GOOD PRACTICES**

### *Applying innovative approaches*

During the reporting period, the SI RP explored new ways and opportunities to provide more tangible benefits that could motivate stakeholders and beneficiaries to innovatively collaborate and capitalize on existing successful interventions and initiatives in the Central Asian region. Introducing innovative approaches may require time to ground, institutionalize and sustain beyond the SI RP.

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<sup>24</sup> Mapping of the existing data on sexual and gender-based violence in Central Asia, 2022.

Under Pillar 5, the SI RP is partnering with UoM, AUCA, to translate into Russian and adapt the kNOwVAWdata online training course to the context of Central Asia and introduce key concepts related to measuring VAW, teaching how to use various tools to generate reliable, comparable data and undertake a national prevalence study. Serving as a global product for practitioners worldwide, the course provides opportunities for distant learning and building capacity of national partners (statisticians, researchers, etc.) in Central Asia.

### ***Addressing gender-based violence through education, collaborative thinking and use of digital technologies***

Recognizing the importance of increased use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) to prevent the spread of VAW and capitalizing on its experience in launching hackathons, which are becoming powerful drivers for change, generating solutions that contribute to more egalitarian societies, the SI RP hosted the first regional Spotlight Digital Challenge within Pillar 5 (Closing the Data Gaps on SGBV) in April 2022. Pillar 5, among other priorities, focuses on overcoming the gaps in VAWG data, which includes a component on innovative ways of collecting and visualizing data.

The Spotlight Digital Challenge was designed to increase awareness among young people that digital technologies contain the potential to address SGBV but, at the same time, pose new threats of GBV in cyberspace . The Spotlight Digital Challenge offered an educational component for students and recent graduates from the region – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. It also provided a space for problem-solving, creative thinking, and collaborative skills among young people from Central Asian countries in their attempts to create concepts of technology-based solutions and mobile applications in support of EVAWG in their home countries and in the region of Central Asia. The Challenge improved young people's understanding of gender inequality and discrimination, and increased awareness of SGBV in cyberspace (IT-facilitated violence) and safety measures. A community of like-minded young people formed a self-sustained network to share information on different opportunities for the acceleration of their ideas.

## **GOOD PRACTICES**

Strong coordination and complementarity among the three implementing RUNOs ensured cohesion and consistency between SI RP activities implemented by RUNOs under different pillars.

A youth component of the SI RP is implemented by youth-led organizations, which allows them to better understand their needs, aspirations, and interests to better mobilize youth organizations from all Central Asian countries.

Implemented mostly in Kazakhstan (since 2019) and Kyrgyzstan, the innovative MenEngage concept is a novelty for the region and raises interest.

In November 2022, Central Asia joined the Global Solidarity Movement For Gender Equality, HeForShe. Limited analytical information on masculinities and social norms and no research on men's perception and use of VAWG in Central Asia and at the national level, led to development of the online mobilization communications strategy. The SI RP conducted 30 in-depth interviews with activists, civil society actors, businessmen and businesswomen, gender experts, journalists, and filmmakers from all five countries; surveyed 1,000 Central Asian men and analyzed results; conducted focus groups with target audience in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to test developed messaging pillars and key messages for each country; and analyzed men's comments on high-profile YouTube SGBV documentaries, social media posts and podcasts. This approach proved to be a good practice resulting in the successful launch of the campaign reaching over 10,000 people in Central Asia within its first weeks, effective collaboration with HeForShe advocates, TikTok and continuous interest from influencers and the private sector.

There are many groups of women facing intersectional inequalities in Central Asia, but there is little information describing their experiences, including access to services. This stems partly from laws and policies around their legal status coupled with a high level of social stigma in these countries. SGBV data among general populations of women in Central Asia is limited, and there is little data on the GBV-related vulnerabilities, experiences and needs of these women. Engaging by and for CSOs on the design and implementation of the primary research on intersectionality and SGBV in Central Asia proved to be a good practice. This research will explore the unique circumstances resulting from the intersection of gender inequality with other social inequalities and their relationship to the experience of SGBV among them, to identify what data should be collected to inform SGBV policies and programmes to ensure they are inclusive of all women in Central Asia. Thus, the SI RP directs the study in collaboration with CSOs that worked extensively with these priority groups: women living with HIV; women living with disabilities; sex workers; LGBTIQ+ community members; women with the experience of migration; and older persons (65+ years).

In some instances, the offline format proved more effective than online, as it allowed expansion of the network of partners and beneficiaries.

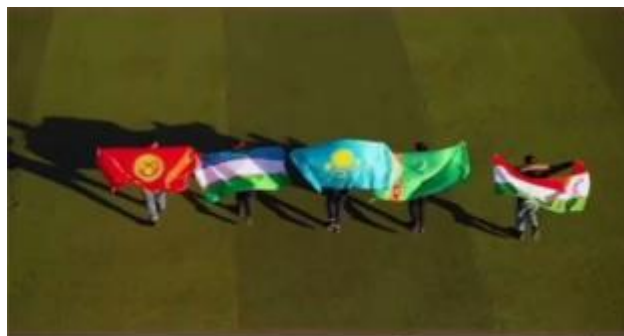
### ***Establishment of social media in Russian language***

In August 2022, the SI Secretariat agreed to launch Instagram and Facebook pages in Russian for the SI RP and the two country programmes in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. This significantly expanded outreach to the Russian-speaking public in the region.

During the 16 Days of Activism campaign, the pages covered over 118,000 accounts through publications and collaborations in Russian, enabling joint publications with partners in the region and proactive engagement with the public. Currently, the page has over 650 followers. Partners have tagged Russian-speaking followers over 175 times in their posts and over 500 times in stories. To improve the EU's visibility as the donor and core partner of the SI in the region, the SI RP tagged the official pages of EU delegations in the region on the SI Russian Instagram. As a result, some of the SI RP publications have been reposted by the EU in Kazakhstan, further increasing the SI RP visibility.

### ***Extended newsletter coverage***

Between September and November 2022, the SI RP introduced a new format newsletter that covers not only the four SI programmes in the region but also regional partners addressing GBV. This is a good approach where all stakeholders add to and share info from the newsletter providing for a broader perspective on the efforts made to prevent VAWG in the region. By including regional partners, the newsletter fosters collaboration and highlights the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach to address GBV. Overall, these practices are in line with the UN Reform aimed at consolidating efforts of the agencies. The newsletter in the new format can be accessed at this [link](#). Newsletters produced in 2022 can be accessed [here](#).



*Photo Credit: UN RCO Kazakhstan*

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY**

### ***Overview***

#### ***News Portals:***

55 articles about events organized by the SI RP were published on various news portals in five countries and on global news portals. Most of the publications were made in Russian. Links to all

articles are available [here](#). Central Asian and Global news portals that posted articles about SI RP are listed below:

**Global:**

<https://spotlightinitiative.org>  
<https://spotlightdigital.org>  
<https://habr.com>  
<https://kazakhstan.unfpa.org>  
<https://www.undp.org>  
<https://eca.unwomen.org>  
<https://www.eeas.europa.eu>  
<https://www.mzv.cz>

**Kazakhstan:**

[kazakh24.info](http://kazakh24.info)  
<https://www.inform.kz>  
<https://paperlab.kz>  
<https://the-steppe.com>  
<https://astanait.edu.kz>  
<https://dknews.kz>  
<https://ru.sputnik.kz>  
<https://24.kz>  
<https://ecolomist.kz>

<https://polisia.kz>  
<https://femagora.org>  
<https://el.kz>  
<https://zhaikpress.kz>  
<https://wonderwomenhub.com>  
<https://manshuq.com>  
<https://www.inform.kz>

**Kyrgyzstan:**

<https://devkg.com>  
<http://stat.kg>  
<https://mfa.gov.kg>  
<https://www.president.kg>  
<https://ru.sputnik.kg>  
<https://kg.akipress.org>  
<https://www.auca.kg>  
<https://www.vb.kg>

**Tajikistan:**

<https://vecherka.tj/archives/54508>

<https://avesta.tj>  
<https://vecherka.tj>

**Turkmenistan:**

<https://turkmenistan.gov.tm>  
<https://salamnews.tm>  
<https://tmcars.info>  
<https://turkmenistan.un.org>  
<https://centralasia.news>  
<https://snq.today>  
<https://snq.fm>  
<https://arzuw.news>  
<https://turkmenistan.gov.tm>  
<https://orient.tm>

**Uzbekistan:**

<https://pravacheloveka.uz>  
<https://nuu.uz>

**Instagram:**

In August 2022, the SI RP Instagram and Facebook pages were launched in Russian to expand outreach to the Russian-speaking public in the region. During the 16 Days of Activism, over 100,000 accounts were reached through publications and collaborations. The establishment of pages in Russian made it possible to post joint publications with partners in the region and engage with the public. Currently, over 600 people follow the posts of the SI RP. The page has been tagged by partners in posts 175 times and over 300 times in stories. Instagram page @spotlightcentralasia has been tagged by partners in their own posts over 175 times and over 500 times in stories. Partners that made publications and stories referencing events or initiatives organized by the SI RP included:

@euinkyrgyzstan	@heforshekyrgyzstan	@unfpa_kyrgyzstan	@idea_ca
@eukazakhstan	@heforshecentralasia	@unwomenkyrgyzstan	@nur.alliance
@euintajikistan	@heforshekazakhstan	@unintajikistan	@ilim_elim
@eu4turkmenistan	@heforsheuzbekistan	@uniceftajikistan	@nswmun
@eudeluzb	@un_kyrgyzstan	@tajikistan.unfpa	@actedcentralasia
@unfpakaz	@undpkg	@unwomenkyrgyzstan	@csdgalmu
@undp.kazakhstan	@unicefkg	@unfpa.uzbekistan	@gender.tj
@unwomenkazakhstan	@usaidkg	@unfpa_turkmenistan	@fond.farosat

@korgau\_astana                      @tut.coworking                      @rafaelgulov                      @femagora  
 @rinat\_balgabaev                      @dcdebate\_tut                      @kanykei.damirbekova                      @charliezly  
 @gender\_issue\_through\_                      @just\_khotun                      @mussaldayeva                      @abdinabiev\_beka  
 art                      @manshuq\_media                      @domovyata\_life                      @aigerim\_akulbekova  
 @po\_bonuvoni\_fardo                      @uniceftajikistan                      @sukhbattime                      @rakhimova2968  
 @batyrjamal                      @wonderwomenhub                      @rakhimova2968                      @mbos279  
 @glebponomarevkz                      @kaliya\_kz                      @mediasabak                      @kawj.kg  
 @bishkekfeminists                      @fatim\_lead                      @eleonora\_assanova                      @foc\_kg  
 @smuzi\_tv                      @reproducshop                      @mozhno\_zhit                      @mussaldayeva  
 @zhaikpress                      @e.toksobayev\_school                      @kaznu\_un                      @soschildrevillageskg  
 @arnoo\_komics                      @guncha.annageldieva                      @elmira\_bukharbaeva                      @zhaikpress

*Accounts reached by the SI RP via Instagram accounts @spotlightcentralasia and @heforshecentralasia*

Page	Posts	Followers	Accounts engaged	Accounts reached
@spotlightcentralasia	64	658	791	118,000
@heforshecentralasia	26	843	6,454	414,000
@heforshekazakhstan	10	152	201	4,267
@heforsheuzbekistan	12	44	18	66
@heforshekyrgyzstan	11	77	136	1,131

The above information pertains to the outreach and engagement metrics of the SI RP through the Instagram page in Russian @spotlightcentralasia (launched August 2022) and the HeForShe Central Asia movement @heforshecentralasia (launched November 2022). The HeForShe Central Asia Instagram account targets men, with women a secondary targeted audience; thus, the account reached 85.1% of men out of 414,000 total reached accounts. The SI Central Asia Instagram account reached 118,000 accounts with 52.34% men and 47.66% women.

The SI RP partnered with the women’s community, @Wonderwomenhub and Internet media company @manshuq\_media, to organize social media campaigns on International Women’s Day and the 16 Days of Activism that resulted in the following engagement of the public:

Page	Campaign	Followers	Accounts engaged	Accounts reached
@manshuq_media Instagram Channel	Prevention of discrimination against women living with HIV	31,800	46,380	505,030
@Wonderwomenhub Instagram Channel	16 Days of Activism Campaign	8,174	1,623	32,364

### Messages

These messages were further tested in eight focus groups and successfully launched, including:

- **Gender equality:**
  - Gender equality...is when you are equally proud of a son and a daughter...everyone needs @HeForSheCentralAsia
  - Gender Equality...is no stereotyping about men and women...everyone needs @HeForSheCentralAsia
  - Gender equality...is when she is not forced to marry...everyone needs @HeForSheCentralAsia
- **Healthy masculinity:** A man has the right to be vulnerable and express his feelings in a safe way, and care about his health and well-being. He, like any other person, has doubts, and could feel sad, repent or make mistakes. He has the right to enjoy fatherhood, and question the expectations of masculine, controlling and violent behavior imposed on him by the traditional narrative.
  - Your mentality is you. Norms accepted in society can be changed. Reference to mentality is a way of hiding laziness and a desire to maintain the status quo. Young men are tomorrow's aksakals, to whom young people will listen, so you can stand up for new rules today. - for Uzbekistan

### Media and visibility events

In November 2022, a group of 130 journalists, including media actors, independent journalists, and social media captains, participated in a training session to learn how to address SGBV. The journalists were from various countries, including 15 from Kyrgyzstan, 30 from Tajikistan, 25 from

Uzbekistan, 21 from Kazakhstan, 19 from Turkmenistan, and 20 from Afghanistan. They applied their newly acquired knowledge by participating in a contest to create the best media product for SGBV prevention.

The SI RP produced a new format for its regional newsletter. This newsletter not only captured updates from the SI RP perspective but, for the first time, it also featured the latest developments in advancing gender equality across Central Asia and Afghanistan within the ongoing SI country programmes. The newsletter included insights shared by UN agencies and development partners in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as part of their programme interventions aimed at preventing SGBV and HP.

### **Campaign**

The annual 16 Days of Activism campaign is the culmination of an effort to analyze, report and highlight major interventions of women activists and grassroots CSOs in combating SGBV. The following activities were conducted throughout the campaign:

1. Master class on gender journalism
2. Youth engagements
  - Three I-Talks on the issues of GBV, gender equality, women's empowerment in the universities of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan
  - Regional online forum, 'Media Initiatives of the girls from Central Asia'
  - National Youth Debate Tournaments, 'Non-Violence Cup' in each Central Asian country
  - Lectures at the universities
3. HeForShe Central Asia movement campaign launch and collaboration with TikTok
4. Live broadcast on radio stations, including Qazaq Radiosy, GovoriTV, and Anhor.UZ in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan respectively
5. Social media campaigns
  - Manshuq Media
  - Wonder Woman
  - Youth 'Nur' Alliance
  - Tik toks on gender stereotypes and SGBV issues



### Human interest stories

Stories were written in Russian. A headline and a lead were translated. All MSWord and PDF published versions are available [here](#).

#### Story of Zulaikha, Uzbekistan – ‘The life in gambling’

*This story was provided in Uzbek language by [Sabohat Rahmon](#), one of the winners of the contest held after the regional master class on gender journalism and was translated from the original into English.*



Story of Zulaikha

Photo Credit: screenshot from the video material of SAFO-TV

Zulaikha, along with her two children, was forced out of her house with nothing but the clothes on her back and no money in her pocket. For a week, she resided in the Neighborhood Citizens' Assembly guardhouse. Unfortunately, Zulaikha's father couldn't take her in because he had remarried after her mother's passing, and her stepmother refused to let her come home. With no other family to turn to, Zulaikha faced significant challenges. What occurred in Zulaikha's life after this difficult period? Follow the link mentioned above to

access the full story.

#### Story of Manizha Paktin – Unfeminine profession

This story was taken in a video interview format in Russian within the 16 days of the Activism campaign and uploaded on [Instagram](#) to inspire young women in Central Asia to choose the profession of their dream, even if the nearest community believes that this profession is unfeminine. Manizha Paktin is a woman from Afghanistan, who is Afghanistan's first woman construction worker. Manizha lives in Kazakhstan and works as a Lecturer at the International



Story of Manizha

Photo credit: <http://cso-central.asia/>

Educational Corporation of KazGASA University, Construction Faculty. In the interview, she describes the reaction of her male colleagues on her choice and explained how she overcame it. Manizha is also a Director of Stand Up For Afghan Women Academic Organization.



Cooperation with religious leaders  
Photo credit: UN Women Kazakhstan

### **Cooperation with religious leaders**

Within the framework of the project, ‘Strengthening interagency cooperation on preventing and responding to gender-based violence’, and with the financial support of the SI, the Ferghana Regional Department of the Center for Support of Civil Initiatives held roundtables with the participation of religious leaders of the Fergana region. Religious leaders have shown readiness to cooperate in this matter with the Ferghana Regional Department of the Center for Support of Civil Initiatives. ([Read more](#) to learn about the outcomes.)

## **Media Initiatives of Central Asia**

[Project ‘Sepgit’](#) (Turkmenistan) is a platform which includes personal stories and media content, such as video interviews and podcasts, as well as banners and advertisements. The aim of the platform is to promote gender equality and to share the success stories of women and the support they have received from the community.

### **Testimonials**

A full collection consisting of 19 testimonials can be accessed following the link [here](#).

#### **Ms. Marilyn Josefson, Ambassador of the European Union to Kyrgyzstan:**

*“We are pleased that the Know the Data on Violence Against Women (kNOwVAWdata) course provides a comprehensive and powerful tool for addressing many challenges associated with collecting, analyzing and using quality data on violence against women. We hope that this will contribute to the creation of an effective system for measuring violence against women and more informed decision-making by politicians. At the EU, we are committed to helping the countries of Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan, in their quest to combat gender-based violence. Effective research on violence against women is not only about fairness in society but can also influence important individual decisions: about family cohesion, about education, about working conditions and about others.”*

**Ms. Nodira Alimova, Centre 'Kalb Nuri', Small Grants recipient from Uzbekistan:**

*"Within the framework of the Spotlight Initiative Regional Programme, the Centre 'Kalb Nuri' prepared an educational tool 'Gender and Media' for Journalism faculties of universities of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The centre could cooperate with the university on using this tool for university students."*

**Mr. Bahodirhon Eliboev (participant of Master Class on Gender Journalism from Uzbekistan):**

*"We have been writing about gender issues for many years, important topics were raised at the master class that we did not know about. I would like to suggest that we start working with men. To put it figuratively, if the violence victim is a sheep and the perpetrator is a wolf, we need to work with the wolves. It is also necessary to involve and to collaborate more with religious organizations to increase awareness on this topic, as many people in our country are still religious."*

**Photos**  
[full collection](#)



**Photo 1.** Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed visited Kazakhstan where she met with local grantees within the Spotlight RP.  
 (Photo credit: UN RCO Kazakhstan)

**Photo 2.** Experts, practitioners and officials representing law enforcement and justice sectors, state and non-state crisis centers, research institutions, gender activists and international community from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan joined together at the discussion of the architecture of response to gender-based violence in the countries of Central Asia in September 2022 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. (Photo credit: UNDP Kazakhstan)



**Photo 3.** H.E. Ms. Marilyn Josefson, EU Ambassador in Kyrgyzstan, delivers opening speech at the launch of kNOwVAWdata course in Kyrgyzstan in September 2022. (Photo credit: UNFPA Kazakhstan)



**Photo 4.** Regional CSO Forum held in Turkestan, Kazakhstan in November 2022. (Photo credit: UN Women Kazakhstan)

## Videos

A collection of 51 links to the videos created and published by the SI RP and beneficiaries of the programme in 2022 can be accessed following the link [here](#).

## SUSTAINABILITY

In 2023, the SI RP will focus on the development of the sustainability plan for the signature interventions. One of the signature interventions is MSR to SGBV, implementation of which will be continued in the countries of Central Asia after the end of the SI RP. Engaging men, youth and religious leaders will also be supported further. The SI RP laid out an extensive infrastructure, analytical work and baseline assessments across all pillars allowing different actors to build and continue work on EVAWG in Central Asia. For example, the Central Asian Alliance will be a key enabler for the sustainability of the SI RP. In the absence of the existing regional forum as a coordination mechanism in Central

Asia, the SI RP has sought to fill this gap through its interventions, including the Central Asian Alliance on EVAWG and HP to a certain extent. The Central Asian Alliance will be supported by the work of the already established regional informal youth network, Nur and the regional CSO network on the prevention of SGBV. The regional virtual knowledge-sharing platform will support the Central Asian Alliance's work and will be hosted



"NUR" Youth Alliance meeting  
Photo credit: UNFPA Kazakhstan

and further maintained by the wider regional knowledge-sharing platform, Act for Equal. The latter is one of the commitments of the Government of Kazakhstan with the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on SGBV. Another example is the high interest from the private sector to support the HeForShe Central Asia Solidarity Movement For Gender Equality. The established Coordination Group will integrate the Regional CSOs Network and regional grant-making mechanism into the work of the Central Asian Alliance, based on the extensive national and regional consultations with CSOs from all countries in the region. Furthermore, the informal youth network will continue its work on the prevention of SGBV in the region.

The kNOwVAWdata course remains in the region and will be taught in English and Russian in the American University of Central Asia (AUCA), Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Developed and piloted regional research methodologies and tools on men's perception and use of VAWG and addressing data gaps on intersectionality and SGBV will be widely disseminated, and a pool of research practitioners will be trained on these research methodologies. These are expected to generate interest to continue within the Central Asian Alliance work: thematic research and development of prevention programmes based on evidence-based data on masculinities and social norms as well as advocating for better tailored services for women who are traditionally left behind – women living with disabilities, women living with HIV, sex-workeres, older women (65+ years), women with the experience of migration.

It is expected that a sustainability plan will include: a regional monitoring tool and gap analysis on gender justice and a legal framework to help sustain legislation oversight and ensure a systematic law-making and elaboration process.

## **NEXT STEPS**

In the upcoming Phase II, the following projections have been planned to further advance the EVAWG and GEWE efforts in Central Asia. A regional monitoring tool/dashboard on gender justice and the laws/legal framework will be shared with national partners and stakeholders to measure progress in Central Asia on international commitments for gender equality and EVAWG. The dashboard will be shared with state institutions in Central Asia in charge of voluntary reporting on SDGs and CEDAW.

National experts will utilize the strengthened evidence-based knowledge and capacities acquired from the regional seminar to assess gaps and strengthen existing legislation on prevention and response to SGBV, including DV/intimate partner violence, and/or gender equality and non-discrimination. The legislation should respond to the rights of the most groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and should be in line with international standards and treaty body recommendations.

The regional model M&E tool for implementation of regional model SOPs, developed in Phase I, will be developed and distributed among key sectors. A roadmap for the adaptation and implementation of the regional model SOPs will strengthen implementation of SOPs at the country level. The capacities of the national trainers from three sectors (health, social support, police) will be enhanced in a MSR to SGBV.

The study on protecting the rights of women in religious marriages will be disseminated to initiate a regional public dialogue with government officials, religious leaders, civil society, and other partners. The study will develop a set of recommendations on the matter. Consequently, a roundtable will bring together women's rights activists, including youth organizations, journalists, government officials, and leaders of faith-based organizations from the region to discuss the findings and recommendations of the study.

At least 10 grants will be awarded in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan to CSOs working with vulnerable groups of women. The grants will be used to identify common challenges and design a plan of action to address discriminatory norms and stigma.

The Central Asian Alliance on EVAWG and HP will host its launching conference based on the extensive consultations conducted with different sectors starting in 2021. The regional virtual knowledge platform will be developed through the consultative process aggregating knowledge products, analytical materials, and learning resources and opportunities mapped into several thematic rubrics mirroring SI pillars. The regional virtual knowledge platform will be further integrated into the Central Asian Alliance work.

The work of the network of youth organizations will be further strengthened. The capacities of men from Central Asia will be enhanced on SGBV and gender equality issues.

The SI RP will build further on its successful initiatives, including reaching 7.6 million people from Central Asia raising awareness on engaged men and boys and their advocacy on gender equality, partnership, engaged fatherhood, healthy masculinity via the HeForShe solidarity movement in Central Asia. Further, research results will be disseminated and research methodologies and tools will be developed and piloted on men's perception and use of VAWG and the addressing data gaps on Intersectionality and SGBV in Central Asia.

## ANNEXES

### **Annex A: Results Framework**

*Reporting against the Results Framework will be captured through the Spotlight Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART). Your programme will be responsible for formatting and attaching the data as an annexed table (Annex A) to your report.*

### **Annex B: Risk Matrix**

*Please fill in Annex B and include a link to the annex here, or attach the annex to the report.*

### **Annex C: CSO Engagement Report**

*This year, Annex C will be submitted **online (through Jotform)**, instead of in Excel as in previous years. The form follows the same structure as the Excel sheet previously used, and programmes are still asked to report on the cumulative data on CSO funding from the start of the programme. Please visit the accompanying [guidance](#) for more information. Please make sure to attach Annex C to your report, as well (the Secretariat will share a PDF with you of Annex C).*

### **Annex D: Innovative, Promising or Good Practices Reporting Template**

*Please fill in Annex D and include a link to the annex here, or attach the annex to the report.*

### **Annex E: Annual Work Plan**

*As Annex E, please share your latest 2022 Annual Work Plan and your 2023 Annual Work Plan that reflects the full extended period approved for your programme (if relevant) with the Secretariat. Please also indicate the status of the approval of these AWP's by the programme Steering Committee (approved/to be approved). If already approved by your Steering Committee, please include the relevant signed minutes. No other details are required. For further guidance on AWP's, kindly refer to Chapter 7 of our [Operations Manual](#).*