



JOINT PROGRAMME
“ENDING VIOLENCE –
EMPOWERING CHANGE

ANNUAL PROGRAMME
NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD:
1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER
2025





**JOINT PROGRAMME “ENDING VIOLENCE – EMPOWERING CHANGE”
ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT
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<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Title: JP Serbia Ending Violence Empowering Change Programme Number (if applicable) MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ 00140533 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p><i>Country/Region Serbia</i></p>																						
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme <i>UNFPA, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNDP</i> 	<p><i>Priority area/ strategic results</i> <i>UNSDCF outcomes: 2.1: Universal and inclusive access to quality health, social and protection services is improved; 2.2: Skills, education and capabilities are enhanced to ensure equitable opportunities for all;</i></p>																						
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<p align="center">Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p> <p>Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i> Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i></p>	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Overall Duration (months)</td> <td>36 months</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Start Date⁵ (dd.mm.yyyy)</td> <td>26 January 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Original End Date⁶ (dd.mm.yyyy)</td> <td>31 December 2026</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Current End date⁷(dd.mm.yyyy)</td> <td>31 December 2026</td> </tr> </table>	Overall Duration (months)	36 months	Start Date ⁵ (dd.mm.yyyy)	26 January 2024	Original End Date ⁶ (dd.mm.yyyy)	31 December 2026	Current End date ⁷ (dd.mm.yyyy)	31 December 2026														
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	<p align="center">Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name:Maja Djundic Brankovic Title:Gender Inclusivity Analyst - Portfolio Manager Participating Organization (Lead): UNDP Email address:maja.djundic@undp.org 																						

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.
² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;
³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)
⁴ The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)
⁵ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)
⁶ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.
⁷ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

Main abbreviations and acronyms used in the report

AI	Artificial Intelligence
APV	Autonomous Province of Vojvodina
CBGE	Coordination Body for Gender Equality
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVSV	Center for Victims of Sexual Violence
DV	Domestic Violence
EU	European Union
EVAW	Eliminating Violence against Women
EVEC	Ending Violence Empowering Change
GBV	Gender - Based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GEP	Gender Action Plan
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
JP	Joint Programme
MoESTD	Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
Mol	Ministry of Interior
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MOLESVP	Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NCECM	National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage
NES	National Employment Service
NGO	Non - Governmental Organization
PSSPDGE	Provincial Secretariat for Social Policy, Demography and Gender Equality
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation and Harassment
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SGBV	Sexual and Gender - based Violence
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
UN	United Nations
UN CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, the joint programme “Ending Violence, Empowering Change” contributed to a more integrated, data-informed, and scalable ecosystem for violence prevention and gender equality, linking institutional strengthening, policy reform, and economic empowerment into a coherent and sustainable approach. Prevention efforts improved the capacity of social welfare, health, and education systems to promote non-violent and gender-sensitive parenting, while also institutionalizing accredited training for home-visiting nurses into routine maternal and child health services. At the same time, youth-focused initiatives engaged young men as agents of change and supported adolescents in addressing emerging risks such as technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

Institutional responses to violence were strengthened through the development and piloting of a national open data-based monitoring system for domestic violence cases, enhancing transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. Coordinated multi-sectoral response mechanisms were reinforced through targeted capacity-building, particularly in high-risk regions, while survivor-centered services continued to be delivered and strengthened through health and social protection systems. The programme also contributed to policy development and system improvement through evidence-based analyses of legal aid and support services, while reinforcing the role of healthcare providers through accredited continuous medical education.

The programme further addressed structural inequalities by advancing women’s economic empowerment. Evidence generated through labour market analysis informed the design of a pilot activation model for long-term inactive women, developed in partnership with the National Employment Service, with strong potential to inform national employment policies. Community-level initiatives strengthened women’s economic agency, particularly in rural areas. Efforts to promote women’s participation in future-ready sectors were reinforced through research, skills development initiatives, and the establishment of the Women in ICT Network, creating a platform for advancing women’s leadership, private sector engagement, and future investment opportunities.

Implementation took place in a complex socio-political context marked by social unrest, institutional delays, and a challenging environment for gender equality. Some activities, particularly those involving youth, academia, and large public events, were postponed or adapted. These challenges were mitigated through flexible planning, phased implementation, strengthened stakeholder coordination, ensuring continuity of results and sustained progress toward systemic change.

I. Purpose

The overall programme outcome is to create a society where all stakeholders work to create a gender responsive environment in which women and girls fully achieve their rights and make decisions about their lives freely and independently. The programme seeks to address the root causes of gender inequality, challenge harmful norms and stereotypes, and create a society where gender-based violence (GBV) and discrimination are unacceptable, women's rights are protected, and women can fully participate and contribute to all aspects of social life.

The joint programme contributes to several UNSDCF- outcomes: Outcome 1.3: Equitable economic and employment opportunities are promoted through innovation; Outcome 2.1: Universal and inclusive access to quality health, social and protection services is improved; Outcome 2.2: Skills, education and capabilities are enhanced to ensure equitable opportunities for all; as well as Outcome 3.1: All people, especially the more vulnerable, benefit from the realization of human rights, gender equality, social cohesion, and enhanced rule of law in line with international commitments.

The programme contributes furthermore to the acceleration of the process of attaining the sustainable development goal #5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It also supports the implementation of international commitments and recommendations, particularly CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention.

The joint programme's multi-agency structure brings significant added value by combining the complementary mandates, expertise and operational capacities of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and UN Women. This integrated approach enables a comprehensive response to gender-based violence and inequality, linking policy development, institutional strengthening, service delivery and community engagement. While UNDP contributes systems strengthening and policy support, UNICEF focuses on child protection and advocacy of marginalized groups, UNFPA on youth and sexual and reproductive health and rights and UN Women on sustainable survivor-centered services and women's empowerment. Together, this collaboration ensures coherence across sectors, avoids duplication, maximizes resource efficiency, and enhances the programme's ability to deliver sustainable, system-wide impact aligned with national priorities.

II. Results

i) Narrative reporting on results⁸:

From January to December 2025, the joint programme made the following progress towards the achievement of planned outcomes and outputs from the Project Document:

- **Outcomes:**

Outcome 1 – Safe Environments for Children and Youth and Gender Equality in Households: Increase the capacities of institutions and communities, facilitating the implementation of effective practices that create safer, violence-free environments for children and young people, and promote gender equality within households through the adoption of equitable attitudes and behaviors

In the reporting period, the programme contributed to a more integrated and sustainable model of prevention, combining institutional strengthening, early intervention through health and education systems, improved access to support mechanisms, and community-level norm change. A key result has been the improved quality and consistency of parenting support services, particularly through sustained professional supervision of Centers for Social Work and targeted capacity-building of preschool professionals. This has enabled professionals to more effectively guide families in adopting non-violent and gender-sensitive parenting practices.

Importantly, the programme contributed to system-level change in the health sector through the adaptation and accreditation of the positive parenting training package “Be the Loving Hand”. This has institutionalized gender-sensitive parenting support within early childhood and maternal health services, ensuring that guidance on non-violent parenting is systematically provided to families from pregnancy onwards. At the local level, the programme strengthened intersectoral collaboration mechanisms, bringing together social welfare, health, education, and civil society actors in five municipalities. This has supported a more coordinated and holistic response to families, moving beyond fragmented service delivery.

In parallel, the programme supported improved access to financial protection mechanisms for women through the introduction of an artificial intelligence (AI) -based virtual assistant for the Alimony Fund, providing accessible and reliable information on entitlements and procedures. This innovation reduces

⁸ Annex 1 presents photographs illustrating some of the programme activities and beneficiary responses. With at least 150 media reports produced covering programme-related activities in 2025, a selection of them is presented in Annex 2 of this report.

administrative barriers and contributes to more timely access to financial support for women and families.

The programme also worked to change harmful social norms among young people, focusing on young men as agents of change. Through workshops and peer-led initiatives, young participants were supported to critically reflect on harmful gender norms, power imbalances, and violence. This approach contributed to increased awareness and more equitable attitudes, including in relation to emerging risks such as technology-facilitated gender-based violence. Public advocacy efforts further reinforced these changes by bringing visibility to structural drivers of gender inequality, including the unequal distribution of unpaid care work, and fostering dialogue among key stakeholders.

Outcome 2 – State Institutions and CSOs Ensure Effective Prevention and Improved Access to Gender-Sensitive Quality Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence

In 2025, the programme advanced a more coordinated, transparent, and survivor-centered system of prevention, protection, and response to domestic and gender-based violence. A key achievement was the development and piloting of a national open data-based monitoring system for domestic violence cases involving urgent protection measures. The system increased the transparency of prosecution offices across municipalities and provided anonymized insights into victim and perpetrator profiles. This supports evidence-based policymaking, strengthens accountability, and enables institutions to identify gaps and improve responses.

Furthermore, the programme strengthened coordinated multi-sectoral response mechanisms, improving capacities of professionals from the police, prosecution, social welfare, health, and education sectors to conduct risk assessments and implement protective measures. This support was informed by emerging trends, which included a decline in femicide cases over two consecutive years, persistent regional disparities, marked by a disproportionately high prevalence in the northern part of the country. In response, targeted capacity-building efforts were prioritized in this area, ensuring that interventions were aligned with identified risk patterns and directed where they were most needed. Building on this, the multisectoral case conferences and specialized trainings that were held further strengthened institutional coordination, particularly in addressing complex cases and cases involving survivors from marginalized groups. This enabled more tailored, context-specific, and inclusive responses, improving the effectiveness of protection measures at the case level.

Targeted analyses of free legal aid and specialized services shaped the improvements in access to justice, while service providers strengthened their capacity to deliver rights-based and gender-sensitive support. Direct support to survivors continued through Centers for Victims of Sexual Violence within health institutions, providing integrated psychological, medical, and forensic services. The programme also reinforced the role of the health sector through an updated and re-accredited e-learning module, supporting early identification and response to GBV within routine healthcare practice.

Outcome 3 – Economic and Career Empowerment of Women and Girls: Creating gender-balanced future-ready careers for women and girls by addressing labor market inactivity and occupational gender-based segregation, improving economic empowerment programs, researching women’s entrepreneurship, and supporting female entrepreneurs

Within the reporting period, the joint programme contributed to a more evidence-based and policy-driven approach to women’s economic empowerment, linking research, programme design, and institutional engagement, and creating a scalable foundation for increasing women’s participation in the labour market. Strong evidence base was developed through analyses of self-employment programmes and research on long-term inactive women, identifying key barriers such as caregiving responsibilities, health constraints, and limited access to skills development. These findings informed the design of a pilot activation programme for inactive women, developed in cooperation with the

National Employment Service (NES). The programme is ready for implementation, and its findings will shape the development of new employment strategic frameworks, creating a strong entry point for scaling through future investment.

At the community level, partnerships with civil society organizations contributed to strengthening economic opportunities for women and awareness of their economic rights. Educational workshops supported young people in understanding gender stereotypes, economic violence, and women's inheritance rights, while targeted training in rural areas enhanced women's income-earning capacities and skills, including in traditional crafts and sustainable production practices.

The programme also promoted women's participation and leadership in innovation-driven sectors. Activities increased the visibility of gender equality issues in the science and technology sector, while a comprehensive study provided actionable recommendations for more inclusive education and employment pathways, supporting women's transition into high-growth sectors. In addition, a curriculum for an interdisciplinary future skills programme was developed to modernize learning models, facilitate the transition and increase access for women from university to the labour market, particularly those from the fields of social sciences and humanities to tech-related career pathways.

In parallel, the project supported the establishment of the Women in ICT Network, creating a platform for advancing gender equality, professional networking, and career development in the technology sector, with strong potential for future partnerships and investment.

Outcome 4 – Enhanced Legal Frameworks, Leadership Skills, and Media Engagement: Accelerate implementation of the legal framework on gender equality by enhancing institutional capacities for delivering gender policies, increase women's and girls leadership abilities to advocate for ending discriminatory practices, and expand the role of the media in combating gender biases and promoting inclusive public discourse

In 2025, the programme contributed to strengthening the legal, institutional, and social environment for gender equality through targeted policy engagement, leadership development, and improved media practices. Evidence-based policy advocacy was advanced through support to the National Coalition to End Child Marriage, enabling data collection on child marriage and adolescent pregnancies, and informing policy dialogue with key institutions. This contributed to the inclusion of child marriage risks in draft amendments to domestic violence legislation, strengthening protection frameworks for adolescents, particularly girls.

The project also strengthened leadership capacities among marginalized groups, supporting women and girls to actively engage in advocacy and community-level change. A mentorship programme for Roma women and girls enabled local initiatives addressing gender equality, while documented good practices provide a model for replication.

In parallel, support to women with disabilities contributed to the growth of a national advocacy network focused on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), strengthening collective voice and improving access to services at the local level. Institutional capacities were further enhanced through cooperation with key national bodies, including targeted trainings addressing risk assessment and biases in domestic violence case management, particularly in relation to marginalized women.

At the same time, the programme contributed to improving public discourse on violence against women. A large-scale media analysis informed recommendations for responsible reporting, while the expansion of a free ethical visual database supports non-sensational and gender-sensitive media coverage.

Outputs:

Output 1.1: Promoting Nonviolent Child Discipline and Strengthening Professional Capacities for Child Welfare and Caregiver Support - During the reporting period, the programme strengthened the capacity of professionals across social protection, education, and health systems to provide consistent and quality support to families in adopting non-violent and gender-sensitive parenting practices. This included continued supervision of 279 social welfare professionals (240 women, 39 men) from 84 Centers for Social Work, alongside capacity-building of 375 preschool professionals (primarily women), improving the quality and consistency of parenting support services.

A key systemic result was the adaptation and accreditation of the national [training package](#) “Be the Loving Hand” for health professionals, with 155 home-visiting nurses and medical staff certified to provide parenting guidance during pregnancy and early childhood, embedding violence prevention into routine health services. Intersectoral workshops in five municipalities (engaging 60 women and 5 men) further strengthened coordination among professionals from social welfare, education, health, and civil society, contributing to a more aligned and holistic approach to family support.

Output 1.2: Facilitating Changes in Communities for Gender Equality: creating advocates and agents of societal change among youth - The programme placed strong emphasis on engaging youth, particularly young men, as agents of change in challenging harmful gender norms and promoting more equitable attitudes. Through a combination of workshops and youth-led initiatives, 66 young men were trained and mobilized to lead peer-based activities, while additional community and school-based actions reached around 130 young people, increasing awareness of gender equality, masculinities, and the links between power, inequality, and violence.

Peer-led approaches were further strengthened through collaboration with the Youth Panel of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, resulting in seven [workshops](#) that reached 140 secondary school students increasing their capacity to recognize and respond to technology facilitated gender-based violence. Lessons learned from these initiatives are informing the development of a practical Guide for School Parliament Coordinators, aimed at supporting long-term prevention efforts.

To ensure sustainability and scalability, the programme initiated the development of a handbook for gender-transformative youth work, which is being tested with 11 youth participants and piloted through a Training of Trainers programme gathering 22 youth workers. This has contributed to the creation of a growing pool of youth practitioners equipped to promote gender equality and prevent violence at the community level.

Output 1.3: Equal distribution of care and household work promoted – The programme in part contributed to the launch of an artificial intelligence-based virtual assistant on the website of the Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography, providing 24/7 guidance on accessing rights under the Alimony Fund. This tool supports citizens, including parents and caregivers, in navigating the temporary child support application process, significantly enhancing accessibility and service efficiency.

In parallel, high-visibility advocacy marked the International Day of Care and Support, engaging around 40 stakeholders, including government representatives, international partners, civil society, the private sector, and caregivers, to promote the equal distribution of care and household work. The event highlighted the economic value of unpaid care, its impact on women’s empowerment, the importance of informal caregivers, and showcased private-sector good practice.

Output 2.1: Strengthen institutional practices and capacities to effectively prevent and address violence against women and girls - A national monitoring system for cases of domestic violence (DV) was developed to track cases in which courts imposed urgent protection measures, enabling comprehensive analysis by jurisdiction, institutional response, and perpetrator–victim relationships. Piloting engaged 109 professionals (91 women, 18 men) from all 64 Basic Prosecutor’s Offices, contributing to enhanced transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making, with official rollout planned for 2026.

Additionally, in partnership with the Provincial Secretariat for Social Policy, Demography and Gender Equality, two comprehensive analyses were completed, mapping free legal aid and specialized support services, identifying gaps, and generating actionable recommendations to improve service coverage, quality, and accessibility. Multiple training sessions were organized in the Province of Vojvodina to strengthen coordinated, survivor-centered responses to DV. A total of 269 professionals (186 women, 83 men) from social welfare, police, prosecution, and selected health and education institutions participated in seven [multisectoral trainings](#) across all districts, enhancing capacities in risk assessment, protection measures, and intersectoral coordination.

Complementing these efforts, three specialized trainings reached 32 legal aid professionals, strengthening competencies in survivor-centered support and access to justice. In addition, ten multi-stakeholder case conferences engaged 64 institutional representatives (47 women, 17 men), improving coordination and decision-making in complex cases. Targeted trainings also addressed systemic biases and protection gaps affecting women from marginalized groups, including Roma women, women with disabilities, and those living in rural areas, reaching 107 professionals (93 women and 14 men) from police, social welfare, and prosecution services. These efforts were strategically focused on Vojvodina, a region accounting for nearly half of Serbia’s femicide cases in 2024, contributing to more targeted and effective prevention and response mechanisms.

Output 2.2: Health care system capacitated to identify and respond to different forms of violence against women including those who experience multiple forms of discrimination and sexual violence – With the programme’s support, the Centers for Victims of Sexual Violence (CVSVs), operating within five health institutions, continued to provide integrated and survivor-centered services, delivering 645 psychosocial and psychological support sessions, alongside comprehensive medical and forensic care over the past 12 months. This contributes to cumulative totals of 889 psychosocial and 275 medical services since programme inception, demonstrating sustained demand and utilization of services.

To further strengthen service quality, all current CVSV counsellors completed advanced trauma-informed training, while an additional 10 counsellors (all women) were trained in basic psychosocial support, expanding the pool of qualified service providers. Multisectoral cooperation was reinforced through workshops, working group meetings, and coordination with police, prosecutors, and social welfare centers, contributing to more consistent and coordinated responses to cases of sexual violence. In parallel, guidance on service provision in cases of sexual violence was upgraded to harmonize procedures and support the formal recognition and standardization of CVSV services within the system.

Building on prior data collection, a national analysis was conducted to identify specific training and practice needs of healthcare providers in response to GBV, providing an evidence base for targeted capacity building. The previously developed online training module was revised according to findings, to reflect real-life healthcare practice, integrating case studies, survivor-centered communication, risk

assessment, and mandatory reporting procedures, along with new guidance on electronic injury reporting, to improve compliance and data quality. The module was accredited by the Health Council of Serbia in November 2025 and integrated into the continuous medical education programme of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Belgrade, ensuring institutional sustainability and nationwide reach, with a launch and rollout scheduled for early 2026.

Output 3.1: Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Employment - During the reporting period, the programme strengthened the evidence base and piloted approaches to address women’s economic inactivity and barriers to employment, in close cooperation with the National Employment Service (NES).

Two major analytical studies were completed, including an in-depth analysis of existing self-employment programmes targeting unemployed women, with a focus on the NES subsidy scheme, and research on long-term unemployment and inactivity among women, including those from marginalized groups. The findings highlighted the need to further tailor and strengthen existing employment support mechanisms to better respond to the needs of women facing structural barriers. Based on this, a pilot activation programme was developed in cooperation with NES, introducing tailored services, job-matching tools, and employer partnerships. The programme is ready for piloting and provides a practical model for improving existing employment measures and informing future employment policies.

At the community level, partnerships with civil society organizations “Women’s Association of the Kolubara District” and “Save the Village” contributed to strengthening women’s economic agency and awareness of economic rights. Educational workshops engaged 86 secondary school students, increasing their understanding of the links between inheritance rights, gender-based violence, and women’s economic position, while 26 women received legal support to claim their rights. In rural areas, targeted trainings enhanced income-earning capacities of 90 women through development of skills in traditional crafts, plant oil production, and zero-waste practices, supporting more sustainable and diversified livelihoods.

Output 3.2: Support to women and girls to pursue careers in science, information technology (IT), and STEM professions including green jobs - The National Day of Gender Equality was marked with a high-level event at the Museum of Science and Technology in Belgrade, bringing together stakeholders from academia, institutions, international organizations, and media to highlight women’s contributions to science and advocate for equal recognition and opportunities in STEM and green jobs.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Association of Women Scientists of Serbia (SRNA), a series of targeted lectures reached over 263 scientists (229 women and 34 men) from key academic institutions in Belgrade and Novi Sad, increasing awareness of gender stereotypes in science and strengthening knowledge on innovation, entrepreneurship, and commercialization of research. A resilience-building workshop (engaging 21 women) further supported women from STEM and ICT sectors in strengthening peer networks and leadership capacities.

Building on these efforts, the Women in ICT Network in Serbia was established, with a clear focus on addressing systemic barriers to women’s participation in the tech sector and promoting their professional growth and leadership. The Network is actively developing guidance for companies to improve gender equality and increase women’s participation in ICT.

To strengthen the skills pipeline, the programme, in partnership with Digital Serbia Initiative, contributed to the development of the “Skills for the Future” report and an interdisciplinary future skills curriculum, co-designed with industry stakeholders. The curriculum aims to modernize learning models, facilitate transition from education to the labour market, and expand access for women, particularly those from social sciences and humanities to tech-related career pathways.

A comprehensive study further analyzed barriers and opportunities for women in technology-driven sectors, combining labour market analysis with private sector consultations. The findings provide actionable recommendations for inclusive education and employment policies and support programmes that facilitate women’s transition into high-growth sectors.

Output 4.1: Facilitating knowledge exchange and advocating for gender equality – Educational materials were developed for the students and staff of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Belgrade to support implementation of the Law on Gender Equality in higher education, and a survey was designed to assess students and staff’s knowledge and experiences related to gender equality and discrimination, to be implemented in 2026.

The programme also supported the initiative for forming a Menstrual Justice Initiative, bringing together civil society organizations, activists, and experts to advance advocacy for affordable menstrual products and elimination of stigma. Additionally, capacities of the “Life Without Violence” Network were strengthened (the Network is coordinated by the Provincial Ombudsman and gathers all institutions and organizations working to eliminate GBV in Vojvodina). Support included the development of the Network’s 2025–2026 Action Plan and trainings for 64 professionals (60 women, 4 men) on gender-responsive risk assessment and data-informed programming.

Insight into media reporting trends and evidence base for further advancements in building ethical public discourse was enhanced through the [analysis](#) of over 10,000 media reports on violence against women conducted by the group Journalists against Violence. The support in this area included the increase of the number of available images in the free [image database](#), the free resource that has been developed for media, to support stereotype free reporting on violence.

The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality was supported in preparing analyses on Serbia’s [progress under the Beijing Declaration](#) and a [Special Report](#) on Discrimination against Women, servicing as evidence for tracking process and identifying points of concern for further work on advancing gender equality in the country.

Output 4.2: Strengthened Women’s Advocacy and Leadership for Strategic Changes – Through support to the National Coalition to End Child Marriage, the programme facilitated data collection on child marriage and [adolescent pregnancies](#) and secured Government commitment to coordinate focused advocacy requests. The [evidence](#) generated, along with the Coalition’s advocacy efforts, contributed to the inclusion of criminal acts related to child marriage (forced marriage and cohabitation with a minor) into the Draft Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Amendments to the Criminal Code, with their adoption expected in 2026.

Leadership skills of Roma women and girls were strengthened through a [mentorship programme](#) pairing 10 mentors and mentees, resulting in 31 women-led advocacy initiatives across 10 locations that engaged 416 participants (373 girls and 43 boys).

Collaboration with the CSO “Out of Circle – VOJVODINA” further contributed to strengthening the leadership, agency, and advocacy capacity of women with disabilities, with a focus on SRHR and

GBV prevention. Through trainings, educational events, and advocacy initiatives, women with disabilities strengthened knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and rights and GBV prevention and confidence to engage in policy dialogue and claim their rights.

Building on earlier efforts, the programme supported the consolidation of the [Initiative](#) of Women with Disabilities for the Promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Serbia, currently composed of 51 women. The support was aimed at reinforcing collective advocacy, facilitating peer support and enabling more sustained engagement with institutions. To inform advocacy, field mapping of barriers to SRHR and protection services was conducted, capturing lived experiences of women with disabilities. Findings were presented to 72 stakeholders at local level, contributing to concrete institutional commitments, including plans for improved service accessibility and procurement of adaptive health equipment.

- **Describe any delays in implementation, challenges, lessons learned & best practices:**

In 2025, programme implementation in Serbia occurred within a complex socio-economic and political context marked by persistent gender inequalities, economic uncertainty, and social tensions. The socio-political environment was heavily shaped by ongoing unrest following the Novi Sad railway canopy collapse in late 2024, with student-led protests and civic mobilization affecting universities, public events, and institutional engagement.

Some activities involving academic institutions, youth engagement and large public gatherings were rescheduled or adapted to online formats, managed through flexible planning and close partner communication. Delays also arose from inter-institutional consultations, formal accreditation procedures, and development of digital tools, including monitoring systems and training platforms.

To mitigate these challenges, the programme adopted a phased, evidence-based approach, piloting tools, strengthening stakeholder ownership, and maintaining continuous dialogue with government counterparts. Key lessons included the importance of extended piloting and training for digital systems, sustained multisectoral facilitation and trust-building across institutions. Despite some issues arising, adaptive management ensured continuity, strengthened partnerships, and reinforced local ownership, enabling the programme to advance its objectives and maintain momentum in a volatile and gender-sensitive operating environment.

- **Qualitative assessment:**

Programme implementation in 2025 was characterized by a multi-sectoral approach, strong partnerships with national and provincial institutions, and increasing engagement of civil society and youth actors. Achievements particularly reflect progress in strengthening institutional capacities, promoting gender-transformative approaches in communities and generating evidence to inform policy reforms.

At the same time, several initiatives initiated in 2025, such as digital DV monitoring systems, labor activation programme for inactive women and professional training modules, were designed to reach full operational impact in 2026, successfully laying foundations for longer-term systemic change. Strategic partnerships were a defining feature of programme implementation in 2025.

Collaboration with national government institutions ensured alignment with policy frameworks and supported the institutionalization of outputs. Key partners included the Ministry of Family Welfare

and Demography, the National Employment Service, the Judicial Academy, the Health Council of Serbia, and the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality.

At the Provincial level, cooperation with the Provincial Secretariat for Social Policy, Demography and Gender Equality and the Provincial Ombudsman was particularly important for advancing multisectoral responses to GBV in Vojvodina. Engagement with professional associations and academia, including the Association of Home Visiting Nurses of Serbia and the Association of Women Scientists of Serbia, strengthened the programme's reach into professional systems and helped translate gender equality principles into professional practice and research environments.

Partnerships with civil society organizations significantly enhanced outreach, innovation and survivor-centered approaches. Organizations such as the Center for Support of Women, Women's Association of the Kolubara District, 'Save the Village', and "Out of Circle – VOJVODINA", contributed specialized expertise in service provision, community mobilization, and advocacy with marginalized groups. These collaborations ensured that programme interventions remained responsive to community needs and grounded in lived experiences of women and girls, including rural women, women with disabilities, Roma women and adolescents. The partnership with Roma women's organizations was instrumental in strengthening the advocacy efforts to end child marriage, enabling grassroots organizations working directly with affected communities to amplify their voices.

Coordination among UN agencies enabled the integration of complementary mandates and expertise, combining policy support, institutional strengthening, community mobilization and advocacy. This enabled the programme's capacity to address gender equality challenges holistically, while ensuring consistent messaging and coherent support to national partners.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome indicator 1: Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms, SDG 16.3.1 Baseline: 26,3 (2018) Planned Target: 50 women	40 (2019, updated March 2022) – SORS data Planned target in progress.		Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS)/ https://sdg.indikatori.rs/en-us/area/indicator/?16.3.1
Outcome indicator 2: Indicator: Adult (25-64) participation in lifelong learning disaggregated by sex Baseline: Baseline: 4.1 (2018) F: 4.5; M: 3.7 Planned Target: 7% (2025)	Participation of adults (aged 25–69 years) in lifelong learning, by sex, 2022 (%) F 21.3; M 18.4 Target achieved.		Source: Adult Education Survey, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS) Women and Men in Serbia (SORS), 2024: https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2024/PdfE/G20246004.pdf
Output 1 Indicator 1.a) Number of caregivers and professionals trained in non-violent discipline techniques and child welfare practices, as measured against the baseline data Baseline: 360 Planned Target: 500 newly trained (total 860)	2025: 503 newly trained professionals (*2024: 235 newly trained professionals) Target achieved.		List of training participants
Indicator 1.b) b. No. of citizens reached through campaign to promote the equal distribution of care and household work Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 500,000	Target achieved during previous reporting period (2024: At least 6.000.000,00 people reached) 5 youth-led initiatives implemented		2024 source: Report on campaign results with information on social media reach, press-clippings

<p>Indicator 1.c) c. Number of youth-led gender equality initiatives launched at local and national levels Baseline:0 Planned Target:10</p>	<p>Planned target in progress.</p>		<p>Report on initiatives launched, press-clipping, photos from the event, human interest stories, workshop reports and participant lists</p>
<p>Output 2 Indicator 2.a) Number of state institutions and CSOs with improved policies and practices for preventing and addressing violence against women and girls Baseline:36% coverage Planned Target:60% coverage (by 2026)</p>	<p>60 institutions and CSOs engaged through programme’s targeted activities addressing violence against women and girls</p> <p>57% coverage of public prosecutor’s offices with trainings on DV prevention</p> <p>100% coverage of public prosecutor’s offices through training on DV cases monitoring system Planned target in progress.</p>		<p>Participant lists, training reports</p> <p>*The Project Document envisages Report on implementation of Istanbul Convention/CEDAW report as sources of verification. However, the current <u>state report</u> on the implementation of the Istanbul convention does not provide consistent insight into the number of institutions and CSOs with improved VAW prevention policies and practices, while shadow reports highlight lack of systematic and integrated data tracking training for professionals.</p>
<p>Indicator 2.b) Number of specialized services providers for GBV survivors expanded and sustained through women's CSOs. Baseline:8 Planned Target:20</p>	<p>9 specialized service providers expanded and sustained (5 CVSV services supported and additionally, services of 4 women’s organizations in Serbia expanded through training of additional councilors in psychosocial support provision to victims of sexual violence.</p> <p>Cumulative progress with baseline is 17 services expanded and sustained. Planned target in progress.</p>		<p>Partner Agreement with Centre for Support of Women which manages work of all Centers for Victims of Sexual Violence, quarterly reports on provided services and activities of the CVSVs.</p> <p>Training reports, participant lists, service provision reports</p>
<p>Indicator 2.c) Number of healthcare professionals trained in identifying and responding to different forms of violence against women Baseline: 0 Planned Target:150</p>	<p>Online training modules have been updated and accredited, while healthcare professionals can access online training from 2026.</p> <p>Planned target in progress.</p>		<p>Report on implementation of Istanbul Convention/CEDAW report</p>

Output 3 Indicator 3.a) Recommendations on inactive and unemployed women’s empowerment in place Baseline: No Planned Target: Yes Indicator 3.b) Number of women and girls enrolled in entrepreneurial and STEM training programmes Baseline: 0 Planned Target:250 Indicator 3.c) Number of women with improved knowledge and skills for business establishment and development Baseline:0 Planned Target: 300	Research report with recommendations prepared Target achieved.		Research report document
	229 women and girls engaged Cumulative progress towards target: 429 Target achieved.		Training reports and participant lists
	91 women improved their knowledge Cumulative progress towards target: 164 women Planned target in progress.		Training reports and participant lists
Output 4 Indicator 4.a) Number of targeted stakeholders actively participating in training sessions and implementing learned practices Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 500 Indicator 4.b) Number of women-led advocacy initiatives influencing policy changes or legal reforms Baseline:2 Planned Target:4	186 targeted stakeholders engaged Cumulative progress towards target: 274 Planned target in progress.		Training reports and participant lists
	2 women-led advocacy actions initiated Bearing in mind the baseline no., the planned target is achieved.		Participant lists, meeting minutes, event reports

iii) A Specific Story

Problem / Challenge faced:

Despite a strong legal framework in Serbia, including the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence adopted in 2017, domestic violence remains a serious challenge in Serbia. Effective prevention depends not only on legislation but also on the ability of institutions to identify risks early, assess cases accurately, and coordinate responses across sectors. Police, prosecutors, and social welfare professionals frequently respond to complex and high-risk situations where violence can escalate rapidly. In practice, gaps in coordination between institutions, limited opportunities for joint case analysis, and personal biases influencing risk assessment can undermine institutional responses. These challenges are particularly significant when supporting women from marginalized groups, who often face additional barriers in accessing protection, justice, and support services. The need to strengthen institutional responses became particularly evident in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, which accounted for 47% of all femicide cases in Serbia in 2024.

Programme Interventions:

To address these challenges, targeted interventions were implemented to improve cooperation among institutions and equip professionals from police, centers for social work and public prosecutor's offices with practical tools for managing complex domestic violence cases. Training sessions across 90% of municipalities in Vojvodina were implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, the Judicial Academy, and the Chamber of Social Protection. The trainings aimed to improve professionals' skills in identifying risk factors, coordinating institutional responses, and ensuring long-term protection for survivors. Practical learning was ensured through analysis of real cases, simulations of emergency responses, victim-centered communication techniques and planning of coordinated protection measures.

Additionally, partnership with the Provincial Secretariat for Social Policy, Demography and Gender Equality, case conferences brought together institutional representatives to jointly analyze complex cases and improve coordinated responses. Multi-agency trainings addressed systemic biases and protection gaps affecting marginalized women, further contributing to more inclusive protection mechanisms in multi-cultural Vojvodina. The trainings were implemented synchronically by two UN agencies, amplifying impact.

Result:

The interventions strengthened institutions' capacity to identify high-risk situations earlier, coordinate responses more effectively and provide more comprehensive protection to survivors, fostering a trauma-informed approach. The initiative also strengthened multisectoral cooperation among police, prosecutors, social workers, and legal professionals, which is essential for preventing repeated violence and ensuring long-term safety for survivors. As one participant from a center for social work noted, "survivors must hear from institutions that they are not responsible for the violence and that the system will use all available legal measures to protect them." By focusing on municipalities with higher risks, the programme contributed to building a more coordinated and responsive system for protecting women at risk.

Lessons Learned:

Several lessons emerged from the initiative. First, effective prevention of DV requires continuous professional training and practical skill development. Second, multisectoral cooperation is essential and joint trainings and case discussions improve coordination between institutions, while context-specific interventions ensure relevance and readiness of participants to apply gained knowledge in practice. Finally, practitioner-led training proved particularly effective, as trainers with direct field experience were able to address real operational challenges and provide practical guidance, even after training completion.

III. Other Assessments or Evaluations

No additional assessments or evaluations were undertaken in the reporting period.

IV. Programmatic Revisions

In 2025, programme implementation continued in a challenging socio-political environment shaped by ongoing social unrest following the Novi Sad railway canopy collapse in late 2024. Nation-wide student protests and civic mobilization, alongside strikes by teachers and school staff, affected the functioning of universities, secondary schools, and public events. As a result, activities involving higher education institutions, youth engagement, local advocacy, and trainings with healthcare professionals were postponed or adapted to online formats.

The programme team maintained close communication with stakeholders to monitor the evolving situation and adjust timelines, ensuring continuity and minimizing impact on overall objectives. The programme also navigated a gender-backlash environment, including the still unresolved Constitutional Court decision suspending certain provisions of the Law on Gender Equality, which required careful alignment of advocacy, awareness-raising, and policy support activities.

Additionally, the Government of Serbia had not formed the Coordination Body for Gender Equality following the 2023 elections up until June 2025, defined in the Project Document as the primary national partner. UN agencies maintained direct cooperation with national partners to secure their active engagement and facilitate the planning and implementation of activities, forming especially a strong partnership with the Minister without portfolio in charge of gender equality, prevention of violence against women and economic and political empowerment.

Despite these contextual challenges, the programme successfully adapted its implementation strategy through phased approaches, flexible timelines, and strengthened partnerships. No major programmatic revisions were required beyond these adjustments, and all activities continued to advance toward achieving programme objectives.

V. Resources

In the reporting period, financial management, procurement and human resources arrangements were implemented without hindrances, in accordance with UN procedures, and with general coordination and oversight provided by UNDP as lead implementing agency, as defined in the Project Document.

Conclusion

In 2026, the joint programme is expected to transition from piloting and capacity-building to full-scale implementation and institutionalization of key interventions, ensuring sustainability and nationwide impact. Core systems developed in 2025, including the domestic violence monitoring platform, accredited training programmes, and the activation model for economically inactive women, are anticipated to become fully operational, contributing to more responsive, data-driven, and inclusive service delivery.

Continued strengthening of multisectoral coordination, alongside expanded outreach to marginalized groups, is expected to further enhance prevention and protection mechanisms.

In parallel, policy reforms informed by programme-supported evidence and advocacy are likely to advance, particularly in areas related to child marriage, gender equality and access to justice.

Building on established partnerships and lessons learned, the programme is expected to consolidate its role as a catalyst for systemic change, contributing to reducing gender-based violence, increasing women's economic participation, and fostering a more equitable and resilient society in Serbia.