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Special thanks are due to Marina Sedova, former Project Manager, for providing detailed information on the project inception, implementation and sharing valuable ideas on potential UN system interventions in the area of disability in Turkmenistan.

The author of this report was impressed to see a strong commitment of project beneficiaries and government officials to promote human rights of persons with disabilities. Much sincere appreciation goes to women with disabilities who benefited from the project and demonstrated their commitment to lead other women and men with disabilities to explore, find and implement actions to exercise their rights and overcome the barriers they face.

The evaluator hopes that this evaluation and its recommendations will help to identify and implement a number of interventions that will advance human rights of persons with disabilities in Turkmenistan.

The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of UN in Turkmenistan. The author remains solely responsible for any errors that may remain.



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Turkmenistan was the 'irst \$entral \*sian countr" to accede to the United Nations \$onvention on #ights o' !ersons with isabilities @ \$ # ! A in )eptember 277B and rati'ied its %ptional !rotocol in 2717. The ,overnment o' Turkmenistan demonstrated its strong commitment to advancing human rights o' persons with disabilities @ ! 2 sA and not onl" maintained a range o' supports and services 'or ! 2 s inherited 'rom the )oviet times but also extended them over the last "ears. /n the area o' social protection, 'or instance, the )ocial )ecurit" \$ode was amended in ebruary 2711 that substantiall" increased bene'its and services 'or all categories o' ! 2 s.

2hen the !roject was developed, it was clear that despite enhanced social bene'its and services, improved healthcare provision and introduction o' some elements o' inclusive education models, ! 2 s remain sociall" excluded. )ocial exclusion, low educational attainment, unemplo"ment, low self-esteem and limited opportunities to participate in political and social li'e were 're3uent parts o' ! 2 s' dail" experience. The stereot"ping o' and pre-udice against ! 2 s were widespread and their 'amilies experienced social stigma. /n addition to disabilit"4speci'ic biases, women with disabilities 'aced gender stereot"pes when the" were seen as being primaril" responsible 'or domestic matters and child care, and men 'or providing 'inanciall" 'or the 'amil".

%ne o' important venues and mechanisms to change such dominant perceptions and eliminate barriers women with disabilities 'ace, is to have women with disabilities in leadership roles in multiple areas o' societ" who would be able to lead the change and a"ect views o' man" on disabilit". 2hen the !roject was designed women and girls with disabilities were not involved in decision making regarding planning o' di"erent programs and services 'or ! 2 s in Turkmenistan. The" o'ten experienced in'ormational and communicational isolation and had limited opportunities to be engaged into polic" dialogue with the ,overnment.

The !roject )ocial /nclusion through 9eadership )kills 'or isabled 2omen supported b" the United Nations emocrac" <und was implemented b" UN !, \$% Turkmenistan together with the ea' and (ind )ociet" o' Turkmenistan @ ( )TA during Can



The collected evidence demonstrates that the project has achieved almost all of its intended objectives. The announcement about the project was well received and that about 187 candidates have applied that demonstrates strong need among women with disabilities in such training opportunities. The trainings were conducted on the premises of the Social Rehabilitation Complex of Tashkent where 66 participants from regions were accommodated and other 11 women leaders were from Ashgabat. The trainings on democracy, the rule of law, processes of social policy formulation, gender and practice their leadership skills in disability organizations were provided. A series of study visits were organized to ministries, universities, non-profit and business organizations, and municipal departments to meet with top level managers and discuss the roles of managers and functions of different agencies. Guest speakers (top administrators and managers, lawyers, cultural workers, doctors, teachers, etc.) were also invited to meet with the project beneficiaries and speak about their leadership experience and professional career. One of the most important outcomes is that women leaders learned how to use the knowledge acquired in practical life situations to advance their human rights. Some of them shared the knowledge acquired with other women with disabilities. It helped them to mobilize other women with disabilities and either to communicate their ideas to decision makers or establish their self-help groups.

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The most important impact of the project is that it helped women leaders to believe in themselves and built their self-advocacy skills so that many of them are not afraid to advocate for themselves or on behalf of others with decision makers at the national and local levels, business owners, in stores, hospitals, with social service providers and other fields. Learning about gender, leadership,



- /t takes long time to change mindsets o' decision makers '



The easiest and one of the most effective solutions would be to require ministries and state agencies to procure goods and services directly from suppliers without the tendering procedure. For instance, UNICEF has the necessary modern equipment and well trained personnel to meet a number of state needs (e.g., produce uniforms for the army, police, railway, oil and gas companies).

UNICEF can provide its expert support in embedding evidence-based policymaking principles and practices in developing and implementing policies and programs supporting employment of PWDs. UNICEF can strengthen capacity of respective line ministries by providing trainings and seminars on practical aspects of using data and evidence through all stages of disability policymaking cycle, including development of policy options, implementation and monitoring.

The consultant offers the following recommendations for UNICEF:

- UNICEF, given the complexity of disability policy agenda and strong experience of UN system in implementing UN as well as national programs, it may be beneficial to establish a high level advisor (board with representation from lead government ministries and agencies, UN agencies and other donors) to provide strategic guidance at the critical milestones of the National Disability Strategy development. Capitalizing on UN partners' respective expertise and their comparative advantage, UNICEF may advance the coordination mechanism to ensure that supports of disability reforms by the UN system are coordinated, comprehensive and executed in a timely manner.
- A high level advisor (board with representation from lead government ministries and agencies, UN agencies and other donors) to provide strategic guidance at the critical milestones of the National Disability Strategy development. Capitalizing on UN partners' respective expertise and their comparative advantage, UNICEF may advance the coordination mechanism to ensure that supports of disability reforms by the UN system are coordinated, comprehensive and executed in a timely manner.
- Over the last ten years UNICEF has collaborated extensively with UNICEF that actively promotes the interests of visually and hearing impaired individuals that constitute only a segment of all PWDs. The accurate data on disability is needed not only to capture the real situation in the country but also to assess the real impact of the government actions advancing human rights of PWDs at the household and individual level. High quality, comparable data on disability is important for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of disability-focused policies and programmes. One of potential solutions would be to include a block of Washington group questions on disability into the next national census. UNICEF should not focus solely on improving the available statistical and administrative disability data but support the government in establishing mechanisms allowing the diverse disability groups and individuals to be heard. In the short run it is critically important for public servants to learn how to conduct effective consultations with primary focus on identifying the challenges that PWDs face and finding joint potential solutions. Capacity building measures focusing on state officials should demonstrate the value and benefits of consulting with PWDs and PWDs.
- Changes in public attitudes are necessary to advancing the inclusion of PWDs. The right policies and strategies can be adopted but people's beliefs about individuals with disabilities determine how they are treated in all aspects of their lives. If the public has charitable views of disability and believes that PWDs are incapable of full participation in society, these attitudes shape the processes of PWDs' inclusion in society. The consultant strongly recommends implementing diverse awareness-raising campaigns at the national and local levels to reinforce the positive image of PWDs as holders of all the human rights and to break down cultural barriers and prejudices against

persons with disabilities. The media should be encouraged and trained to portray persons with disabilities from the perspective of social and human rights model of disability.

UNESCO is well positioned to develop and implement online and face-to-face training on UNCRPD and state obligations, including how to mainstream disability into ministry policies and programs. All the current and newly recruited staff in relevant ministries should undertake mandatory courses aimed at raising their awareness on disability. The consultant believes that additional training on how to write effective disability-focused policy papers and other documents can be developed and delivered by UNESCO.

- 1. The Ministry of Energy and Environmental Protection (UNESCO is implementing a project Improving Energy Efficiency in the Residential Buildings Sector of Turkmenistan. Through this project at least 87 architects and/or engineers have been trained on energy efficient building reconstruction. As UNESCO established good relations with the architects, it may be beneficial to explore a possibility of implementing a joint project focusing on developing and enforcing accessibility standards, at least in the area of construction. National building codes were revised to require minimum standards of access and were applied to all buildings at the time they were being built and during major renovations irrespective of ownership. Despite significant progress made in improving accessibility, the consultant finds that Turkmenistan does not have effective mechanisms for overseeing and evaluating compliance with buildings' accessibility legislation. It remains unclear if sanctions for non-compliance are imposed if, for instance, newly constructed buildings do not meet the accessibility standards. The consultant advises to legislate an oversight mechanism and means of penalizing non-compliance, in consultation with NGOs, which should participate in monitoring implementation of accessibility standards.
- 2. Accessibility-related issues should be considered when designing all UNESCO projects and programs. This can be done by engaging persons with disabilities in the project design phase, the design of specific interventions, and/or implementing a quota for beneficiaries who are persons with disabilities in each project. For instance, UNESCO interventions in the area of disaster risk reduction can take into account specific needs and circumstances of persons with disabilities and strengthen their resilience and better prepare them for potential disasters.
- 3. The outcomes and impacts of projects supporting persons with disabilities may be difficult to measure as some

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Turkmenistan was the 'irst \$entral \*sian countr" to accede to the United Nations \$onvention on #ights o' !ersons with isabilities @UN \$#! A in )eptember 277B and rati'ied its %optional !rotocol in 2717. The \$onvention is a comprehensive document that contains 87 articles. It is grounded in the premise that public authorities should go 'urther than to +ust help persons with disabilities @! 2 sA to ad+ust to existing conditionsE the" should seek to adapt the conditions in order to accommodate ever"one, including those with special needs. \*lthough the UN \$#! does not include speci'ic 'eatures ensuring strict domestic compliance, governments are re3uired to demonstrate good 'aith e"orts to progressivel" achieve their obligations, and to demonstrate the" use the (maximum resources available? in this regard. The rati'ication o' UN \$#! makes governments answerable to international bodies 'or its disabilities laws and policies and demonstrate how the values, principles and rules o' UN \$#! are moving countries? laws and polic" 'orward. The governments are also assuming their responsibilit" to revise all the relevant laws, policies, and practices to ensure that that the" do not even unintentionall" discriminate against persons with disabilities

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The women often experienced informational and communicational isolation and had limited opportunities to be engaged into policy dialogue with the government. Women with disabilities lacked advocacy and negotiation capacity within the disability organizations as well. The deaf and (blind) society of Turkmenistan (NTA) that was a main project partner, for instance, is a well established disability organization in the country that plays active role in advocating for itself. Although about half of its members were women only a few of them occupied management positions that limited their ability to communicate women's specific perspectives and ideas to the leadership and government decision makers.

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The project social inclusion through leadership skills for disabled women supported by the United Nations Democracy Fund was implemented by UN Women, Turkmenistan together with the national partner (NTA) during January 2016 to June 2018. The NTA, which is a non-governmental organization with objective to protect the rights and interests of the hearing and visually impaired people, facilitate social rehabilitation and integration and provision of employment services. The selection of NTA was well justified as this organization had extensive experience on multiple projects with UN Women and other international partners in advancing rights of women and is well positioned to advocate for legislative and policy changes. The NTA was involved in particular in a project championing revisions of national legislation in order to ensure its compliance with UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The overall objective of the project was to promote engagement of women with disabilities in policy making. Targeting hearing and visually impaired women in the NTA the project focused on expanding knowledge of hearing and visually impaired women on democratic institutions, modern socio-economic-political processes, gender issues and computer skills.

The project correctly identified three main barriers that women with disabilities face: lack of management capacity and skills, gender discrimination and lack of access to information in an appropriate format. The project focused specifically on hearing and visually impaired women, with three main objectives:

- Outcome 1: Knowledge of hearing and visually impaired women has increased in terms of democratic institutions, modern socio-economic-political processes, gender issues and computer skills.
- Outcome 2: Management capacity and leadership skills of hearing and visually impaired women raised and number of women with disabilities taking managerial positions inside the NTA increased.
- Outcome 3: Hearing and visually impaired women play an active role inside the NTA and in the policy dialogues with government.

Within the UN Women Country Program Action Plan 2018-2021 the project contributed to the MDG-2. The government ensures comprehensive socio-economic integration of all vulnerable groups including women, disabled and vulnerable persons.

The project adopted a logical and comprehensive approach

meetings with representatives from different organizations and forum discussions to help the project beneficiaries to master core leadership skills. More specifically, the project focused on



Outcome 1: Knowledge of hearing and visually impaired women and their access to information has increased on democratic institutions, modern socioeconomic/political processes, gender issues and computer skills.

To achieve Outcome 1, the project was planning to train 88 visually and hearing impaired women in politics, socioeconomics and ICT. In addition to offering formal training courses comprised of four themes: democratic institutions, modern socioeconomic and political processes, gender and women leadership, and computer skills, the project planned to invite ( ) to share information with women leaders about its activities, challenges, perspectives and plans.

Seven training courses for visually impaired women and two for hearing impaired women with one month duration (18 days) were planned to be delivered by local consultants. Specific themes included:

- Democracy and national legislation (Constitution, Social Security Code, etc.), the UN

and demonstrate how disability issues might be interconnected with purpose and tasks of those organizations. Women with disabilities were supposed to apply their knowledge and skills in preparing for these meetings and demonstrate their presentation skills as well as ability to formulate and deliver key messages to stakeholders. Through the meetings and visits, women leaders were supposed to establish new relationships with other leaders, professionals, and researchers, which will be helpful in their career of leaders. It was planned to organize follow up discussions with student visit participants to identify the most important and relevant lessons they learned.

It was expected to organize meetings with a central apparatus of IT, heads of departments and facilities to share information with women leaders about its activities, challenges, perspectives and plans and demonstrate its facilities. It was supposed to result in discussions of activities that would address specific needs and aspirations of women IT members with IT leadership.

The project was planning to support participation of women leaders in regional events and student visits to disability organizations in other countries. Such an international exposure was supposed to provide women leaders with the experience at the international level and first hand experience of activities of women with disabilities' work in other countries and establish connections with other leaders, professionals, and researchers, who would be valuable sources of information and expertise for future cooperation.

Outcome 0E. Hearing and visually impaired women play an active role inside the IT and in the public dialogues with government.

To achieve Outcome 0, the project planned to involve women leaders into discussion events (small forums) identifying short and long term priorities in terms of a) personal development, b) participation in activities of disability or other organizations, and c) the most important issues they are going to discuss during small forums. The project manager was expected to assist women in selection of a common theme and form of discussion and development an agenda as well as supporting women presenters.

Following on key findings and lessons learned from small forums, the project was planning to conduct national forums on issues of women leadership and social inclusion. The forum was supposed to include participants from all regions of the country and, in addition to women leaders, include representatives from companies, ministries, governmental agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Women leaders were expected to identify themes for national forums through a questionnaire. Participation in this activity could have both strengthened capacities of women leaders with disabilities in organizing an event at the national level and formulating and communicating their ideas and aspirations to decision makers.

The project document identifies a number of risks and contains some corresponding mitigation strategies. It was believed that some women would not be able to come for a whole month to Ashgabat and it was planned that IT would explain the benefits of training course and other project activities to increase women motivation. It was planned to develop an alternative list of participants to replace potentially those women who would not be able to attend or would change their mind. Another risk was that no qualified trainers would be available. To address it, it was

planned to widely disseminate findings among high schools and universities and offer flexible schedule of training courses. The risk of limited availability of guest speakers was planned to address by offering maximum flexibility to speakers.

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This evaluation took place immediately after the project completion. It is the expectation that its findings and recommendations will be used by UN and key project stakeholders to inform their future work in advancing human rights of persons with disabilities in Turkmenistan.

The consultant followed the guidance provided in United Nations Evaluation Group Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports. The following guiding principles for the evaluation process and outcomes were adopted so that its outcomes are:

- participatory as it will reflect the views of various stakeholders, project's beneficiaries and implementers as possible
- high quality as it will use triangulation (simultaneous use of perception, validation and documentation to analyze information)
- impartial and balanced
- credible, clear and easy to understand
- evidence based and action oriented
- gender responsive and
- future oriented in its recommendations.<sup>8</sup>

The consultant is committed to providing quality products and services. \*s a delia

- Quantitative and Qualitative information was collected and analysed. Some of the documents that were reviewed included project document and reports, relevant IT documentation, reports of international organizations and national partners on gender aspects of development in Turkmenistan, with particular focus on women with disabilities. A list of documents examined and used in preparation of this report can be found in Annex B.0.
- In order to identify key informants for face-to-face semi-structured interviews, focus groups and email exchanges and validate the evaluation methodology, questionnaires, findings and recommendations of the evaluation exercise.
- In order to validate the evaluation methodology, questionnaires, findings and recommendations of the evaluation exercise.
- In order to validate the evaluation methodology, questionnaires, findings and recommendations of the evaluation exercise.

The Questionnaire 'or semi-structured interviewees and 'ocus groups can be 'ound in \*nnex B.1

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- / & - . ! (The consultant made two separate presentations o' preliminar" 'indings and recommendations to UN ! and ( )T. The" validated preliminar" 'indings and provided an opportunit" 'or management and sta" o' UN ! and ( )T to contribute their suggestions and ideas to 'inali&ation o' the report.

The consultant 'ollowed the UN - , code o' conduct and ethical responsibilities including guidelines on protection o' privac" and con'lict o' interest. The evaluator exercised his independent judgement and provided a comprehensive and balanced presentation o' strengths and weaknesses o' the !roject being evaluated, taking due account o' the views o' a diverse cross-section o' stakeholders. The consultant tried to ensure that the evaluation is based on reliable data and observations.

\*ll con'idential in'ormation obtained b" an" means was treated in con'idence. !ersonal, con'idential and sensitive in'ormation was not discussed with, or disclosed to, unauthori&ed



Relevance deals with the appropriateness of the project design to the needs of women with disabilities in Turkmenistan.

The project design is relevant vis-à-vis the overall project goal. As the barriers and challenges faced by women with disabilities are multi-faceted and multi-dimensional, UN Women adopted a comprehensive approach to address them. Specific challenges faced by women with disabilities addressed by the project include:

- Limited knowledge of women with disabilities of ICT, democracy, gender and leadership
- Limited opportunities for open dialogue of NGOs and ministries and other government organizations.

The project design and its objectives are relevant and well aligned with the national policies and





employment of people with disabilities and social integration of people with disabilities through participation in activities of public disability organizations. The project beneficiaries decided to organize a highly successful forum that combined two topics: promotion of opportunities for employment of people with disabilities and social integration of people with disabilities through participation in activities of public disability organizations. The forum provided women leaders with opportunities to engage into policy dialogues and forum discussions with representatives of relevant ministries and national stakeholders.

The project opened a hot line that provided consultations and assistance to hearing and visually impaired women on different issues, including health services, social welfare, placement of children with disabilities in special schools, employment opportunities, etc. Although it was widely advertised and a hired specialist is highly knowledgeable and skillful, the demand for this service was quite low. The consultant reviewed the documentation compiled by the specialist that included records on the number of calls and issues raised and found it properly maintained. Overall, the



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with disabilities across the countr" and overseas. \*t the same time the participants o' 'ocus groups indicated that the" are losing the ac3uired skills as the" are too poor to a"ord a ! \$ and cannot travel 'ar to use the

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<p>Output 2.6.2 International student visits organized for women with disabilities.</p>	<p>Research for conferences, workshops or and contact possible host organizations for arranging international student visits for women leaders.</p> <p>Develop student visit programs and arrange logistics</p> <p>Collect applications from women leaders</p> <p>Organize international student visits to disability organizations from other countries or participation in conferences for ; women leaders with disabilities</p> <p>Hold follow up meetings on international student visit results and future plans of women leaders.</p>	<p>women leaders benefited tremendously from these visits as they helped them to share their concerns and ideas.</p> <p>Follow up discussions of the visits were organized and were found to be very interesting and stimulating by the participants.</p> <p>The project document contains more ambitious list of activities for this output, including participation in regional events than it is presented in project reports.</p> <p>The revised targets of 2 international student visits were partially met. Only one student tour was organized.</p> <p>All women participated in trainings were informed and the student visit and interviewed on phone. 22 women were selected for further consideration. The selection committee composed of UN project staff and ( )T central apparatus selected ; candidates for student visit and 2 alternative candidates through a competitive process. A decision was made to send a group of the best 8 visually impaired women leaders with one representative of ( )T. They were from 0 regions of the country. One participant whom the consultant interviewed expressed her sincere gratitude for such an opportunity that helped her to learn how women with disabilities are supported in Belarus and what they do.</p>

<p>issues of women leadership and social inclusion held.</p>	<p>0 &amp; @</p> <p>disseminations of Questionnaire and collecting proposals from women leaders with disabilities.</p> <p>- engage women leaders in design of the National forums and other preparator" activities.</p> <p>organize two National forums for women leaders with disabilities</p> <p>organize follow up discussion for lessons learned and findings.</p> <p>assist women leaders in developing proposals to government agencies regarding disability issues.</p>	<p>/</p> <p>Project beneficiaries were extensively involved into topic identification and forum implementation, including making their own presentations.</p> <p>Two main topics were 1) promote opportunities for employment of people with disabilities and 2) social integration of people with disabilities through participation in activities of public disability organizations. 68 individuals participated in the forum. 1: women leaders with disabilities from 8 states @#regions, 2 international guest speakers</p>
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their ministries in the area of disability". There was a real change in mindsets of ministry staff and decision makers who met with women with disabilities and heard from them directly about challenges they faced and solutions they proposed. Ministry officials and leaders of diverse organizations learned that persons with disabilities are the same people as persons with no disabilities who would like to study, get good jobs, get married and pursue other opportunities in life and that society has to do much more than it is doing now to help them achieve their goals.

Many project beneficiaries due to the burden of double discrimination, lack of awareness, and difficult circumstances had low self-confidence and little hope for change before the project implementation. Women are at increased risk for academic failure, social difficulties, psychological problems, prolonged dependence on parents or guardians, and employment difficulties. How to measure the impact of the project that addressed leadership, self-confidence and communication skills of women with disabilities? Traditional measures such as a number of women who got employed due to project intervention or a number of recommendations communicated and accepted by decision makers do not capture the breadth of the project impact.

To unpack other equally important project impacts, the consultant examined how the project changed mindsets and life approaches of its beneficiaries. Interviews and focus groups demonstrated that many women with disabilities overcame many challenges they faced and achieve positive outcomes in their lives that is captured by the term Resilient.

They improved self-awareness or awareness of their strengths and weakness and acceptance of their disability and became proactive in active engagement in the world around them and believe in the power to control their own destiny. Numerous stories demonstrated that many women with disabilities became more persistent in the face of adversity and flexible in pursuing alternate strategies to reach a goal. The focus groups participants clearly identified their specific yet flexible goals and outlined strategies to reach them by relying on social support systems that included some women met through the trainings. The consultant was particularly impressed to see positive temperament and strong self-esteem of women leaders that were built/strengthened through the project.

The most important impact of the project is that it helped women leaders to believe in themselves and built their self-advocacy skills so that many of them are not afraid to advocate for themselves or on behalf of others with decision makers at the national and local levels, business owners, in stores, hospitals, with social service providers and other fields. Self-advocacy refers to an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions. One woman leader told the evaluator that she is not afraid to tell in the hospital that she has the same rights as everybody else and will wait in line but will demand the same services that are provided to non-disabled individuals. The project provided women with disabilities with opportunities to learn, foster their self-confidence, motivation and leadership skills so that they can exploit their potential and lead others.

Learning about gender, leadership, government operations and ICT gave the project beneficiaries the tools and experience to take greater control over their own lives and engage into multiple level advocacy work. One of the project beneficiaries openly communicated her family housing problems to the Melis Hairwoman who actively engaged local and city authorities into its effective resolution.

The consultant heard 'rom man" women leaders and other partners about one ! ro-ect bene'iciar" with visual impairments who was admitted as a 'ull time student to the ( elarusian ) tate





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- Programs to address disability and gender issues need to be designed for both maximum reach and broad accessibility. Focus on a limited number of beneficiaries will not lead to systemic changes.
- Women with disabilities are not a homogenous group. Women with physical and sensory disabilities often have different needs than women with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. Women living in urban areas may have different priorities than women in rural areas. Understanding the individual characteristics of individuals with disabilities is a crucial foundation for supporting them well. Much diverse factors as age, gender, and ethnicity "Hamil"

agreed plan of actions to promote human rights of Muslims in Turkmenistan that should be aligned

potential problems as duplication of supports and services, cost ineffectiveness, and inaccessibility







provisions regarding the labour rights of persons with disabilities, including the prevention of discrimination against workers with disabilities. For instance, the employers have to fulfil the recommendations of the medical/labour commissions with regard to issues such as reduced work hours without loss of wages, reduced workload, and other measures outlined in the individual rehabilitation plans.<sup>17</sup> In accordance with Article 1B of the Law of Turkmenistan on Employment, employers are required to designate a particular percentage of jobs for disabled persons and inform about these vacancies local employment centres.

According to the Social Protection Code, disabled persons have the right to be gainfully employed and the employer cannot refuse to enter into an employment contract or promote a disabled person, reassign him/her or terminate the employment contract with the exception of those cases where the individual's health condition prevents the execution of professional duties, or threatens the health and safety of others. The law specifies that enterprises, organisations and institutions are required to establish the necessary conditions in accordance with the individual programs of rehabilitation to enable disabled persons to work. Enterprises, organisations and institutions are also required to have quotas of job positions for disabled persons.<sup>11</sup>

For many disabled persons, work is key to economic independence, health and wellbeing and full participation in the community. Under the socialist system after receiving education in segregated specialised schools, many of those who were blind, deaf, or had less serious disabilities were employed in state-funded sheltered enterprises, or in home-based work. Through the interviews and focus groups, the consultant learned that there are significant gaps between the legislation and policies and realities faced by disabled persons in the field of employment. Turkmenistan is a society that still considers providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities an act of charity rather than a right governed by international and national law. Employment is not only economically important for disabled persons as it helps to increase their incomes but it also a means to improve self-worth and social acceptance and respect. The importance of ensuring access to the job market for vulnerable groups, including disabled persons was emphasised during the post-2018 National Consultations in Turkmenistan.<sup>12</sup>

Employment involves matching potential employees with job opportunities. For a disabled person who is looking for a job cannot find one, the reasons may lie with the employee, with the employer, with job opportunities, or with the mechanisms that match the two sides together. To promote employment of disabled persons, all these areas have to be addressed simultaneously. The consultations with key stakeholders, including disabled persons themselves, confirmed that there are multiple barriers to employment.

Disabled persons need individualised support that meets their strengths and needs as well as local economic conditions. An individual plan of employment support should be developed for them that takes into account such individual characteristics as age, skills, special needs and the employment ability of disabled persons,

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and local job market conditions.<sup>10</sup> His international experience demonstrates, individualized approaches are effective in addressing barriers to labour market inclusion that each woman faces. The plans could contain various rehabilitation and work elements such as the assessment of professional skills, career guidance and counselling, restoration of professional skills and development of new professional skills, as well as benefits in cash and kind.<sup>16</sup> The plan can include specific commitments for the woman that she or she can sign and include a requirement for periodic follow-up meetings with caseworkers. Individualized approaches can also include a series of activities to help build the self-esteem, confidence and resilience of women. To ensure that the individualized plans work, it is necessary to clearly delineate responsibilities of line ministries for education, vocational training, customized rehabilitation services, etc. so that the supports and services are comprehensive and well-coordinated to prepare women for employment. The focus groups and interviews provided the consultant with substantial evidence that the women with disabilities looking for jobs do not know who to turn to as it is unclear which ministry and respective service provider is responsible for vocational training, apprenticeships, and education of women. As a result, many of the project beneficiaries had to use their own funds to obtain the necessary training or relied on free training services provided by such organizations as the Red Crescent to acquire the necessary skills.

The focus groups confirmed that often medical/social commissions unnecessarily restrict a range of occupations that women can pursue. As a result, some women with disabilities who were willing to and capable of performing some jobs could not apply for them nor pursue the required educational and professional training opportunities.

Employment on the open market is the ideal option but a lot of factors have to be addressed to make it work for all women in Turkmenistan. There is a range of legislative and policy options that UN Women and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection can explore to promote employment opportunities of women in Turkmenistan.<sup>18</sup>

contribute to it. It is important to clearly outline th

- Critically review the effectiveness of the current incentives for employers to hire and maintain disabled employees. It may be beneficial to explore if the corporate income tax incentives to employers work and examine a need of extending tax exemptions to imported products, devices or equipment and training materials used by disabled employees at work.

The easiest and one of the most effective solutions would be to require ministries and state agencies to procure goods and services directly from suppliers without the tendering procedure. For instance, Turkey has the necessary modern equipment and well trained personnel to meet a number of state needs (e.g., produce uniforms for the army, police, railway, oil and gas companies). Furthermore, Turkey has a law on public procurement of products of associations of disabled persons. The law requires state entities to place their orders for procurement of goods without application of the tendering procedure with associations of persons with disabilities.

UN Women is well positioned to partner with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection on cost sharing basis to review the current employment support systems, including vocational rehabilitation and training of disabled employees, tax incentives for employers, enforcement of the quota system and other mechanisms to increase employment opportunities of disabled employees. In joint potential project of the Ministry and UN Women follow these steps:

1. Identify the main barriers to employment of disabled employees relating on the information available from multiple partners. Conduct roundtables and other forms of consultations with stakeholders and disabled employees across the country to confirm that the challenges identified require nationwide interventions.
2. Once the consultations identify main barriers, decide on the policy program instrument to use to address these barriers. Develop policy programmatic solution and obtain the government approval.
3. Decide who will be responsible for its implementation, including eligibility criteria, delivery mechanisms, capacity building interventions, funding and accountability requirements and monitoring of performance mechanisms.

UN Women can provide its expert support in embedding evidence-based policymaking principles and practices into developing and implementing policies and programs supporting employment of disabled employees. In Turkmenistan, the evidence is not sufficiently used in the policy development process through its core stages and UN Women can strengthen capacity of respective line ministries by providing trainings and seminars on practical aspects of using data and evidence through all stages

In a case of complex services such as employment support projects where multiple interventions could be implemented depending on beneficiaries' circumstances and where multiple partners could be involved, it is advisable for the Ministry to pilot new services to test and fine tune new models. UNAMA help to choose pilot sites that should be representative of the realities of Turkmenistan and reflect such main factors as geography, income levels, unemployment levels, and gender





The media should be encouraged and trained to portray persons from the perspective of social and human rights model of disability. The media information awareness-raising campaigns about the rights of persons should be extended and include participation of persons in talk shows, regular television and radio programmes.

The project beneficiaries and many national stakeholders, including partners in key ministries, demonstrated their knowledge of the social and human rights models of disability. In the social model, disability is seen as the result of complex interactions between a health problem or a functional limitation and the social, political, cultural, economic, and physical environment. These, in combination with personal factors such as age, gender, and level of education, can result in a disadvantage – that is, a disability. Under this approach, the disability focus is no longer how to provide for those deemed unable to integrate into mainstream society, but rather how to make society accessible to all, on an equal and non-separate basis. Whatever the nature of disability, the basic principles of the social approach to disability adopted by the United Nations places responsibility on society to provide an enabling environment by removing the physical and social barriers to participation in everyday life in order for all





and beliefs. It is advisable to be creative and innovative and expand the currently used objective variable indicators to collect evidence pertaining to results. Surveys of beneficiaries and partners may be regularly conducted to capture the impact at the levels of ultimate beneficiaries. They will help to quantitatively assess levels of changes in the areas that may be difficult to capture through other evaluation instruments. To assess impact of trainings provided, for instance, it may be beneficial to conduct two surveys: one immediately after the completion of training and another some time later to examine if the beneficiaries use the knowledge obtained and skills gained.

The consultant strongly advises to develop elaborate logframes for all projects supporting persons with disabilities. The main intended outputs, activities, results and objective variable indicators should be adequately defined, appropriate and stated in measurable terms.



- To what extent and how has the project contributed to strengthening of leadership skills of women with disabilities?
- To what extent has the project contributed to strengthening capacities of women with

- Have you participated in National forums organized by the project? What did you learn through them? How do you apply knowledge and skills acquired through National forums in your work?
- How do you use the knowledge and skills acquired through the project work? Please be as specific as possible.
- Did you share your new knowledge with other women with disabilities? How? Please provide some examples.
- What specific skills did you acquire? How have you used them? How do you think you may use them in the future?
- Was the project training and other supports responded to your need? If not, what else would have been needed?
- Did you communicate your suggestions/ideas to respective government institutions? What was the response?
- Do you participate in community work? Do you think that the project helped you to assume leadership roles in community?
- How do you support other women with disabilities in your locality?

## Assessing impact

Impact deals with whether the project's overall objectives have been achieved.

More specific questions regarding impact are as follows (the questions will be adapted to interviewees' focus groups)

- To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact?
- Is the project likely to achieve its anticipated impact? Are unplanned effects likely to take place?
- What would be long-term benefits of strengthening leadership skills of women with disabilities and promoting their engagement in development policymaking? Please share your ideas and go beyond the most obvious outcomes.
- Have the capacities of women with disabilities to contribute to policymaking been improved? How do you think it will affect the actual policies, especially for persons with disabilities?
- What were the project contributions to the achievement of the outcome 2.1 The government ensures comprehensive socioeconomic integration of all vulnerable groups including women, disabled and /VO persons of the country? Program action plan 2.1.1

## Assessing expected sustainability

Sustainability deals with being strategic and looking to the future and assessing if key project elements will be in place and expand beyond the project completion in 2018.

More specific questions regarding sustainability are as follows:

- Did the project design include an appropriate sustainability strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of local capacity, etc.) to support continuous leadership capacity building of women with disabilities?
- What is the level of ownership of the project within the country? What are the prospects for further development of related interventions after the end of external support?
- To what extent has the project promoted strengthening of already existing partnerships and establishment of new ones? Have the cooperation of national and local partners enhanced as a result of the project activities?
- Will the national partners or donors continue implementing similar activities aimed at building women with disabilities' leadership skills and promoting of opportunities to engage them into national policymaking?
- Which components of the project are sustainable? Please provide specific indicators of sustainability.
- Are there some components where sustainability remains an issue? What can be done to improve sustainability of these components?
- What actions or risk mitigation strategies have been taken to improve project sustainability?

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Programme of the Visit  
Mr. Arkadii Toritsyn  
International Consultant to Conduct Evaluation  
of the UN P !ocial Inclusion through "eadershi# !kills for isa\$led %omen Pro&ect  
Ashga\$at' Turkmenistan  
August () \*!e#tem\$er +' (, -+

Arrival and accommodation in Grand Turkmen Hotel

- 09.30 – 10.30 Meeting in UND !ountr" #\$\$ice %it& ' italie ' remi() De\*ut" +e(ident +e\*re(entative
- 10.30 – 11.30 Meeting %it& UND ro,ect Management and - ta\$\$
- 11.. / – 13.00 Meeting %it& ot&er UND (ta\$\$ 0 !ommunication( A((ociate!
- 13.00 – 1..1/ 2unc&
- 1..30 – 1/.30 Meeting %it& t&e !&airman o\$ t&e Dea\$ and 3 lind -ociet" 0D3 -1 o\$ Turkmeni(tan
- 1/.30 – 14.00 Meeting %it& t&e management (ta\$\$ o\$ Dea\$ and 3 lind -ociet" o\$ Turkmeni(tan %&o %ere involved into t&e ro,ect im\*lementation) including (u\*\*orting t&e involvement o\$ ro,ect 5ene\$iciarie( in deci(ion making regarding t&e ne% D3 - !&arter and ot&er internal i((ue( (uc& t&e (tructure) \*lanning event() divi(ion o\$





- 09.30 – 10.30 Presentation of Preliminary Findings and Recommendations to Deans and Senior Management
- 11.30 – 12.30 Meeting with a representative of the Ministry of Education (Araev Allamrat) Head of Vocational Training Dept and Aa&an Alam" (&eva) (C&ool de\*t.11
- 13.00 – 14.15 Lunch
- 14.30 – 15.00 Presentation of Preliminary Findings and Recommendations to UNDP and Project management and (ta\$. Di(cu(cion.
- 15.00 – 15.03 Departing with Acinta Barrin() UN representative in Turkmeni(tan
- 16.00 Departure from Ashgabat



- The World Bank's 2018 National Consultations in Turkmenistan, May 2018

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! )ocial /nclusion through 9eadership ) kills 'or isabled 2 omen

18 working da"s in Cul"4\*ugust @tbcA

& . ome based with 1 missions to Turkmenistan

" emocratic , overnance !ort'olio )pecialist, UN !

Turkmenistan

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The proect )ocial /nclusion through 9eadership ) kills 'or isabled 2 omen supported b" the United Nations emocrac" <und was implemented b" UN !, \$% Turkmenistan together with the national partner ea' and (lind )ociet" o' Turkmenistan @ ( )A during Canuar" 2716 D Cune 2718. The overall obiective o' the proect is to promote engagement o' women with disabilities in development polic" making. <ocusing on hearing and visuall" impaired women in the Turkmenistan ea' and (lind )ociet" @ ( )TA which is one o' the one o' the 'ew established disabilit" organi&ations in the countr" and a leading organi&ation advocating 'or people with disabilities, the proect will expand knowledge o' hearing and visuall" impaired women in democratic institutions, modern socio4economic4political processes, gender issues and computer skills.

The proect 'ocused on the 'ollowing outcomes:

0 + Knowledge o' hearing and visuall" impaired women has increased in terms o' in democratic institutions, modern socio4economic4political processes, gender issues and computer skills.

0 ) Management capacit" and leadership o' skills o' hearing and visuall" impaired women raised and number o' women with disabilities taking managerial positions inside the ( )T increased.

0 6 .earing and visuall" impaired women pla" an active role inside the ( )T and in the polic" dialogues with government.

2 ithin the UNDP Country Program Action Plan (CPAP) the !roect contributed to the %UT\$%M- 2.1E The government ensures comprehensive socio4economic integration o' all vulnerable groups including women, disabled and . /VO persons.

The overall idea was that a gradual approach 'rom receiving substantive knowledge on democrac" and institutions, gender and leadership to practical exercises during meetings with representatives 'rom di''erent organi&ations and 'orum discussions will increase leadership capacit" o' hearing and visuall" impaired women.

The proect 'ocused on developing the leadership skills o' the women with disabilities# improving their capacit" o' advocac", networking, discussion and presentation, as well as abilit" to 'ormulate and deliver ke" messages to stakeholders to promote rights and needs o' women with disabilities.

They will be encouraged to play an active role inside the disability organizations and be engaged in the policy dialogues with government.

The project strategy took a three-prong approach by focusing on capacity building on communications, advocating and networking of women managers with disabilities, providing them opportunities for practicing leadership skills, and expanding knowledge of women with disabilities. First, the project activities created opportunities for hearing and visually impaired women that were selected from the 8 regions of the country to obtain new knowledge on democracy, the rule of law, processes of social policy formulation, gender and practice their leadership skills in disability organizations. Second, the project focused on capacity building on communications, advocating and networking of women managers with disabilities and promoting more women with disabilities to take managerial positions inside the disability organization. Third, the project created opportunities for hearing and visually impaired women to practice their leadership skills in disability organizations and for to increase their engagement in policy dialogues through organizing meetings and forum discussions with representatives of relevant policy makers and national stakeholders.

During the project; small groups of women (14) were selected from the different regions (provinces) of Turkmenistan including Ashgabat to participate in 1 month training sessions on the above mentioned topics. For this purpose, trainers on each of the topic were hired. This approach filled the knowledge gaps and helped build women's capacity and confidence for realizing their leadership roles and expanding opportunities for them to be a part of mainstream society and promote the rights of women with disabilities.

Interactive design of trainings provided participants an opportunity to participate in discussions, share their points of view and experience, and give small speeches and presentations on some themes. The training programs were designed by local professionals to increase women's knowledge about democratic principles, the rule of law in practice, policy making processes. Training courses focused on the following topics: a) democracy and national legislation, the UN Conventions, the governmental arrangement and institutions, concept of civil society b) modern social, economic, and political processes in the country and some international trends c) gender

\* After completion of the training course, training participants organized a forum on promotion of opportunities for employment of people with disabilities. Social integration of people with disabilities through participation in activities of public disability organizations.

The project also opened a hot line that worked 8 days per week providing consultations and assistance to hearing and visually impaired women on different issues, including health services, social welfare, placement of disabled children in the special schools, employment opportunities, etc. In accordance with the Article 9, part c) of the project document signed jointly by UNICEF, UN Women, and the State and (Civil) Society of Turkmenistan. The UNICEF in Turkmenistan is responsible for conducting an evaluation at the end of the project. This evaluation should be carried out by an independent and external entity. UNICEF will also liaise with the State, as necessary, to determine the best course for conducting evaluations.

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The purpose of the evaluations is to undertake in-depth analysis of the project in order to determine whether the project has achieved its planned outcomes. The evaluation should also focus on determining whether all planned outputs were delivered and whether they were delivered in an effective and efficient manner.

Evaluation, even when critical, needs to be constructive. As much attention is to be paid to positive points and conclusions as to identified weaknesses and failures. This point is not only a question of objectivity; it is also a basic condition for the evaluation report to be accepted by all concerned parties. The basic goal of an evaluation is a balanced set of conclusions and recommendations by which all stakeholders will be willing to stand in the interests of advancing the broad goals that gave rise to the project. Evaluation is not just an audit of past performance. Thus, one of the major purposes of the evaluation is to identify the lessons learned that provide the information for the future projects in the same area.

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The evaluation should cover the project's social inclusion through leadership skills for disabled women implemented by UNICEF during the period of January 2016 to June 2018 based on the project document signed by UNICEF, UN Women, and the State and (Civil) Society of Turkmenistan.

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The preparation of evaluation questions should be based on analytical work conducted by the expert during the preparation phase, when the project's objectives and strategy are reconstructed from project documentation.

The evaluation questions should include, but not be limited to the following:

- To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not?
- Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs?
- Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability?
- What progress toward the outputs has been made?
- Were stated outputs achieved?
- What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended outputs?
- What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?

- To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact?
- What contributions to the achievement of the outcome 2.1 The government ensures comprehensive socio-economic integration of all vulnerable groups including women, disabled and VPO persons. of the country's program action plan? AR

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\*All experts applying for this position are required to provide brief (1-2 pages) description of the methodology for the evaluation. However, the specific design and methods for the evaluation will be determined from consultations among UN in Turkmenistan





[http://europeandcis.undp.org/files/forms/11WmodifiedWorW/\\$sWandW/\\$s.doc](http://europeandcis.undp.org/files/forms/11WmodifiedWorW/$sWandW/$s.doc) please upload the  
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iii) Financial proposal: All applicants shall submit a detailed, carefully considered and justified  
financial statement based on a lump sum specifying a daily fee for the tasks and an estimated  
duration as specified in this announcement and other possible costs including vaccinations,  
travel to and from the mission.