

REPORT

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR A PEACEFUL TAJIKISTAN PROJECT (2020-2021)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) jointly developed the Empowering youth for a peaceful Tajikistan (EYPT) project in 2019. The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) supported the 2 million US Dollar (USD) project to address on risks of violent extremism (VE) in the Republic of Tajikistan (RT). The 18-month project was extended for an additional six months and implemented on the ground from 29 September 2020 through 2021. The three Recipient United Nations Organizations (RUNOs), with the support of the UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO), implemented the project in five target cities and districts of Tajikistan: Kulob, Isfara, Khorog, Baljuvon and Shahrinav.

The purpose of the final evaluation is to assess the achieved results of the EYPT project in its two output areas. Output 1 was “Adolescents and young people have better competencies and skills that foster their opportunities in social and economic life”. Output 2 was “Adolescents and young people have more opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making and peacebuilding processes to strengthen non-violence values and action”. The evaluation was tasked with supporting learning from project’s performance and achievements to inform the future work of UN agencies in empowering young people from marginalized communities and strengthening their contributions to peacebuilding and community development in Tajikistan.

It should be noted that evaluation report also serves for accountability purposes to a wide range of stakeholders including state and non-state, local and international actors, and the private sector. It is expected that the report will also guide future interventions of RCO, RUNOs, and other development partners in the area of youth and women empowerment and prevention of violent extremism in a sustainable manner. Demonstrated good practices will be considered as a model for future programming

Political and developmental context for the project

Tajikistan faces risks of violent extremism, which has been recognized by policymakers in the country and the international community, from both “push” and “pull” factors. Tajikistan has the youngest and fastest-growing population among the Central Asian countries. Despite positive economic growth during the recent years Tajikistan is considered as one of the poor countries of the region with 26.3 % of people living below the poverty line.¹ Statistics paint a particularly bleak picture of economic and social exclusion and inequality for young people, especially young women. Education statistics also point to the difficulties of young people and adolescents, especially girls. And these challenges are compounded for young people in peripheral regions of the country, where there are even less opportunities for them. However, no reliable data exists that can speak to the direct causes of those at risk to violent extremism and the overall size of the problem in Tajikistan. UN Women staff asserted that studies have shown that the majority of Tajiks recruited to foreign terrorist groups, such as Daesh/ISIS have been mainly seasonal migrant workers based in Russia, majority of whom are young men).²

¹ Asian Development Bank figures, available at <https://www.adb.org/countries/tajikistan/poverty> (accessed 6 June 2022).

² Evidence from ethnic Uzbek communities in Kyrgyzstan suggests that seasonal migration of young men to Russia, because it limits their contact and engagement with their social networks and communities at home, makes these migrants more vulnerable to VE recruitment. See Noah Tucker, “What Happens When Your Town Becomes an ISIS Recruiting Ground? Lessons from Central Asia about Vulnerability, Resistance, and the Danger of Ignoring Perceived Injustice.” CAP Paper, 2018 (Washington: George Washington University). Available at https://www.academia.edu/37064117/What_Happens_When_Your_Town_Becomes_an_ISIS_Recruiting_Ground_Lessons_from_Central_Asia_about_Vulnerability_Resistance_and_the_Danger_of_Ignoring_Perceived_Injustice?email_work_card=title

Description of the Empowering youth for a peaceful Tajikistan project

EYPT aimed to promote the resilience of Tajikistan’s young people to violent narratives through assisting partners in areas of the country where risks of VE are exacerbated by vulnerability to extreme poverty and outward migration. EYPT was designed to empower youth and women by providing them with capacities, skills, and competencies that open socio-economic opportunities, enable them to participate in political life, and enhance their community participation, sense of belonging and confidence in the government.

The Project was implemented in close partnership with the Committee for Youth and Sports Affairs (CYS) under the Government of Tajikistan (GoT) and other national government partners as well as authorities in the sub-national governments of five areas – two cities and three districts (Kulob, Isfara, Khorog, Baljuvon and Shahrinav). EYPT project targeted youth between the ages of 14 - 30 and aims to build resilience among youth by:

1. Improving socio-economic opportunities for youth adapted for the labour market, which requires new sets of skills and competencies suitable for innovative sectors of the economy;
2. Building trust and opportunities for youth to engage and empower themselves and their communities; and
3. Deploying tailor-made initiatives for groups of youth that face particular exclusion dynamics, and social norms related to gender equality, and women and girls’ empowerment.

Evaluation methods

The evaluation team (ET) developed and implemented methodologies for a transparent, participatory gender-sensitive evaluation process to evaluate the project and worked with RUNOs and the RCO to review documents and interview staff, IPs, and beneficiaries to gather data for analysis. The Evaluation began in December 2021 with discussions with the RUNOs and RCO to develop the inception report and methodologies and led to fieldwork by the national evaluator in person and over the phone in the RT in March 2022. Per UN evaluation guidelines, the ET used a set of evaluation questions organized through Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) revised evaluation criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability plus categories of Partnerships, Human Rights and Gender Empowerment and Conflict Sensitivity from the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation for fieldwork and to organize a draft inception report. The inception report was reviewed and revised twice before approval. The ET then implemented the plans in the inception report.

The ET received three rounds of written comments on the draft evaluation report and revised the draft to finalize the evaluation report.

Findings and Conclusions

Analysis of the main findings from the evaluation’s review of documents and fieldwork converges on the following conclusions, organized through the OECD DAC categories that have framed the evaluation.

UN agencies working in the RT have a lot to offer in supporting developmental approaches to PVE. The design of the project was highly relevant to the needs of beneficiaries, particularly youth and women in Tajikistan, which was recognized by the government and RUNOs as well as IPs. The project was aligned with government priorities in activating the youth and women in society.

In effectiveness, of the project's 27 output targets, RUNOs reported exceeding targets for 23 indicators, achieving two indicator targets, and almost meeting the remaining two indicators. However, the end-line survey found that the three outcome targets had not been met. These indicators are challenging as community-based; the results of activities may not have had enough time to spill over into the population of youth in these communities. Interviewees asserted that the project was highly effective and noted good practices that increased effectiveness such as bringing ideas from one region to another and bringing youth from all the regions together. Challenges to effectiveness were conflict issues in some locations and the need for each IPs to engage the government in each project site themselves to ensure approval and support in the short-time period for the project. Delayed approval from national partners at the outset was seen as the largest impediment to effectiveness.

The project had notable efficiencies, as explained in documents and interviews, from the close collaboration and good information sharing by RUNOs as well as across IPs. RUNOs reported working well through a "one-UN approach." IPs reported they delivered all activities with quality; many noted reaching more beneficiaries than planned or called for in their agreements. The delayed startup of the project and the need for each IP to engage and get support from each local government in project areas were seen as challenges to efficiency.

The sustainability of project achievements was more challenging, as a small \$2 million initiative designed for only 18 months with a startup that was delayed by 10 months. The six-month extension was noted as supporting sustainability as there were project approaches, taken up by the government for the integration of PVE into the official government vocational education curriculum and training for VE instructors. Closer ties between youth and their local governments were also noted as supportive of sustainability since these local institutions would continue on after the end of EYPT.

The EYPT project had solid partnerships between RUNOs, between the UN and the main government counterpart CYS (after the initial delay around obtaining approval for the work plan), with other government partners, and between RUNOs and IPs. IPs and RUNOs built good partnerships with local governments and youth to support implementation and sustainability.

EYPT project was attentive to the importance of human rights and used a human rights-based approach (HRBA) as designed and implemented with an emphasis on reaching disadvantaged, marginalized youth and women as high risk for VE recruitment.

The was attentive to the importance of gender equality and used GESI approaches due to RUNO's understanding that there were risks in VE for women and opportunities for women in PVE in Tajikistan. RUNOs shared this approach, rather than just leaving the specific needs/opportunities for women to UN Women. The focus on At-Risk Youth was thus both a focus on young women as well as young men, with tailored interventions developed and implemented reflecting different local contexts and opportunities in the five target regions.

The project focus on conflict-affected areas (GBAO and Isfara) and non-conflict-affected ones. The project was seen as conflict sensitive by RUNOs and the RCO in interviews because of how the project was designed and implemented.

Lessons learned

The analysis of the findings and the conclusions above suggest a set of key lessons learned based on the EYPT experience.

- *RUNOs in Tajikistan can and have developed good practices and experience collaborating and working together effectively to design, implement, report on, and learn from the joint EYPT project that can be used going forward.*
- *Government decisionmakers need to be involved from the outset of design and kept continuously engaged.*
- *Project approaches can be designed and work successfully in a sequence on complex problems, with focus on soft approaches to PVE and socio-economic empowerment and inclusion of vulnerable youth and women.*
- *Young people and women in districts in Tajikistan have tremendous needs for support.*
- *Local administrations can work on youth inclusion in an innovative manner in Tajikistan.*
- *Projects with longer duration are needed to have more extensive results and shape outcomes.*

Recommendations

The findings, conclusions, and lessons learned above from the experience of UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, stakeholders, IPs, and beneficiaries with EPT inform a number of key recommendations for the UN.

- *RUNOs should develop approaches towards expediting the approval and start of projects with government stakeholders.*
- *RUNOs should work with government partners and donors to identify resources to expand the activities of the EYPT project.*
- *RUNOs should develop longer-term programming to support the engagement of youth and women in governance, society, and the economy.*
- *The RCO, to complement and strengthen its coordination role in joint programmes, should consider engaging earlier in joint projects to support joint project design, resource mobilization and government endorsement.*
- *The PBSO should consider ways to share the experience of strong cooperation and coordination by RUNOs in the development, implementation, monitoring and reporting on PBF-funded programming from the EYPT project with other UNCTs.*
- *RUNOs, potentially with the support of the RCO, should develop ways to systematically, regularly share information exchange and cooperate, including through joint events to better leverage youth, WPS and peacebuilding agenda within SDG30, and promote ONE-UN approach, integration of lessons learnt and sustainability*

- *RUNOs and the RCO further accelerate efforts to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment of youth, WPS and peacebuilding agenda with national, subnational and local development programmes and plans*

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AWG	active women's group
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CT	Counter Terrorism
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EMG	Evaluation Management Group
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EYPT	Empowering youth for a peaceful Tajikistan
FGD	Focus group discussion
GBAO	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region
GE	gender equality
GESI	gender equality and social inclusion
GoT	Government of Tajikistan
HR	human rights
HRBA	human rights-based approach
INGO	international non-governmental organization
IP	Implementing Partner
KII	Key Informant Interview
LLC	Limited Liability Company
LoA	Letter of Agreement
MOLME	Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Population of RT
NAP	National Action Plan
NEET	not in job, education or training
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PO	public organisation
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
RCO	UN Resident Coordinator's Office
RF	Results Framework
RP	Responsible Party
RT	Republic of Tajikistan
RUNO	Recipient UN Organization
CYS	The Committee of Youth and Sport Affairs under the Government of Republic of Tajikistan
COWFA	Committee on Women and Family Affairs under the Government of Republic of Tajikistan
TA	Technical Assistance
TBD	To be determined
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDS	United Nations development system
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USD	United States Dollar
VE	Violent Extremism
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

1. INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The Empowering youth for a peaceful Tajikistan (EYPT) project was developed in 2019 by three United Nations (UN) agencies in Tajikistan: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) funded the 2 million United States Dollar (USD) project based on risks of violent extremism (VE) in the Republic of Tajikistan (RT) from both push and pull factors.

UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), the UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO), and the State Committee for Youth and Sports (CYS) finalized and signed the EYPT Project Document (ProDoc) in December 2019. Key national partners of the project were the Committee for Women and Family Affairs (CWFA), General Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Education and Science of the RT, and the authorities in the five districts/cities EYPT targeted (Kulob, Isfara, Khorog, Baljuvon and Shahrinav). The planned start date was 1 January 2020. After initial delays in implementation in 2020 caused by changes in the leadership of the main national partner CYS and the COVID-19 Pandemic, EYPT project was implemented from September 2020 and extended for 6 months in duration (through 2021).

Annex 1 provides the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the international evaluator, which explained that the purpose of the final evaluation was to assess the achieved results of the EYPT project in its two output areas to support learning as the project came to a close. The chronologic scope of the evaluation was the full time period of the project, September 2020 through December 2021. The PBF requires that projects be evaluated. Output 1 was "Adolescents and young people have better competencies and skills that foster their opportunities in social and economic life". Output 2 was "Adolescents and young people have more opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making and peacebuilding processes to strengthen non-violence values and action".

The ToR stressed that the final evaluation should assess the project's performance and achievements vis-à-vis the project's overall objectives and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories, and challenges that the project faced. The evaluation was asked to analyze findings to provide specific and actionable recommendations for priority areas for peacebuilding and community development going forward. The geographic scope of the evaluation was thus to examine implementation in the RT with a focus on the five target areas of the project.

Specific objectives listed in the ToR were to:

- Ascertain the achievements of the project and its relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact including synergies with other UN support efforts (coherence);
- Assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project in terms of: 1) addressing key drivers of conflict and the most relevant peacebuilding issues; 2) alignment with National Peacebuilding Policy and national priorities of country; 3) whether the project capitalized on the UN's added value in country; and 4) the degree to which the project addressed cross-cutting issues such as conflict and gender-sensitivity in Tajikistan;
- Assess the effectiveness of the activities aimed at empowering young people, both men and women, to participate equally in political, social, and economic life and making young people more resilient to radicalistic and violent narratives;
- Analyze how human rights and gender equality (GE) principles are integrated in the programme implementation;

- Assess to what extent the intervention and its results made a concrete contribution to the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals in particular SDG 16;
- Assess the opportunities for meaningful participation in decision making provided under the intervention aimed at strengthening non-violence values and action;
- Review and assess the risks and opportunities (in terms of resource mobilization, synergy and areas of interventions) for youth related PVE projects in future;
- Assess whether the support provided by the PBF has promoted the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, allowed a specific focus on women’s participation in peacebuilding processes, and whether it was accountable to gender equality;
- Assess engagement of the municipal and districts stakeholders in the project, and their understanding, including financial and other commitment for sustainability of activities
- Identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories and challenges within the project, to inform future work of participating UN agencies in the frameworks of adolescents and young men and women empowerment;
- Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project’s best practices;
- Provide actionable recommendations with respect to UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women’s work on youth empowering role and contribution to community development and peacebuilding interventions; and
- Evaluate the project’s efficiency, including its implementation strategy, institutional arrangements as well as its management and operational systems and value for money.

The ET validated that UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, and the RCO agreed on the evaluation purposes and objectives in discussions with the RUNOs and RCO and through the review and discussion of the draft inception report.

The audience for the evaluation is the UN team in Tajikistan, the PBF, and the government stakeholders of EYPT. RUNOs and the RCO plan to use the evaluation to support learning, project development, and resource mobilization. The PBF may use the evaluation towards encouraging learning from joint development, implementation, and reporting, particularly in sensitive areas like PVE. It is hoped that government stakeholders will use the evaluation towards strengthening sustainability of project results, amplifying these results, and building national ownership of EYPT supported practices and products for wider, longer use. There may be potential implications for United Nations development system (UNDS) reform, through the relevance and apparent good experience of the RUNOs and RCO “working as one” – as some RUNO staff put it in early interviews.

2. POLITICAL AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT FOR THE PROJECT

Tajikistan faces risks of violent extremism, which has been recognized by policymakers in the country and the international community. Risks are driven by the interplay of two sets of factors: ‘push factors’ - structural conditions that make the overall socio-economic environment more conducive, and individuals more vulnerable to violent extremism, and ‘pull factors’ - catalyst factors that exploit and interact with structural conditions to draw people into violent extremism.

‘Push’ factors are related to the persistent political, social, and economic exclusion experienced by specific groups of young men and women and their immediate communities and beyond. Rising inequality, shrinking civic space for engagement, and lack of inclusive development contribute to these inclusion – exclusion dynamics.

Youth at risk can be ‘pulled’ – attracted by the offerings from violent groups – in the kind of exclusionary environment created by the ‘push’ factors above. For example, local grievances can be manipulated into

violent extremism by domestic and foreign recruiters through various communication methods with financial incentives as well as the offer of a sense of belonging to a group and other psycho-emotional benefits.³ This strategy works particularly well where institutions and public services to address the grievances and improve living conditions of the vulnerable groups do not work effectively. Perpetrators of violent extremism use ideology and religion to justify their actions, even when they are motivated by global, political, context-specific or personal issues.

Gender also plays an important role in radicalizing young men and women, as it is used a tool for recruitment. Radicalization ideologies are gendered, relying on particular construction of femininity and masculinity to support VE. For men who cannot meet traditional expectations of masculinity, violent extremists groups can offer a compelling substitute (i.e. soldier, fighter). As such, gender norms and dynamics influence how particular grievances and/or ideologies are manipulated to recruit to VE. Subsequently, gender-responsive prevention mechanisms help to better address VE.

VE fortunately remains a rare event. Most young people, in the face of strong social, and economic grievances - even with exposure to attempted recruitment by VE groups - remain peaceful. There is an absence of data on VE support in Tajikistan. And there is no data that clearly establishes the number of people that could be considered to be at high risk of turning to violent extremism and the overall size of the VE problem in Tajikistan. Studies have demonstrated that the majority of Tajiks recruited to foreign terrorist groups, such as Daesh/ISIS have been mainly male seasonal migrant workers to in Russia.

It is also critical for approaches to VE not to overly rely on securitized approaches that in fact narrow the social, economic and civic spaces for young people. Identifying ‘extremism’ rather than VE as the problem risks this overly securitized approach, which does not provide sustainable solutions and may be counterproductive.

The ProDoc noted that EYPT responds to national priorities and is closely aligned with the National Strategy of Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism 2016-2020 adopted by the RT in 2015. The strategy explicitly noted the importance addressing socio-economic marginalization as a driver of VE recruitment as well as the importance of PVE for young people and women. The State National Security Committee of the Republic of Tajikistan manages and tracks the implementation of the strategy and its action plan. The EYPT project also responds to the State Programme on Social Development of Youth of Tajikistan 2019-2021, which sets priorities of expanding the participation of young people in political, social and economic life; more effective employment, and economic independence of youth. The implementation of this strategy is managed by the CYS, the main partner of the project.

Tajikistan has the youngest and fastest-growing population of the countries of Central Asia. And the country continues to face difficult issues with poverty. The ProDoc, using data available in 2018, noted that official statistics are that 29.7% of the population live below the official poverty line, and 14% of the population living in extreme poverty⁴. 53% of the workforce is in agriculture which is dominated by low-pay, low-productivity and informal employment⁵. Evidence demonstrates that while poverty is not directly linked to violent extremism, it increases risks of economic exclusion – and that addressing economic exclusion (particularly of youth) can prevent people turning to violence, including through VE.

³ E.g. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf “Religion and ethnicity have been recognised as powerful expressions of individual and group identity. There is robust evidence that radicalisation is a social process and that identity is a key factor in why individuals become involved in violent movements.

⁴ Agency on statistics under the President Office www.stat.tj

⁵ (ADB, 2016 (cps-taj-2016-2020-ssa-03.pdf (adb.org)

Statistics paint a particularly bleak picture of economic and social exclusion and inequality for young people, especially young women. The ProDoc noted that young people are 66% of the population; every year around 150,000 young people enter the labour market that has few opportunities for them⁶. Labor underutilization among youth is 20.5%. The official youth unemployment rate is 10.6 % (twice the rate of those aged 30-75). Almost 30% (29.3) of young people of 15-24 years old were not in job, education, or training (NEET), and about 90% of these NEET youth consisted of young women. The NEET rate for female youth is considerably higher than for male youth. Almost a third of employed young people are in unpaid (informal) jobs compared to 15 percent of adults. Youth are also significantly less likely to be self-employed (5 percent compared to 11 percent among adults).

Education statistics also point to the difficulties of young people and adolescents, especially girls. Young people, particularly young women and girls, have limited access to education, knowledge, and skills that has the potential to support their social and economic advancement and bring them financial and personal security. The ProDoc noted that girls aged 11-17 are approximately twice as likely as boys to be deprived of school attainment and attendance⁷.

These economic conditions and educational situation make it challenging for young people, again particularly for young women and girls, to be engaged in political, social, and economic life. And these challenges are compounded for young people in peripheral regions of the country, where there are even less opportunities for them.

As the ProDoc notes, a trend towards re-traditionalization reinforcing traditional gender roles that are detrimental to women's empowerment and gender equality is evident. And women and girls already face widespread political, economic, and social exclusion. The ProDoc noted that women are poorly represented in elected officials, as appointed officials, and even at the settlement and village level, are as little as 16% of the civil servant staff⁸. Most women are employed in low-paid labour in agriculture, healthcare and education. And fewer women are employed, with worsening trends. The ProDoc noted that the disparity between male and female employment rates increased from 6.8 to 19 percentage points between 2004 and 2016. The extensive rate of male labour migration leaves women alone or with extended families; this gives rise to issues of "abandoned women" without education, employment or capital that are left in poverty, sometimes with spouses who have also abandoned them. Early marriage and even polygamous marriages exist which deprive women of legal protection of their rights.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR A PEACEFUL TAJIKISTAN PROJECT

Through the EYPT project, the RUNOs aimed to promote the resilience of Tajikistan's young people to violent narratives through assistance to partners in areas of the country where risks of violent extremism are exacerbated by vulnerability to extreme poverty and outward migration. EYPT was designed to empower youth and women by providing them with capacities, skills, and competencies that open socio-economic opportunities, enable them to participate in political life, and enhance their community participation, sense of belonging and confidence in the government.

The Project was implemented in close partnership with the State Committee for Youth and Sports Affairs, Committee for Women and Family Affairs, General Prosecutor's Office and Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan as well as authorities in the sub-national governments of five areas –

⁶ Labour Force Survey in Tajikistan, 2016

⁷ [UNICEF Tajikistan \(Access to education | UNICEF Tajikistan\)](#)

⁸ Country Gender Assessment, World Bank, 2021

two cities and three districts (Kulob, Isfara, Khorog, Baljuvon and Shahrinav). EYPT project targeted youth between the ages of 14 - 30 and aims to build resilience among youth by:

1. Improving socio-economic opportunities for youth adapted for the labour market, which requires new sets of skills and competencies suitable for innovative sectors of the economy;
2. Building trust and opportunities for youth to engage and empower themselves and their communities; and
3. Deploying tailor-made initiatives for groups of youth that face particular exclusion dynamics, and social norms related to gender equality, and women and girls' empowerment.

The goals of EYPT project were pursued through implementation of two Outputs:

Output 1. Adolescents and young people have better competencies and skills that foster their opportunities in social and economic life.

Output 2. Adolescents and young people have more opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making and peacebuilding processes to strengthen non-violence values and action.

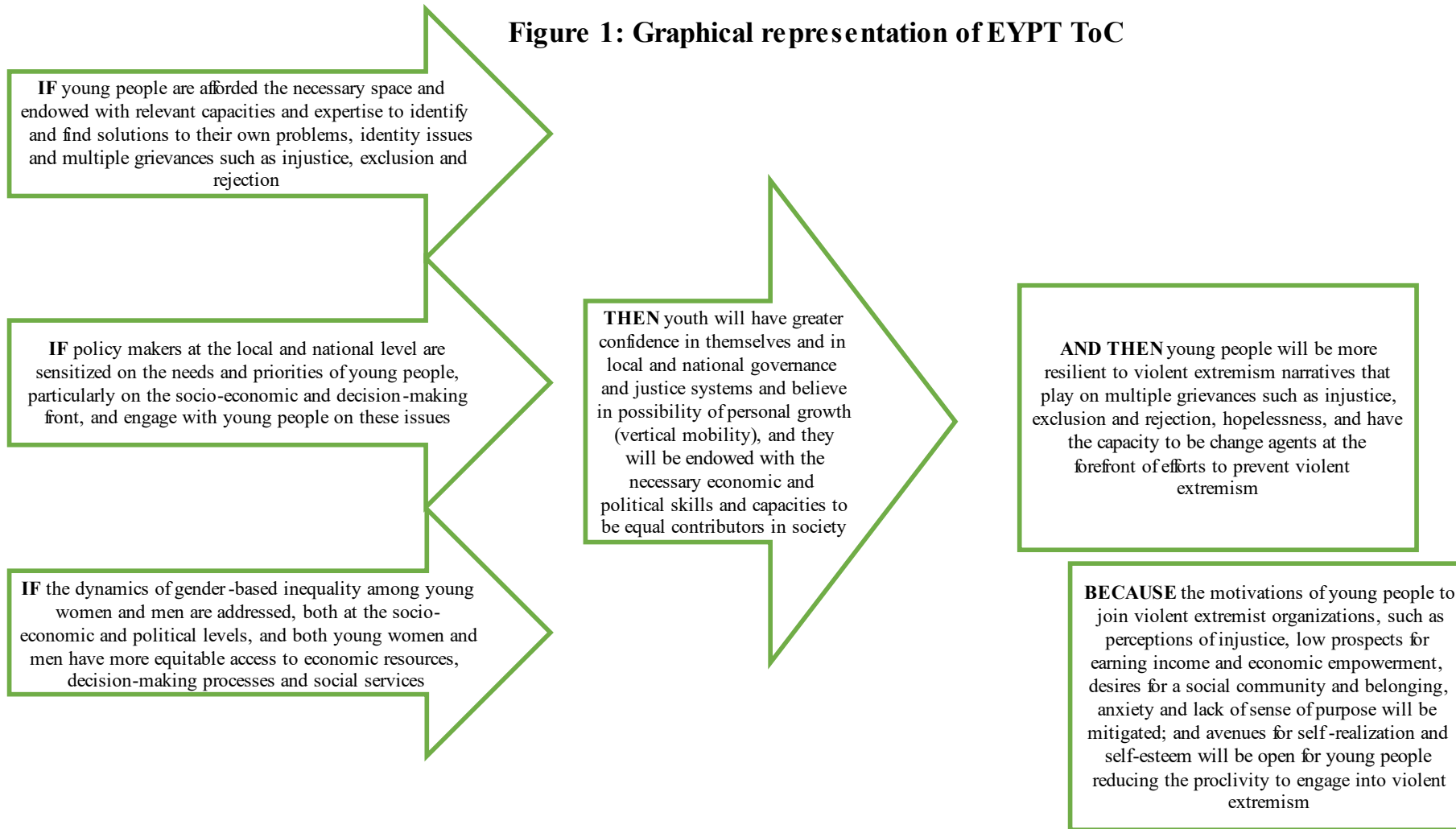
Under Output 1, the RUNOs aimed to build skills and competencies that allow people to be competitive and better placed in political and economic life, expand their livelihood options, and open new avenues for employment, self-realization, and participation. The output addressed push factors related to the lack of options of young people for self-fulfillment, inadequacy of the education and skills meeting modern labour market requirements, and lack of skills that enable to identify extremism propaganda and counteract it. The output also addressed gender norms and their role in creating these obstacles for young women and men. As a result of the output implementation, the young people have been equipped with critical competencies and relevant employable skills corresponding to market demands and thus were able to diversify their livelihood options. The skill development approach was based on the results of the sensemaking exercise to define the existing demand of the domestic labour market but also to assess potential for promoting new professional and soft skills, in the social, economic spheres and jobs that were more attractive for the young people. Skills development has been promoted through the mix of proven and innovative solutions, including use of the modern technologies and tools.

Through Output 2, the RUNOs sought to empower youth to identify their own priorities and generate solutions, feel the power of helping others and agency of changing the community around them. Under the output, RUNOs capacitated government staff to support youth development and participation with a while safeguarding their rights as well as supporting the development and implementation of youth-friendly and gender-sensitive policies and programmes. In this way, the output addressed pull factors that relate to the feeling of not being heard, lack of confidence, sense of purpose, justice and belonging. To complement the first project output that supported young people as receivers of capacity building assistance, this second output supported young people as agents of change and promoted their actions to benefit communities.

Activities under both outputs were designed to be interconnected so that RUNOs could ensure that activities complemented and leveraged each other. EYPT thus aimed to provide comprehensive, integrated package of trainings, capacity building and advocacy for the same group of beneficiaries and stakeholders. UNDP, UNICEF, and UN Women often selected the same implementing partners and grantees, as well as worked with the same key stakeholders, towards EYPT goals.

Graphically represented, the ToC of the project from the ProDoc was as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Graphical representation of EYPT ToC



Key stakeholders of the EYPT project, as discussed in the ProDoc, are relevant state committees and government partners at the national level, the authorities in the five target sites, and members of these communities, including beneficiary adolescents, youth and women. Key government stakeholders were the State Committee for Youth Affairs and Sports and the State Committee on Women and Family Affairs. Local stakeholders were the city and regional authorities in Kulob, Baljuvon, Isfara, Khorog, and Shahrinav.

The Committee for Youth Affairs and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is a key government partner which was responsible for overall coordination and support in implementation of the project. The Committee was also a member of the project board and the co-chair of the Project Steering Committee Meeting along with RCO. At the local level in 5 target districts it is represented by Youth Departments directly engaged in implementation of project activities.

The Committee on Women and Family Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan was Key project partner in promotion of gender equality, women empowerment, and gender-responsive interventions in PVE. The Committee facilitated implementation of project activities at the local level and supported PO “Gender and Development”.

One of the key UN partners in localizing SDGs were local authorities in 5 target districts of the project. They played the coordinating role in implementation of project interventions and ensuring that project’s priorities are mainstreamed into the local development programmes.

Civil society organizations provided technical expertise at the local level, access to target audience, and were actively engaged in project implementation, and facilitated youth and women’s empowerment, learning activities, job creation, etc.

As per results’ framework the project aimed to cover 13168 beneficiaries.

EYPT faced significant delays in implementation of the project timeline in 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis and the competing priorities of the Government as a result of the pandemic, which was compounded by leadership change within the main national partner, the State Committee for Youth Affairs and Sports. Although the ProDoc was signed in December 2019, the initial Steering Committee (SC) meeting to launch the project implementation was held only on 29 September 2020 – almost 10 months after the ProDoc was signed. UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women implemented the project through their own staff as well as managed activities with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and public organisations (POs) in Tajikistan.

4. EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation team (ET) developed and implemented methodologies for a transparent, participatory gender-sensitive evaluation process to evaluate EYPT. RUNO, RCO, and PBSO staff together managed the evaluation through an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) consistent with the 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020).

The ET ensured that study methodology is gender-responsive. During collection of primary and secondary data and its analysis the ET made sure that gender lens is incorporated. This included but was not limited to:

1. Desk review – collection and analysis of gender disaggregated data, report, and other project documents.
2. Data collection – ET emphasized equal participation of men and women, boys and girls during the interviews and FTFs.
3. Data analysis was conducted through a gender lens, assessed the project performance from gender perspective and formulated recommendations to further promote gender equality.

The ET held an inception call in December 2021 with UNDP and the RCO followed by briefings on RUNO engagement in EYPT in January 2022 with UNDP, UNICEF, and UN Women. Once the ET understood how the joint project worked, the activities of each RUNO under EYPT, and how these activities were directly implemented or implemented by stakeholders, implementing partners, and grantees, the ET developed a draft inception report that outlined planned evaluation methods to collect data through document review and from interviews with RUNOs, the RCO, implementing partners, and stakeholders plus focus group discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries. A draft inception report was submitted 31 January 2022, and revised the draft based on detailed comments from RUNOs into an inception report for approval by the ERG at the end of February 2022. A further round of comments followed in March, which were addressed in the final inception report.

The ToR provided a list of evaluation questions organized through Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) revised evaluation criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability. The ToR added questions under the categories of Partnerships, Human Rights and Gender Empowerment and conflict sensitivity and as important cross-cutting criteria for the RUNOs and for UNDS reform. These questions were used in the inception report to develop plans to collect valid and reliable data for analysis to evaluate the EYPT project by the evaluation team. The categories have been used to organize the evaluation report, as planned in the inception report.

The evaluators employed non-experimental mixed methods to collect limited quantitative and more extensive qualitative data to analyze to address the purpose of the evaluation, address the objectives of the evaluation, and answer all of the evaluation questions from the ToR. The ET used gender-sensitive evaluation approaches in considering what to evaluate as well as how to conduct the evaluation ensure that participatory and inclusive processes were used that are culturally appropriate to reach women and men, particularly young women and men. Adolescents under the age of 18 that work with the project were not reached as the ethics of conducting the evaluation with minor beneficiaries was determined to be overly complex for the evaluation.

In addition, the ToR called for a theory of change approach and employing mixed methods to account for complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate. to consider whether and how the findings of the evaluation are or are not relevant to the key concepts and linkages in EYPT's ToC. This included assessing whether the underlying assumption of the ToC appeared valid at the time of development. The ET was also asked to assess the outputs and outcomes of the project, whether and how these correspond to those anticipated in the ToC if the project were to be successful, and whether there is or is not evidence for the processes that link the elements of the ToC in the causal chain.

ET adopted a ToC approach via qualitative and quantitative (from secondary sources) data collection methods and analytical exercises to test the changes occurred as a result of project interventions with consideration of the legal, social and economic context, assessing and clarifying the role of RUNOs and other partners in contributing to change.

Methods used by the ET were:

- Desk review of documents and data from the project, including project and programme documents, progress reports, financial records, meeting minutes and monitoring reports, results of the baseline assessment, and secondary data or studies related to the country context and situation;
- Consultations and discussions with the management of RUNOs and their project management staff for EYPT;
- Semi-structured interviews with RUNO staff, the RCO, project partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries;
- FGDs with beneficiaries; and
- A briefing on preliminary findings 23 March 2022 with RUNOs and the RCO.

The end-line assessment for EYPT was underway through a contract with *Tahlil va Mashvarat*. The ET will use available indicators from the project’s results framework and data from the project and anticipates using the end-line survey if available towards assessing the achievement of outputs and outcomes for the final Evaluation Report.

The ET has triangulated findings from different data sources to maximize the validity and reliability of conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations through answering the specific evaluation question from the ToR. The inception report developed an Evaluation Matrix which developed and explained the questions that the ET planned to use to gather data, what data the ET are looking for to answer the questions, which methods can be used to gather these data, and how these data would be analyzed by the ET.

The Evaluation Matrix (Annex 2) was used to generate document review and interview questions to gather data. The RUNOs provided the ET with lists and contact information of their partners under EYPT in the wake of these meetings for the ET to reach out to them for fieldwork. The evaluators analysed the data from document review and interviews to provide findings and draw conclusions, document lessons learned and best practices, and propose recommendations.

Fieldwork focused on gathering data from RUNOs and their implementing partners as well as stakeholders and beneficiaries that worked with the project. Interviews focused on how UNDP and the project team, partners and beneficiaries, and stakeholders view their experiences with the project and verifying and triangulating data on project results from documents and interviews. Data from project staff, documentation and stakeholder interviews will be used to determine the plausibility of the ToC and the ways the project was designed and implemented.

The evaluation began with an initial review of documents to develop a draft Inception Report structured around the ToR for the International Evaluator (see Annex 3: List of Documents). The draft inception report developed plans for the evaluation team to complete all necessary tasks to collect and analyse data to answer all of the evaluation questions. After initial discussion of the draft with RUNOs and the project team, the evaluators revised the draft for RUNO/RCO approval. Upon receipt of a second set of comments, the ET revised again for a final inception report for RUNO/RCO approval. The ET then implemented the approved plans in the inception report for the evaluation.

The ET applied purposive, maximum variation, convenience sampling technique taking into consideration accessibility of the regions and project beneficiaries during field work. As such, the national evaluator conducted in-person interviews in Isfara and remote interviews to reach out to Khorog, Kulob, Baljuvon and Shahrinav. In addition, FGDs involving young people in Isfara were held in the Tajik language in March 2022. ET reached out to all representatives from government agencies provided by the project team, however only three representatives from Ministry of Labour and Employment, Committee on Women and Family Affairs, and Committee on Youth and Sports were available to meet for interviews. The ET also conducted in-depth interviews with IPs representing regions under the project. The list of informants reached for interviews or focus groups is attached as Annex 4: List of Interviews and Focus Groups. As stated above, the sampling methodology was convenience based, as reaching remote project regions was not possible due to severe winter conditions, political situation in GBAO, and COVID-19 outbreak during the field work. The ET was gender sensitive as it purposefully sought to reach both young women and men.

Table 1: Interviewees

Category of Informants	Number of Informants
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RUNOs	11
RCO	1
Implementing partners	4
Government stakeholders	5
Beneficiaries	6

Informed consent was explicitly solicited and given for all interviews and focus groups (see Annex 5 Evaluation Instruments). All interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis. The evaluators guaranteed that all information provided in discussions and interviews would not be linked to any specific person and that all information provided will be kept confidential and only used for the evaluation report. Interviewees were given the option to opt-out of particular questions or the whole interview if they were uncomfortable or unwilling to discuss questions.

The Evaluation Report is a synthesis of the evaluation team’s analysis of findings from documents, interviews and focus groups. The distribution of interviews as well as the amount of knowledge interviewees had on EYPT have left the most useful data and information for analysis to answer the evaluation’s questions coming from, RUNO staff and their implementing partners.

The ET has used qualitative data from the Results Framework (RF). The ET has also used data from the end-line survey as it became available for the final report in May. The limited quantitative analysis is through percentage calculations and the comparison of numbers. Most data used has been qualitative information from project reporting, interviews, or focus groups.

Purposive sampling was used to select individuals for interviews; selection focused on the people who were the most well-informed about the project in implementing partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder organizations to shed the most-light on the activities and achievements of the project. The evaluators asked RUNO staff about the ToC for the project and its use and utility towards understanding the extent to which design and implementation was shaped by a theory-based approach. The team thus used an empirical approach to examining the ToC based on whether and how it was used to contribute to outputs and outcomes. The approach in selection was gender sensitive in that the national evaluation team member self-consciously made sure to seek and hold interviews with both women and men from a recognition that gender was likely to affect how the project was designed and implemented as well as project outputs and outcomes achieved or not reached.

The ET identified limitations to the methodologies, data collection plan, and analysis plan as well as ways to manage these limitations. These limitations are common in evaluations, as are the conventional measures to manage these risks:

Limited Resources: The evaluators have limited resources, particularly time, which constrained the distribution and number of interviews and focus groups done. However, there was sufficient resources and time to gather adequate data to address the purposes of the evaluation. Not meeting with national government stakeholders has left a limitation in relevance. Meeting with only one government stakeholder has left limited ability to generalize about government engagement with and future use of EYPT activities and benefits.

Limited Ability to Make Causal Inferences/Attribution: Other events might have influenced the course of the project’s implementation or results. Without knowing what these are, the ET’s ability to draw any conclusions regarding the impacts of those events or influence of other unobserved variables on the project will be limited. The ET will not have adequate information to include and/or rule out competing explanation for these impacts. Thus causal claims are not made. Instead may be clear that the project has

contributed to change. Interview and FGD questions ask about the contributions of project and questions about why changes identified have occurred.

Recall Bias: Respondents had less memory of activities conducted at early stages of the project compared to later ones. The ET inquired specifically about earlier activities with respondents to gather adequate information from this period.

Acquiescence Bias: Partner staff, beneficiaries, and stakeholders may be tempted to tell the ET what they think they want to hear. The ET asked questions to different RUNOs and IPs and triangulated findings to attempt to account for potential acquiescence bias through the ET's analysis.

Juveniles as beneficiaries: Adolescent children are a sensitive group to work with; UNICEF is expert at this work, including in difficult areas like juvenile justice. To avoid risks of doing harm by engaging with children in the evaluation, the ET will not gather data from adolescent children.

External validity: The project focused on specific partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries in RT. The evaluation thus focuses on reaching these key groups. This focus on internal validity limits the extent to which the findings and conclusions of the evaluation can be extrapolated beyond these groups..

Two additional limitations emerged in the fieldwork for the evaluation. First, no direct data was gathered relevant to determining the relevance of the project to government stakeholders beyond signing the ProDoc and work plan. Second, the evaluation team was not provided with and did not obtain quantitative data on funding and staffing to bring to bear on efficiency questions.

These common limitations did not prevent the ET from gathering and analysing valid and reliable data to compile findings, identify lessons, reach conclusions, and make recommendations that target the purposes of the evaluation.

The Final Evaluation ToR set out five deliverables to meet purpose and objectives of the evaluation. The final inception report, addressing all comments on the draft inception report, was submitted 12 March. The ET did a presentation on preliminary findings through a PowerPoint to the RCO and RUNOs 23 March 2021. The ET continued to gather information through interviews and focus groups and analyzed these data for this draft report, the third deliverable. The ET has revised and resubmitted this Final Project Evaluation Report for the fourth deliverable addressing all comments on the draft and incorporating data from the remaining interviews and FGDs into the final evaluation report. Finally, the ET will develop communications products conveying the findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations to other audiences beyond the RUNOs, RCO, and PBF for the fifth and final deliverable.

5. KEY FINDINGS

RELEVANCE

Relevance is “the extent to which the project objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, regional, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.”⁹ The evaluation’s findings are that EYPT was in line with national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcomes, and the needs of target groups in Tajikistan.

⁹ OECD-DAC definitions are used for all categories except gender equality which uses the UN Women definition. OECD-DAC definitions are from Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria. December 2019. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf> (accessed 24 March 2022).

Relevance to needs of target groups

Project documents and RUNO and RCO staff interviewed noted that the EYPT project was relevant to beneficiaries in Tajikistan, the challenges of the region in developing opportunities for the youthful population, the RT, and the project's implementing partners. PVE is a particularly sensitive set of issues in the region and RT. To be relevant, RUNOs framed issues of PVE through vulnerability to get RT support to work in this sensitive area. The Government validated the relevance of the project through signing the ProDoc. With the change in chairs at CYS, the new leadership revalidated the relevance of the project in eventually signing and supporting the workplan for EYPT. This demonstrated that the project was aligned with both the old and the new leadership of the CYS. Youth, IPs and the representatives of state bodies participated in the study have also confirmed consistency of project priorities with the needs of target groups, in particular youth. As stated by one of the FGD participants "Adults think that we are not capable, not trustful, we cannot do or undertake important responsibilities at societal level and there some other stereotypes about youth, I think the project showed that we [youth] also have great ideas, we can do useful things for the society, and we are reliable partners".

RUNOs and the ProDoc particularly noted and provided evidence for how issues for youth and women in particular raised VE risks and how project approaches could help reduce these PVE risks. RUNOs emphasized the larger, longer term framework of their work in the country and the importance of bringing participatory, inclusive approaches to governance, society in Tajikistan of which the project was an example of how this could be done through the concept of PVE. Social inclusion was emphasized in the design through the targeting of marginalized regions, where youth and women were particularly marginalized. The design of the project, as agreed with the RT, focused on these five areas as particularly marginalized. Marginalization was seen as leading to challenges for social inclusion of young people and women in particular in these areas that have limited opportunities for their inclusion in meaningful social and political participation in their communities as well as limited livelihoods prospects (both educational and in work or business). RUNO staff emphasized the importance of reaching these underserved regions, characterizing their populations – particularly youth and women – as marginalized.

In-line with national development and UN priorities

IPs interviewed asserted that the project was highly relevant for Tajikistan, their organizations, and their stakeholders and beneficiaries. IP's noted they partnered with the RUNOs for EYPT because of the fit with their missions and the opportunity to support their beneficiaries that needed this support. The project was relevant, as one CSO leader put it, in "helping young people, in particular those who are marginalized, vulnerable, poor, to dream, to plan about the future and help them to realize some of the plans." An IP noted that the beneficiaries found the project relevant: "We saw that they were waiting for such project. They liked it and they were very engaged." IPs asserted that the project clearly fit with government priorities in a variety of ways: by supporting the government's policies, and by supporting the NDS and mid-term development programme, as well as sectoral priorities, by supporting the President's emphasis on youth. Another IP noted that the country's emphasis on youth was another piece of evidence for relevance of the project. And the focus on gender was seen as relevant by another IP, who noted that a gender perspective on PVE had been a missing part of the puzzle in prevention efforts in Tajikistan. The IP also noted that this effort was in accordance with state policy on PVE as well as aligned with a number of other programmes dedicated to activating the roles of women in society and addressing social and economic vulnerabilities of youth, in particular young women and girls.

In terms of relevance, some IPs noted that parts of their activities directly targeted PVE. IPs focused on gender noted that traditional gender roles and patriarchal traditions are strong in Tajikistan, which makes it important to consider gender for the country as a whole and particularly for more remote areas as was done through the project.

IPs asked stated that beneficiaries also recognized the relevance of the project. As one IP put it, beneficiaries "highly appreciated it. After meetings, performances and other activities we always get positive notes and

feedback.” The context of this remark made clear that the IP was talking about how beneficiaries recognized how relevant the project was to their needs.

Conducted desk research assessed the project interventions highly consistent with policy framework in Tajikistan. In particular, with the National Strategy of Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism 2021-2025, which has specific focus on:

- Eliminating the socio-economic prerequisites of extremism and violent extremism
- Prevention of extremism and violent extremism among minors and young people
- Addressing gender specific issues – gender equality in all spheres

The project priorities are highly consistent with the youth agenda of the country as well. The State Programme on Social Development of Youth of Tajikistan 2019-2021 sets priorities of participation of young people in political, social and economic life; effective employment and economic independence of youth. This includes empowering women as agents of change in building community resilience as well as combating discrimination of women in society, as well as broader efforts towards gender equality.

[Consistency with SDG.](#)

It can be stated that the Project interventions have contributed to localization of SDGs in Tajikistan. With the specific focus on youth and creation of decent job opportunities and gender equality, the Project interventions were found instrumental in addressing SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (Reducing inequalities), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).

It should be noted in SDGs, there are 20 youth-specific targets spreading over Goal 2, Goal 4, Goal 5, Goal 8, Goal 10 (inequality) and Goal 13 (climate change), while young people’s involvement is also key for participation, inclusion, accountability and revitalized global engagement embedded in Goals 16 (peaceful, just and inclusive societies) and 17 (partnerships and implementation).

The Project interventions also correspond with the [United National Development Assistance Framework for Tajikistan \(UNDAF\)](#) Outcome 2: People in Tajikistan benefit from equitable and sustainable economic growth through decent and productive employment; stable energy supply; improved access to specialised knowledge and innovation and more favourable business environment. The Project interventions also contributes to the Outcomes of the Social Development, Inclusion and Empowerment area of UNDAF and specifically to Outcome 5: Women, youth, children, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are protected from violence, and discrimination, have a voice that is heard and are respected as equal members of society.

Consistency with the [National Development Strategy \(NDS-30\)](#)

The Project interventions have directly contributed to local development agenda as well. The National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period to 2030 (NDS-30) remains as a roadmap for all development initiatives for all actors in the country, linking to and aligning local priorities with global development agenda. The evaluation shows that the Project interventions were well-aligned and contributed to the overall goal of NDS-2030 - Improving the living standards of population, based on sustainable economic development and specifically, to development objective (d) of NDS-30 on Expansion of Productive Employment. Also, the Project, through gender-sensitive programming and targeting

disadvantaged regions of the country, contributed to equity prospects of the NDS-30 that promotes social and economic inclusion and stipulates gender equality through addressing structural gaps and providing greater opportunities for women and girls, in particular in rural areas.

It should be noted that productive employment, in particular among youth, is one of the key national priorities highlighted in section 5.2. of the NDS-30.

The Project interventions are aligned with the [Mid-Term Development Programme](#) for the period from 2016 to 2020 priorities as well. The Project particularly inputs to priority 3.5.3 section 4.2. On Productive employment, in particular for youth and women. It has been found that the Mid Term Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period of 2021-2025 has specific section for Youth development and sport (section 7), where active participation of youth in social, economic and political life of society remains among the key priorities of the country.

[Contribution District Development Programmes \(DDPs\).](#)

The study has also assessed the consistency of Project priorities with District Development Programmes (DDPs) in targeted districts. Two DDPs, for Khorog City and Isfara District were assessed over the course of the evaluation study. It has been found that overall, the Project interventions are consistent with the gaps in the area of entrepreneurship, unemployment and access to skills and knowledge on innovations and gender equality. It has been found that the DDPs are aligned with Mid Term Development Programme priorities. At the same time, the Programmes have no specific targets related to participation of youth in decision making and specific actions related to PVE.

A longer timeframe for implementation and expansion of the project – in terms of either or both reaching more people in specific geographic areas or expanding the geographic coverage of the project – was seen by several IPs as ways to further improve the consistency of the project interventions with the county context/needs of target groups. The challenges RUNOs faced with obtaining government approval to start activities at the outset of planned project implementation, discussed further in effectiveness, had negative effects on relevance as there was less time than anticipated in project design to connect project areas and beneficiaries or have activities with longer periods of implementation.

COHERENCE

Coherence is “the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.” The evaluation’s findings are that EYPT fit the context that it was developed for and was consistent with the RT’s policies and goals.

Fit in context and consistent with Government’s policies

Project documents and RUNO and RCO staff interviewed provided evidence that the EYPT project was coherent in its design and implementation – both in internal coherence (within the RUNOs and IPs) and external coherence (in engagement with stakeholders from civil society and local governments). RUNO and RCO staff noted how the project connected the RUNOs, each with different mandates and leading roles in the UN system, their main government and implementing partners, as well as connecting youth and women beneficiaries in from the five target districts/cities. The project linked the lead agencies in the UN system for work with women (UN Women) and adolescents (UNICEF). As UN Women notes, “Within the UN system, UN Women is mandated to lead, promote and coordinate efforts to advance the full realization

of women's rights and opportunities.”¹⁰ Similarly, “UNICEF is the lead agency for children in the UN system, working to save children’s lives, defend their rights, and to help them fulfil their potential from early childhood through adolescence.”¹¹ The Peace and Development Advisor in the RCO was credited with having supported coherence in the development and design of the project. Coherence in design was supported by RUNO practices in implementation that worked towards close cooperation and information sharing among RUNOs in implementation of the project. RUNOs used shared modules, some of which had already been developed and tested, such as the UNICEF peacebuilding training model, which some other UN agency staff asserted was “really outstanding.”

Synergies and interlinkages

Some IPs recognized and stated that the objectives of the project, the inputs, activities, outputs, and its theory of change was strong, logical and coherent. These IPs recognized the causal relationships between these elements and saw them as reasonable. IPs interviewed noted ways that they worked with more than one RUNO as supporting coherence. Another IP noted that the approach supported external coherence by linking local governments with civil society, which was particularly needed: “In rural areas, [as] local authorities do not always understand and know how to work with youth, with CSOs, how to join efforts towards a shared goal.”

RUNOs and government stakeholders noted that the programme was consistent with or contributed to the RT’s “Strategy on countering terrorism and violent extremism for 2021-2025” and “Action Plan on countering terrorism and violent extremism”.

EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness is” the extent to which the project achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.” The evaluation’s findings found considerable evidence for EYPT’s effectiveness through progress towards outputs and outcomes. Findings also found evidence for factors that supported or hindered these achievements, as discussed below.

Project documents and RUNO and RCO staff interviewed provided evidence for EYPT project effectiveness.

Effectiveness of delivery and factors shaping effectiveness

The main issue noted in project effectiveness was that after the design and signing of the ProDoc, RUNOs were then delayed for months from starting project implementation as they waited for government counterpart approval of the project’s work plan. This delay came even with government approval and signature for the ProDoc, as required to get PBF funding. The prolonged negotiations on this final approval for particular activities continued from the time of the signature of the ProDoc until July 2020; without work plan approval, activities could not start. The project steering committee only met 29 September 2020 to approve the work plan, after which implementation could begin. The project was originally designed to be 18 months in duration; this delay took 10 months off of that period. This delay led the project to be a short-term one, even with a six-month extension (the most allowed by PBF funding rules). This delayed start up hampered coherence, efficiency, sustainability, and national ownership, as well as effectiveness.

Key results - Outputs

The project demonstrated and reported on notable achievements in its activities in reporting to the PBF and in interviews. The final report to be submitted to the PBF provided the following data on the achievement of outputs, included as Annex 6: Table of Output Indicators, which is summarized below.

¹⁰ UN System Coordination for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, available at <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/eastern-and-southern-africa/zimbabwe/un-system-coordination-for-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment> (accessed 26 June 2022).

¹¹ Global Issues, Children, available at <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/children> (accessed 26 June 2022).

EYPT set 15 output indicators under Output 1.1, Adolescents and young people have better competencies and skills that foster their opportunities in social and economic life. Annex 6 provides a table that assesses progress towards targets for these Output indicators. To summarize this table for Output 1.1, EYPT reported exceeding 13 of these targets, meeting one target, and almost achieving one target. This strong record of achievement towards all 15 targets under this output, suggests strong project effectiveness in providing young people with competencies and skills.

EYPT set 12 output indicators under its second Output. Effectiveness of achievements under Output 1.2, Adolescents and young people have more opportunities for meaningful participation in decision making to strengthen non-violence values and action, was thus to be measured by whether EYPT met these 12 targets set in the ProDoc. Annex 6 provides a table that assesses progress towards targets for these Output indicators. To summarize this table for Output 1.2, EYPT reported exceeding 10 of these targets, achieving one, and almost achieving one. These output data suggest a strong record of achievement in providing more opportunities to young people for engagement in decision making.

Key results - Outcomes

End-line survey data made available at the end of the evaluation made it possible to compare progress made under EYPT based on change from the baseline values for the outcome indicators. Annex 7 provides detailed data on the achievement of outcomes in a Table of Outcome Indicators, which is summarized below. These outcome data from the survey suggest modest project outcomes to date.

EYPT sought to expand the participation of adolescents and young women and men in decision making; The outcome indicator used measured the proportion of adolescents and young people in the community that felt that young people consider that they participate in decision making in their communities. EYPT set a goal of expanding the proportion of young people that felt they participated by 10 percentage points. The final evaluation found that the growth in percentage point terms compared to the baseline of young people that felt they participated was instead 8.3 percentage points, less than the targeted 10 percentage points.

The situation was similar for the indicator on beliefs of young people about whether they had access to economic opportunities and social services in their communities. For this indicator, EYPT set a higher goal of expanding the perception that young people have access to economic opportunities and social services in their communities by 15 percentage points. The end-line found the growth in young people's perceptions in this area was 5.5 percentage points, less than the targeted 15 percentage points.

These outcome-level data suggests that the three outcome targets had not been met. Progress was evident in two, but not to the extent targeted in the ProDoc. And the trends went in the wrong direction on one outcome, with a smaller proportion of the target group holding the desired view at the end of the project compared to the proportion holding this view at the time of the baseline. For 1b: - the proportion of adolescent girls and boys who believe that non-violent means are the best approach to address differences and conflicts in targeted areas – 5.6 percentage points less of the population surveyed compared to the baseline reported that they believed non-violent means are the best approach to address differences. These outcome indicators are challenging to meet for the EYPT project as community-based, which by definition go beyond reaching only those beneficiaries that the project directly worked with to assess the views/beliefs of the larger community from whom beneficiaries are drawn. These outcome data may suggest that there was not sufficient time for project activities to shape broader community outcomes among all young women and men in project sites. Other factors, such as the challenges of the COVID pandemic and now the Russian war in Ukraine may have larger effects on the perceptions of young men and women in these targeted areas. This could help explain why people believe there are fewer access opportunities in the economy for young people that in the baseline, as economic conditions have broadly deteriorated across the country (although

less decline in project areas than in non-project areas as noted above). This kind of alternative explanation however does not explain declining support for non-violent approaches (Outcome indicator1b).

Other data and methods are more positive on EYPT effectiveness. Interviews found that RUNOs noted that using proven, tested methods and models was an effective way to reach the youth. One example mentioned was how the RUNOs agreed and used the UNICEF peacebuilding module for training with their beneficiaries. Reaching youth was also seen as the most effective method as the beneficiaries are still developing so can really soak up this knowledge and retain it for their adulthood. Thus RUNOs argued that youth were the most effective group to reach as could absorb and use this knowledge even with a short-duration project.

Interviews with EYPT project IPs and stakeholders also noted evidence for effectiveness through the achievement of output and activity-level goals. IPs described the project as highly effective. IPs also noted examples where their activities reached individuals and groups of beneficiaries in ways that transformed their lives or the community. Examples follow:

Children from the conflict area [from the border conflict with Kyrgyzstan] who participated in the project were depressed in the beginning, it was clear that they feel stressed, seemed depressed. Over the course of the project, they became more active, opened up, started communicating with peers, others. We have seen significant progress from their behavior.

We have cases when youth with deviant behavior influenced by our volunteers and completely changed behavior. Everyone who knew him at school, in community surprised how that boy changed.

One IP noted that having IPs work in more than one location was seen as increasing effectiveness, as IPs could take good practices that worked in one location to their other locations. Having the voices of youth heard by local authorities and a solid group of change agents empowered in project areas were seen as evidence of effectiveness by the IP.

Engagement with government partners for vocational education was seen as effective as these institutions have a wide reach across Tajikistan. Introducing a new module into the curriculum could be and was done effectively, as was the development of the training module, according to interviews.

IPs noted challenges to effectiveness that came with the pandemic and conflicts in border areas, that required that they replan some interventions. These conflict issues affected implementation in Khorog and in Isfara, including by leading to delays, for some IPs. The need to inform and engage local authorities by IPs in each location was also seen as a challenge to effectiveness. While RUNOs provided letters of support for IPs to use, an IP noted that a high-level national and regional kick-off meeting at the start of the project could have supported greater effectiveness by making this step of informing the authorities with more vigor. This mechanism was thought to be particularly of potential use in districts where local authorities were not as supportive.

Another challenges to effectiveness was the short time frame of the project. RUNOs, IPs, stakeholders, and beneficiaries noted ways that a longer time period for activities could strengthen the effectiveness of project in many different ways. These included having instructor training for vocation education on PVE as well as doing lessons learned based on the first year of implementation of the new training programme, to improve based on the experience of implementation and the feedback of the initial students trained under the module.

IPs noted the short timeframe as a limitation to effectiveness and what was accomplished. Some IPs simply stated that the project would have been more efficient and had greater accomplishments if the timeframe was longer. Another IP noted that the six month time period of their contract was too short and that more results could be achieved with more time. A different IP noted that a longer-term project and follow-up

support for youth would do more to maximize outputs and outcomes of the project. Another noted the need to reach all social groups. The IP's work "heated discussions that we have observed between parents and children." Covering all members of society was seen as a way to increase effectiveness and maximize outcomes.

IPs identified some of the main factors that contributed to achieving intended outputs were the strong capacity of their staff and good relationships with state actors, particularly the CWFA. Another IP noted the importance of reaching families. The IP reported that one mother that was beneficiary asserted: "I will never push my son anymore to find a way to make money to support the family..., I never thought that it can lead to engagement with extremist and terrorist groups." Forum theatre was seen as a very powerful tool because it not only helps to understand issues but also simulates a solution to the problem.

FGD participants identified successes from their engagement with the project and the results they had been able to achieve such as through small projects providing waste bins, which leads to people using the bins and less trash in the community – as well as demonstrates that youth can be positive participants in their communities with great ideas and are reliable partners. Beneficiaries thus also saw project effectiveness.

Representatives of youth and women affairs at local level highlighted a greater participation of youth in social, political and economic lives of society as well - "now we have a group of young people who participate actively in various activities of at city level, sometimes they support our plans, sometimes they come up with ideas that we support.."

EFFICIENCY

Efficiency is "the extent to which the project delivers or is likely to deliver results in an economic and timely way." The evaluation's findings noted ways that the EYPT project had been implemented efficiently (as well as impediments to efficiency), as discussed below.

Efficiency of resource use

RUNO and RCO staff interviewed noted ways that the EYPT project delivered activities and results in ways that were timely as well as emphasized efficiency by care to minimize costs and efforts to maximize the number of beneficiaries reached and the quality of project activities. The RUNOs and IPs especially had to operate efficiently to implement all activities quickly after the initial delay in the approval of the workplan and start of implementation. Even with a six-month extension, this created imperatives for RUNOs and IPs to implement efficiently. RUNOs reported working efficiently in the use of financial resources to expend 75% of the first tranche of funding from PBSO in order to access the second tranche.

It was particularly notable how the RCO and RUNO staff reported that they worked together and jointly in planning and implementing this work together. RUNOs reported working well through a "ONE-UN approach." RCO and RUNO interviews noted that this improved the efficiency of project implementation as well as supported effectiveness. The excellent collaboration between RUNOs supported efficiency by sharing information, through using some of the same IPs (UN Women and UNDP in particular), and by sharing in implementation (on matters such as the transportation of RUNO staff to implementation sites).

An IP reported that they did "very intensive work" which was efficient. Delivering more than anticipated and planned was seen as efficient; IPs reported they delivered all activities with quality; many noted reaching more beneficiaries than planned or called for in their agreements. Some IPs asserted they were cost efficient, but did not provide detail to substantiate this assertion.

The delayed start-up of the project based on challenges the UN had getting approval of the work plan with the national partner posed problems for efficiency as well as effectiveness (as described above). The project

benefitted greatly from the extension of the project by six months, the longest period allowed under the PBF's funding instrument.

One IP noted the need to engage and inform authorities in each project location themselves as inefficient. They sought a RUNO or UN-led kick off meeting to bring stakeholders together at the start, which would they felt not only show that the activities and IP had government sanction and approval but also would better encourage their support for activities. And this would have one-time costs rather than repeated costs for the IP to reach and inform different local authorities.

Feedback and learning was noted by some IPs, who asserted that they had to adapt to the changing environment with COVID-19, border clashes, and delays with formal approvals by the government for activities (and the project as a whole).

One IP also noted the challenges they faced in accessing project funds in interviews as an efficiency challenge. While this was a problem for them, the CSO asserted that they were able to use other resources to get started. A different IP noted getting formal approval from state authorities was time consuming and created delays. Even with representation from the CYA at the local level in their planning processes, CYA-level approval from Dushanbe was delayed. This was seen as an area that should be done differently by RUNOs to be more efficient. An IP interviewed noted that need to inform and engage local authorities by IPs in each location was an issue for efficiency as well as a challenge to effectiveness – which was another reason that they felt that a high-level UN national and regional level kick-off meeting at the start of the project would have supported more efficient implementation.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is “the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue after completion of the project.” The evaluation's findings emphasized the challenges to sustainability of the EYPT project and the limits to sustainability of implementing a modest-sized, short term project with a substantial delay at the start of implementation.

Contributions to sustainability

Project documents and RUNO and RCO staff interviewed noted that the EYPT project had been attentive to the importance of sustainability. However the project design was for an 18 month project. Even after another six months were added, the project is a short-term, modest-sized project. These characteristics make sustainability more challenging, as did the delayed start up due to the issues in getting government approval for the work plan which meant implementation did not really start until October 2020, 10 months into the project's planned 18 month time frame. RUNOs and the RCO reported that the UN working on developing larger follow-up project that could strengthen the sustainability of project achievements and processes. However the difficult donor environment where few donors had funding for the country, for youth, or for PVE made resource mobilization challenging and harmed sustainability as it was difficult to get the resources to replicate or extend project approaches. The government's approaches were also seen as posing difficulties for sustainability. However some noted that the government provided support to sustainability through their own progress with the adoption/incorporation of project-supported approaches/activities into their own work (such as in vocational education). And the government was seen as supportive of sustainability through their support for UN fundraising for follow-on approaches to the project.

Ways to strengthen sustainability

The vocational education module was seen as sustainable as incorporated into the curriculum, with its use funded by the Ministry of Labour. The training programme for teachers is part of the retraining plan for instructors of primary VET schools.

IPs interviewed noted that the project had built up the capacity of their staff, which supported the sustainability of their CSO as well as project benefits. Another IP noted that there were approaches of local

authorities that ensured initiatives will be continued after the project ends as the exchange of experience between Baljuvon and Shahrinav “is something that will remain.” This IP considered that in “Baljuvon the local authorities continuously engage with youth and it is institutionalized.” There the youth forum at district level is a part of all district level decisions. A different IP felt that empowerment that builds the skills and knowledge of youth remains with them, and was thus sustainable.

Another example of local ownership and potential to sustainability is a training module developed under the project that incorporated into the professional development programme for civil servants and into the regular course on Women Leadership being organized by the Committee of Women and Family Affairs.

One IP noted that a longer-term project and follow-up support for youth would be more sustainable.

Beneficiaries in FGDs noted that the effectiveness of their work with the support of the project had positive effects on sustainability by building connections between youth and the local youth committee. As participants in one FGD noted:

The project strengthened our relationships with local authorities, in particular youth committee. We used to go with our ideas to youth committee, but they have not been taken seriously. After the project, their attitude changed, now they even call us to participate, to share information with them on what we have done. They propose their support to organize events or engage us in their events.

This ongoing partnership was recognized as contributing to sustaining youth engagement and maintaining the newfound appreciation for youth engagement by the local authorities (through the youth committee).

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are “are voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits.”¹² The evaluation’s findings stress the high quality of partnerships between RUNOs and the RCO, but also the challenges to partnerships with national government stakeholders.

Character of partnerships

Project documents and RUNO and RCO staff interviewed provided evidence how project, RUNO, and RCO staff had worked to build and sustain partnerships with national organizations in EYPT design, implementation, and to support sustainability. EYPT had partnerships with the government, as needed to design and get approval of the project by the PBF. This partnership was challenged by changing leadership at the CYS which delayed approval of the work plan and the project by 10 months. Once this hurdle had been overcome, the partnership with the government at the highest levels was seen as good, with government support for sustaining project approaches through partnerships with national and local government institutions and with support from the CYS for further sustainability through support for fundraising with donors for a larger, longer follow on project.

RUNOs reported, and staff noted in interviews, excellent partnerships between them in project design and implementing, noting the many ways that they worked well together. RUNOs also had and built or strengthened partnerships with their CSO IPs. RUNOs had in some cases limited choices in remote areas for who to work with, as few CSOs had the requisite capacities for partnering with the UN or for working on PVE with youth and adolescents. This left RUNOs working with partners to a large extent that they already knew and had previously partnered with. This continued relationship strengthened partnerships between RUNOs and IPs through more work together on EYPT.

IPs interviewed also asserted that project-supported activities had built partnerships. For evidence, one IP noted “Baljuvon is a good example, youth committee, local authorities were very cooperative.” Another IP

¹² The UN’s definition of partnership is from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships/about> (accessed 26 March 2022).

claimed that “The project directly contributed to state policies and priorities” through work with local and national authorities in accordance with the President’s emphasis on youth and youth development. One experienced partner in women’s empowerment and GE noted peacebuilding was new to their organization and that as their organization developed skills in this area, they also developed new partnerships which further benefitted the organization and their beneficiaries.

The project also had a productive partnership with the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment in vocational education. The development of a training module on topics related to PVE for instructors from the 62 primary vocational education institutions across the country was valued by the Ministry.

In one FGD, participants asserted that thanks to project support and their local activities, they had now been able to engage with the local government youth committee, who now reached out to the youth in collaborative ways. This was seen as building local partnerships between the beneficiaries of the project and the youth committee. Participants in the FGD reported that they are continuing to work even without financial resources of the project through continued engagement with the youth department and continuing to train in and use civil journalism.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are standards that recognize and protect the dignity of all human beings. Human rights govern how individual human beings live in society and with each other, as well as their relationship with the State and the obligations that the State have towards them. The evaluation’s findings note EYPT’s approaches were attentive to human rights in how they were designed and implemented, as well as in what was delivered.

Extent addressed human rights

Project documents and RUNO and RCO staff interviewed noted that the EYPT project has been attentive to the importance of human rights and used a human rights-based approach (HRBA). RUNOs and the RCO noted and understood that there were challenges working with the government and society in their views and observance of human rights. The project was designed and implemented with an emphasis on reaching disadvantaged, marginalized populations (particularly youth and women) as high risk population groups for VE recruitment. Reaching youth early was seen as an approach designed with human rights in mind as prevailing approaches in the country meant that older populations at risk might not be as reachable in ways that did not risk potential human rights abuses. Some activities were explicit about training in human rights, such as the national youth camp that brought together young people from all five target areas (Isfara, Shahrinav, Baljuvon, Kulob and Khorog). Human rights was a dedicated session of the training.

The project remains unique in addressing the right to participation and empowerment of adolescents and youth in a systematic and sustainable manner. The field observations show that the Adolescents Innovation Labs initiative of UNICEF and application of the UPSHIFT methodology remains in a balance of good practice. The UPSHIFT in Innovation Labs as non-formal programme enhances the essential skills of adolescents and youth and develops social entrepreneurship knowledge and capacity. It also empowers young people to be responsive to the changes happening in the country and sensitizes them on social responsibilities towards socio-economic development of their communities.

GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality “refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue

but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.”¹³ The evaluation’s findings note EYPT’s approaches were attentive to gender equality in how they were designed and implemented to reach young women and men, as well as in what was delivered.

Extent addressed gender equality

Project documents and RUNO and RCO staff interviewed noted that the EYPT project has been attentive to the importance of gender equality and used gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) approaches. This was due to their understanding that there were risks in VE for women and opportunities for women in PVE (not only for women).

All of the RUNOs used gender-sensitive approaches in designing the ProDoc and its subsequent implementation. UN Women, grounded on the vision of equality, ensured mainstreaming of gender in all the project interventions. In addition to designing its own project interventions that are directly gender-responsive, UN Women was also providing gender expertise in ensuring gender-sensitive interventions for other RUNOs. For implementation of the project to be inclusive it had to be gender-responsive to attend the gendered differential needs of men and women and its relationship to VE. The focus on At-Risk Youth was thus both a focus on young women as well as young men, with tailored interventions developed and implemented reflecting different local contexts and opportunities in the five target regions.

RUNOs noted that at the culminating events of the project that brought together key beneficiaries and stakeholders of the project, young women in particular stood out as leaders. The outstanding leadership of young women supported by the project was seen by RUNOs as particularly promising for their roles in their communities going forward. While results on gender equality were not notable now, the women beneficiaries of the project and how government partners recognized the potential of these young women as leaders were seen by RUNOs as having promise towards delivering results in gender equality in the years ahead.

Vocational education interviewees noted that training in this area had a mostly male audience, especially for those that were more likely to be migrants in the future. However they asserted that the PVE module “touched on” gender issues. They noted that the instructors are both men and women.

IPs interviewed noted that the efforts to increase the participation of youth already supported social inclusion, and their work particularly targeted inclusion of women and girls in order to contribute to GE. One IP asserted that they mainstreamed GESI in their work through the project. Another IP noted that their work:

contributed to gender equality, because girls education after school is a big issue. Normally parents want them to marry instead of continuing education. One girl, for example, she benefited from our programme and became a finalist of the FLEX programme and waiting for the final decision. She grew without father, she is from poor family, but now, she is quite popular among peers, she participates in most of the events organized by local authorities, she is a leader and already an influencer. We have a lot of girls who have such kind of dreams to become a journalists, a lawyer and such cases encourage and stimulate other children and youth to dream, learn and act.

An IP focused on women felt that gender had prior to the project been particularly missing in PVE; this project brought that “missing part of the puzzle” to PVE in Tajikistan.

FGD participants in Isfara noted this attentiveness to GE issues and their own GESI approach.

In our society, there is strong stereotypes about the role of women in society. Still, most of the parents, and even boys think that the best thing girls can do is to get married after school, take

¹³ UN Women definition from <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm> (Accessed 19 May 2022).

care of family and raise children. The Project showed that girls can be a leader, like in our group [name] is our leader, girls can initiate interesting project and do the same things what boys do. In our trainings we have discussions around gender equality, at the end we usually come to an agreement that actually they are equal.

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

Conflict sensitivity is whether and how the project took approaches that considered the broader environment and how project activities may interact with conflict in particular contexts to mitigate unintended negative effects and to influence conflict positively wherever possible. The evaluation's findings are that conflict sensitivity was a part of EYPT's approaches and that RUNOs were conflict-sensitive in designing and implementing the project.

Extent project was conflict sensitive

Project documents and RUNO and RCO staff interviewed noted that the EYPT project was conflict sensitive in its design and implementation. The role of the Peace and Development Advisor from the RCO was seen as important in the overall design, as well as in making this design conflict sensitive. RUNOs and the RCO were sensitive from the outset to the government's issues with explicit work on PVE and framing of VE. Framing the project differently was seen as an example of being sensitive to how conflict was seen by the government. Activity implementation was paused briefly in Khorog over conflict issues at one point. However, overall the project did not have a prevention approach embedded in it or ways to adjust the project to address conflict, such as the issues with Kyrgyzstan on the border. The project was not able to adjust implementation to target communities most involved in that conflict as the five areas for the project to work were fixed. The project could have been designed to focus more on conflict-affected areas, rather than a mix of conflict (GBO and Isfara) and non-conflict areas.

Documents and interviews did not identify any unintended effects of the project.

EYPT brought new knowledge to some partners. One experienced partner in women's empowerment and GE noted that this peacebuilding was new to their organization; this was thus a broader benefit to them and their beneficiaries that the organization developed skills in this area. The youth in one FGD noted the importance of civic journalism training, which opened up the skills of many young people who would be better able to communicate about non-violent ways of addressing community issues, differences, and potential conflicts.

Conflict issues and tensions were seen by beneficiaries in focus group in Isfara as having limited the reach of the project. The desire of these beneficiaries to reach children and youth in remote, border regions there was not realized due to border conflicts in these areas with Kyrgyzstan, which left these beneficiaries not training other youths in villages on the border as envisioned but instead training in the city itself. While they invited children and youth from these border communities to attend, FGD participants recognized that people in these remote border communities did not really have enough of an opportunity to attend the trainings under these circumstances.

Conflict in Khorog also affected implementation. One IP requested that their local partner in Khorog stop project activities when there was conflict there out of concern that the activity could potentially be misunderstood by local authorities. But then the local authorities requested that we not stop and continue our activities among community members because they can potentially strengthen social cohesion and reduce political tensions which was especially needed at this time.

IPs interviewed did not identify any unintended outcomes in the ET's interviews. One IP reported halting activities with their local partners during a conflict situation in order to avoid any potential misunderstandings by local authorities. However, the local authorities instead requested that we continue

“activities among community members that can potentially strengthen social cohesion and reduce political tension.”

IPs were confident that awareness raising on VE among women and girls was effective to prevent VE. However evidence to substantiate this view was not gathered by the IP.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the main findings from the evaluation’s review of documents and fieldwork converges on the following conclusions, organized through the OECD DAC categories that have framed the evaluation.

UN agencies working in the RT have a lot to offer in supporting developmental approaches to PVE. The design of the project was highly relevant to the needs of beneficiaries, particularly youth and women in Tajikistan, which was recognized by the government and RUNOs’ IPs. The project fit government priorities in activating the youth and women in society.

In effectiveness, of the project’s 27 output targets, 23 were exceeded, two were achieved, and two were almost achieved (just narrowly below ProDoc targets) based on the data to be reported in the final report to the PBF. However, the end-line survey found that the three outcome targets had not been met. These indicators are challenging as community-based; the results of activities may not have had enough time to spill over into the population of youth in these communities. Interviewees asserted that the project was highly effective, and noted good practices that increased effectiveness such as bringing ideas from one region to another and bringing youth from all the regions together. Challenges to effectiveness were conflict issues in some locations and the need for each IPs to engage the government in each project site themselves to ensure approval and support in the short-time period for the project. Delayed approval from national partners at the outset was seen as the largest impediment to effectiveness.

The project had notable efficiencies, as explained in documents and interviews, from the close collaboration and good information sharing by RUNOs, which was characterized as a “ONE-UN approach,” as well as across IPs. IPs reported they delivered all activities with quality; many noted reaching more beneficiaries than planned or called for in their agreements. The delayed start up of the project and the need for each IP to engage and get support from each local government in project areas were seen as challenges to efficiency. These challenges suggest lessons for future programming and recommendations to enlist and sustain government support at both levels.

The sustainability of project achievements was more challenging, as a small \$2 million initiative designed for only 18 months with a start up that was delayed by 10 months. The six-month extension was noted as supporting sustainability as were project approaches that have been taken up by the government, such as the integration of PVE into the vocational education curriculum and training. Closer ties between youth and their local governments were also noted as supportive of sustainability. This experience suggests that as designed, sustainability may be limited. The implications of this conclusion are that more attention should go towards sustainability in areas that need substantial time to deliver outcome-level results like youth development and PVE.

The EYPT project had solid partnerships between RUNOs, between the UN and the main government counterpart CYS (after the initial issues around obtaining approval for the work plan) and other government partners, and between RUNOs and IPs. IPs and RUNOs built good partnerships with local governments and youth to support implementation and sustainability.

EYPT project was attentive to the importance of human rights and used a human rights-based approach (HRBA) as designed and implemented with an emphasis on reaching disadvantaged, marginalized youth and women as high risk for VE recruitment.

The was attentive to the importance of gender equality and used GESI approaches due to RUNO's understanding that there were risks in VE for women and opportunities for women in PVE in Tajikistan. RUNOs shared this approach, rather than just leaving the specific needs/opportunities for women to UN Women. The focus on At-Risk Youth was thus both a focus on young women as well as young men, with tailored interventions developed and implemented reflecting different local contexts and opportunities in the five target regions.

Conflict sensitivity was seen by RUNOs and the RCO in interviews in how the project was designed and implemented, although the project did not focus only on conflict-affected areas (GBAO and Isfara).

7. LESSONS LEARNED

The analysis of the findings and the conclusions above suggest a set of key lessons learned based on the EYPT experience.

RUNOs in Tajikistan can and have developed good practices and experience collaborating and working together effectively to design, implement, report on, and learn from the joint EYPT project that can be used going forward. A core team that works together is effective and efficient, including through developing collaboration between different RUNO's IPs. The EYPT experience also demonstrates that in a joint project, RUNOs and the RCO have to be ready to – and then can – work together effectively to overcome delays.

Government decisionmakers need to be involved from the outset of design and kept continuously engaged. RUNOs and the RCO need to avoid delays – as well as to strive for maximum effectiveness, ownership, and sustainability – in projects. The issues with getting the government in the RT to approve the work plan hampered the project significantly. RUNOs and the RCO need ways to engage consistently and effectively at both the national and local levels to bring together the government partners and stakeholders needed for sustainable outputs and lasting outcomes.

Project approaches can be designed and work successfully in a sequence on complex problems with a focus on soft approaches to PVE and socio-economic empowerment and inclusion of vulnerable youth and women. EYPT worked effectively on the nested set of issues that hamper youth and women's engagement in Tajikistan. EYPT worked successfully to develop the capacity and experience of young girls and boys to express themselves, which builds their confidence, and help create the platforms and space for their broader engagement in their communities.

Young people and women in districts in Tajikistan have tremendous needs for support. Beneficiary groups of EYPT have extensive unmet needs, including in the development of platforms to enable young people and women to engage more effectively in governance, the economy, and society in Tajikistan. The promising approaches of the project have reached only a fraction of the beneficiary population in the country. Demonstrated good practices on youth empowerment, in particular the Adolescent Innovation Labs has the potential to expansion and sustainability.

Local administrations can work on youth inclusion in an innovative manner in Tajikistan. Project support effectively stimulated interest among local administrations in project areas on youth work along

the lines of activities in EYPT. Local administrations are promising avenues for further engagement with youth and more supportive of sustainability than project-based initiatives.

Longer-term projects are needed to have more extensive results and shape outcomes. Challenging areas like the development of women and youth in Tajikistan or PVE are difficult to address with a short-term project (of up to two years). After delays at the outset, having a bit more than a year to implement the joint project was not enough to have the anticipated effects on outcomes. Longer-term programming – of more than two years - is particularly important in countries with a limited donor base where the options for follow-on programming support from donors is scant and government partners are highly constrained in their own funding for social programs.

Alignment of RUNOs efforts around District Development Programmes and national level policy advocacy. Despite the fact that the project closely worked with local authorities in targeted districts on youth participation in decision making, gender equality, it could have a greater and systematic approach towards reflection of the project priorities into the DDPs and enhancing capacity of local stakeholders to programme multisectoral interventions to prevent violent extremism. It should be noted that measures related to PVE are part of the National Strategy of Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism 2021-2025, while the Mid Term Development Strategy for the period of 2021-2025 does not include any specific priority or measures in response to VE. The common practice in Tajikistan is that DDPs are aligned and contribute to Mid Term Development Programme (MTDP), so it is important to make sure that MTDP has a broader scope and multifaceted issues as PVE are well-captured and efforts of various actors and agencies aligned at central and local level. Ideally, the DDPs are costed and plans clearly indicate responsible parties, resources available and gaps.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings, conclusions, and lessons learned above from the experience of UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, stakeholders, IPs, and beneficiaries with EPT suggest a number of key recommendations for the UN, listed in order of priority.

RECOMMENDATION 1.

RUNOs should develop approaches towards expediting the approval and start of projects with government stakeholders.

Findings found that the turnover of ministerial leadership led to delays in the start of EYPT, which left RUNOs with a period of some 10 months without an approved work plan, and thus not able to start implementation. RUNOs and the RCO reported that other projects in Tajikistan have had similar issues. This suggests that there is a general challenge in maintaining relationships between the UN and ministerial decisionmakers that should be worked on to support rapid start up, longer-time frames for implementation, and more effective programming.

<i>Impact and priority</i> HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct in depth analysis and produce a technical report that provide insight into the problem, identify and describe the factors associated with delays and provide relevant and applicable solution to improve practice, including SOPs ▪ Jointly with state counterparts develop SOPs to maintain timely approval and start up of projects. ▪ Sign a MoU with governmental stakeholders to create a normative framework for the implementation of SOP ▪ Conduct orientation sessions to relevant staff of state partners about MoUs signed and SOPs.
<i>Timeframe</i> IMMEDIATE	
<i>Difficulty</i>	

RECOMMENDATION 2.

RUNOs should work with state and non-state actors and donors to identify resources to expand the activities of the EYPT project.

The experience of the project suggests good results, but EYPT did not have the length of time in implementation to have as large or enduring effects as sought in the development of the project. RUNOs should seek additional funds towards meeting the needs of beneficiaries through approaches used in EYPT to have more widespread and clearer effects.

<i>Impact and priority</i> HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a TOR and establish a follow-on project sustainability group of staff, stakeholders and potentially donors to systematically explore resource mobilization for the expansion of successful EYPT activities and approaches ▪ Conduct costing exercises of the programmes that can be potentially financed from public or sources other than donors. Develop a fundraising plan and its implementation ▪ Identify good practices of private public partnership in the areas of PVE, youth development and youth empowerment.
<i>Timeframe</i> IMMEDIATE	
<i>Difficulty</i>	

RECOMMENDATION 3.

RUNOs should develop longer-term programming to support the engagement of youth and women in governance, society, and the economy.

The many remaining needs and tremendous issues these vulnerable beneficiaries face in Tajikistan, especially in more remote areas, mean that youth and women beneficiaries need continued engagement by the UNCT to support the development of platforms as well as attitudinal and behavioral change of youth, women, and government partners over a longer period of time. These issues and support are even more important now with issues that are likely to limit opportunities for work as migrant labour in Russia.

<i>Impact and priority</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using an equity and gender equality perspectives in programming, target the most marginalized and vulnerable regions and the most vulnerable youth groups within these regions as a start point of expansion of the programmes with a longer period of financing and well-planned exit strategy. ▪ Design and conduct a longitudinal study to determine impacts of programmes and create evidence for policy making and programming ▪ Ensure that programmatic approaches are gender transformative and inclusive.
HIGH	
<i>Timeframe</i>	
<i>Difficulty</i>	

RECOMMENDATION 4.

The RCO, to complement and strengthen its coordination role in joint programmes, should consider engaging with RUNOs on joint projects to support joint project design, resource mobilization and government endorsement.

The RCO potentially has valuable roles to play to support the first three recommendations to RUNOs, as the RCO could serve to unite and support RUNOs towards expediting the approval and start up of projects with key government stakeholders, support resource mobilization for joint projects that thus supports more than one UN agency, and use its good offices to encourage support and resources for longer-term programming on the engagement of youth and women in governance, society and the economy in the RT.

<i>Impact and priority</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For the RCO, use its convening power in the immediate term to support the joint working group(s) suggested above and staff resources to encourage joint short and long-term analysis, approaches, and programming on women and youth. ▪ The RCO can lead national level policy advocacy initiatives to ensure that an interlinked agenda of youth empowerment, peacebuilding and
HIGH	
<i>Timeframe</i>	
IMMEDIATE	

Difficulty	community development are systematically reflected in national, regional and local programmes and consider.
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RECOMMENDATION 5.

The PBSO should consider ways to share the experience of strong cooperation and coordination by RUNOs in the development, implementation, monitoring and reporting on PBF-funded programming from the EYPT project with other UNCTs

Many UNCT's and RUNOs operating in other countries do not have experience or practices in joint programming that lead to this kind of efficient, effective joint programming, particularly perhaps in challenging issues like peacebuilding and PVE. The experience of UNDP, UNICEF, and UN Women in Tajikistan is exemplary of how joint programming can be done well, including in GEWE. This experience should be used to support the development and implementation of similar practices and experience for joint programming in other countries where the UN operates.

Impact and priority HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The PBSO should consider developing accessible lessons learned knowledge products from the successful development and implementation of joint projects like EYPT over the next few months, and disseminate knowledge products widely across the UN system towards the adoption and adaptation of these practices to more joint-PBF projects in other countries.
Timeframe IMMEDIATE	
Difficulty	

RECOMMENDATION 6.

Promote ONE-UN approach, integration of lessons learnt and sustainability

RUNOs, potentially with the support of the RCO, should develop ways to systematically, regularly share information exchange and cooperate, including through joint events to better leverage youth, WPS and peacebuilding agenda within SDG30, and promote ONE-UN approach, integration of lessons learnt and sustainability.

<i>Impact and priority</i> HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RUNOs and the RCO should consider developing quarterly events with substantial agendas to bring together key RUNO and RCO staff towards furthering the ONE-UN approach in youth, WPS and peacebuilding. This kind of activity could begin by potentially using the experience of EYPT for learning Expand partnership and unified approach and continuously improve practices based on lessons learned, both programmatic and administrative to maximize operational performance
<i>Timeframe</i> IMMEDIATE	
<i>Difficulty</i>	

RECOMMENDATION 7.

RUNOs and the RCO further accelerate efforts to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment of youth, WPS and peacebuilding agenda with national, subnational and local development programmes and plans

Inconsistency between sectoral strategic plans, in particular the National Strategy of Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism 2021-2025 with the NDS 2030 and the Mid Term Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period of 2021-2025 and further down with District Development Programmes, requires dedicated efforts of all stakeholders to ensure alignment of priorities and interventions and effective and efficient use of resources. RUNOs and the RCO can support central and local stakeholders, contribute to and facilitate the process.

<i>Impact and priority</i> HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct review of the policy environment concerning youth empowerment, WPS and peacebuilding from system perspective and propose recommendations on how to align various strategies, programme sand normative framework concerning these topics Develop and propose specific indicators and/or indices to measure changes and performance at national and local levels in the areas of youth empowerment, WPS and peacebuilding. Conduct needs assessment and tailored training programmes to enhance capacity of national counterparts to support and promote youth, WPS and peacebuilding agenda in Tajikistan, with specific focus on equity and gender equality.
<i>Timeframe</i> IMMEDIATE	
<i>Difficulty</i>	

RECOMMENDATION 1.

RUNOs should develop approaches towards expediting the approval and start of projects with government stakeholders.

Findings found that the turnover of ministerial leadership led to delays in the start of EYPT, which left RUNOs with a period of some 10 months without an approved work plan, and thus not able to start implementation. RUNOs and the RCO reported that other projects in Tajikistan have had similar issues. This suggests that there is a general challenge in maintaining relationships between the UN and ministerial decisionmakers that should be worked on to support rapid start up, longer-time frames for implementation, and more effective programming.

<i>Impact and priority</i> HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct in depth analysis and produce a technical report that provide insight into the problem, identify and describe the factors associated with delays and provide relevant and applicable solution to improve practice, including SOPs ▪ Jointly with state counterparts develop SOPs to maintain timely approval and start up of projects. ▪ Sign a MoU with governmental stakeholders to create a normative framework for the implementation of SOP ▪ Conduct orientation sessions to relevant staff of state partners about MoUs signed and SOPs.
<i>Timeframe</i> IMMEDIATE	
<i>Difficulty</i>	

RECOMMENDATION 2.

RUNOs should work with state and non-state actors and donors to identify resources to expand the activities of the EYPT project.

The experience of the project suggests good results, but EYPT did not have the length of time in implementation to have as large or enduring effects as sought in the development of the project. RUNOs should seek additional funds towards meeting the needs of beneficiaries through approaches used in EYPT to have more widespread and clearer effects.

<i>Impact and priority</i> HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a TOR and establish a follow-on project sustainability group of staff, stakeholders and potentially donors to systematically explore resource mobilization for the expansion of successful EYPT activities and approaches ▪ Conduct costing exercises of the programmes that can be potentially financed from public or sources other than donors. Develop a fundraising plan and its implementation ▪ Identify good practices of private public partnership in the areas of PVE, youth development and youth empowerment.
<i>Timeframe</i> IMMEDIATE	
<i>Difficulty</i>	

RECOMMENDATION 3.

RUNOs should develop longer-term programming to support the engagement of youth and women in governance, society, and the economy.

The many remaining needs and tremendous issues these vulnerable beneficiaries face in Tajikistan, especially in more remote areas, mean that youth and women beneficiaries need continued engagement by the UNCT to support the development of platforms as well as attitudinal and behavioral change of youth, women, and government partners over a longer period of time. These issues and support are even more important now with issues that are likely to limit opportunities for work as migrant labour in Russia.

<i>Impact and priority</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using an equity and gender equality perspectives in programming, target the most marginalized and vulnerable regions and the most vulnerable youth groups within these regions as a start point of expansion of the programmes with a longer period of financing and well-planned exit strategy. ▪ Design and conduct a longitudinal study to determine impacts of programmes and create evidence for policy making and programming ▪ Ensure that programmatic approaches are gender transformative and inclusive.
HIGH	
<i>Timeframe</i>	
<i>Difficulty</i>	

RECOMMENDATION 4.

The RCO, to complement and strengthen its coordination role in joint programmes, should consider engaging with RUNOs on joint projects to support joint project design, resource mobilization and government endorsement.

The RCO potentially has valuable roles to play to support the first three recommendations to RUNOs, as the RCO could serve to unite and support RUNOs towards expediting the approval and start up of projects with key government stakeholders, support resource mobilization for joint projects that thus supports more than one UN agency, and use its good offices to encourage support and resources for longer-term programming on the engagement of youth and women in governance, society and the economy in the RT.

<i>Impact and priority</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For the RCO, use its convening power in the immediate term to support the joint working group(s) suggested above and staff resources to encourage joint short and long-term analysis, approaches, and programming on women and youth. ▪ The RCO can lead national level policy advocacy initiatives to ensure that an interlinked agenda of youth empowerment, peacebuilding and community development are systematically reflected in national, regional and local programmes and consider.
HIGH	
<i>Timeframe</i>	
IMMEDIATE	
<i>Difficulty</i>	

RECOMMENDATION 5.

The PBSO should consider ways to share the experience of strong cooperation and coordination by RUNOs in the development, implementation, monitoring and reporting on PBF-funded programming from the EYPT project with other UNCTs

Many UNCT's and RUNOs operating in other countries do not have experience or practices in joint programming that lead to this kind of efficient, effective joint programming, particularly perhaps in challenging issues like peacebuilding and PVE. The experience of UNDP, UNICEF, and UN Women in Tajikistan is exemplary of how joint programming can be done well, including in GEWE. This experience should be used to support the development and implementation of similar practices and experience for joint programming in other countries where the UN operates.

Impact and priority

HIGH

Timeframe

IMMEDIATE

Difficulty

- The PBSO should consider developing accessible lessons learned knowledge products from the successful development and implementation of joint projects like EYPT over the next few months, and disseminate knowledge products widely across the UN system towards the adoption and adaptation of these practices to more joint-PBF projects in other countries.

RECOMMENDATION 6.

Promote ONE-UN approach, integration of lessons learnt and sustainability

RUNOs, potentially with the support of the RCO, should develop ways to systematically, regularly share information exchange and cooperate, including through joint events to better leverage youth, WPS and peacebuilding agenda within SDG30, and promote ONE-UN approach, integration of lessons learnt and sustainability.

Impact and priority

HIGH

Timeframe

IMMEDIATE

- RUNOs and the RCO should consider developing quarterly events with substantial agendas to bring together key RUNO and RCO staff towards furthering the ONE-UN approach in youth, WPS and peacebuilding. This kind of activity could begin by potentially using the experience of EYPT for learning

<i>Difficulty</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand partnership and unified approach and continuously improve practices based on lessons learned, both programmatic and administrative to maximize operational performance
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RECOMMENDATION 7.	
<p>RUNOs and the RCO further accelerate efforts to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment of youth, WPS and peacebuilding agenda with national, subnational and local development programmes and plans</p> <p><i>Inconsistency between sectoral strategic plans, in particular the National Strategy of Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism 2021-2025 with the NDS 2030 and the Mid Term Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period of 2021-2025 and further down with District Development Programmes, requires dedicated efforts of all stakeholders to ensure alignment of priorities and interventions and effective and efficient use of resources. RUNOs and the RCO can support central and local stakeholders, contribute to and facilitate the process.</i></p>	
<i>Impact and priority</i> HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct review of the policy environment concerning youth empowerment, WPS and peacebuilding from system perspective and propose recommendations on how to align various strategies, programme sand normative framework concerning these topics Develop and propose specific indicators and/or indices to measure changes and performance at national and local levels in the areas of youth empowerment, WPS and peacebuilding. Conduct needs assessment and tailored training programmes to enhance capacity of national counterparts to support and promote youth, WPS and peacebuilding agenda in Tajikistan, with specific focus on equity and gender equality.
<i>Timeframe</i> IMMEDIATE	
<i>Difficulty</i>	

ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE FINAL EVALUATION

Country:	Tajikistan
Description of Assignment:	International Consultant for conduction of Final evaluation of the ‘Empowering youth for a peaceful Tajikistan’
Period of assignment/services:	November 2021- March 2022 (37 working days)
Duty station:	Home-based with 1 week mission to Tajikistan
Type of Contract:	Individual Consultant (IC)

1. Background and context

Risks of violent extremism remains a concerning issue for policy makers in Tajikistan¹⁴. These risks are nourished by an interplay of two sets of factors: ‘push factors’ - structural conditions that make the overall socio-economic environment more conducive, and individuals more vulnerable to violent extremism, and ‘pull factors’ - catalyst factors that exploit and interact with structural conditions to draw people into violent extremism. ‘Push’ factors are related to the persistent political, social, and economic exclusion experienced by specific groups of young men and women and their immediate communities and beyond. Rising inequality, shrinking civic space for engagement, and lack of inclusive development contribute to these inclusion – exclusion dynamics.

These ‘push factors’ create an exclusionary environment where youth at risk can be ‘pulled’ by the offerings from violent groups. For example, local grievances can be manipulated into violent extremism by domestic and foreign recruiters through various communication methods with financial incentives as well as the offer of a sense of belonging to a group and other psycho-emotional benefits.¹⁵ This strategy works particularly well where institutions and public services to address the grievances and improve living conditions of the vulnerable groups do not work effectively. Perpetrators of violent extremism use ideology and religion to justify their actions, even when they are motivated by global, political, context-specific or personal issues.

According to the report on “The Missing Peace”¹⁶, most young people, even in the face of strong social, and economic grievances, remain peaceful. Identifying ‘extremism’ as the problem, relying on securitized approaches and narrowing social, economic and civic spaces for young people does not provide sustainable solutions and might be counterproductive. This project relies on identifying the social, economic and gender-based exclusion, with a view to expanding alternative pathways available to young people. An analysis on the inclusion-exclusion dynamics has provided the results presented below.

Socio-economic situation, dynamics of socio-economic inequality and exclusion:

The population in Tajikistan reached 9 million at the end of May 2018, and it remains the fastest growing (and youngest) country in Central Asia, with an average annual growth of 2.1%. Despite economic gains

¹⁴ E.g. the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy of Tajikistan. Materials of the Dushanbe PVE conference in 2016 and 2018.

¹⁵ E.g. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf “Religion and ethnicity have been recognised as powerful expressions of individual and group identity. There is robust evidence that radicalisation is a social process and that identity is a key factor in why individuals become involved in violent movements.

¹⁶ https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf

in recent years (average 5.7% GDP growth between 2009 and 2016),¹⁷ Tajikistan continues to be one of the poorest countries in Central Asia¹⁸. According to official statistics, 29.7% continue to live below the official poverty line, and 14% live in extreme poverty. 53% of the workforce is in the agricultural sector, dominated by low-pay/low-productivity and informal employment. It is worth reiterating that, while extreme poverty is not directly linked to violent extremism, it increases risks of economic exclusion, and systematically addressing the exclusion is the best way to prevent violence, including violent extremism.¹⁹

Tajikistan's potential workforce is growing fast—faster than many of its neighbors in Europe and Central Asia. However, there are some structural features that shape the job challenges in Tajikistan: a) Tajikistan is a mountainous and landlocked country; b) Tajikistan is an agrarian country where almost 3 out of 4 still live-in rural areas; c) A fast growing and young population; d) The legacy of transition and slow-paced structural reforms. Due to these factors, the Tajik economy today is not able to create enough jobs, informal sector represents a large and growing source of jobs, several jobs are seasonal or temporary and there are major inequalities in terms of labor market outcomes.

These statistics indicate a particularly bleak picture of economic and social exclusion and inequality for young people, and especially young women throughout the country. Young people make 66% of the population of Tajikistan, and every year around 150,000 young people enter the labour market, but labor underutilization among youth remains at 20.5%, while the official youth unemployment rate amounts to 10.6 % (twice higher than among those who were aged 30-75 years and more than 1.5 times exceeded the national average)²⁰. Furthermore, almost 30% (29.3) of young people of 15-24 years old were not in job, education, or training (NEET), and about 90% of these NEET youth consisted of young women. Moreover, the NEET rate for female youth is considerably higher than for male youth. Almost a third of employed young people are in unpaid (informal) jobs compared to 15 percent of adults. Youth are also significantly less likely to be self-employed (5 percent compared to 11 percent among adults).

Furthermore, young people and adolescents, especially girls, have limited access to education, knowledge, and skills that could lead to their social and economic advancement and bring them financial and personal security. Girls aged 11-17 are approximately twice as likely as boys to be deprived in school attainment and attendance. The gap between what education system is providing in terms of learning achievements and skills, and what children, young people, communities and economies need is growing. In addition to immediate risks, the harsh economic situation creates long-term fragility risks for the country, especially with the considerable 'youth bulge', and contributes to the migration and "brain-drain" of the most skillful workforce (females make up approximately 18% of the migrants). It is important to note that economic conditions and societal norms exclude a large portion of women from the economy, especially those living outside major urban areas. Moreover, children and young people in Tajikistan have limited access to health services, including mental health and psychological services, that are tailored to their needs.

Parents play an important role in the life of young people and can sometimes be the ones creating obstacles for their active participation. FGDs conducted by UNICEF in 2018 showed that some parents believe that young people cannot take independent decision on issues concerning their lives until they reach the age of 35. This widespread belief is an integral element of limiting environment for youth participation in the life of society. Moreover, most recent Demographic and Health Survey (2018) indicates that 67 percent of children of age up to 14 face violence. Adolescent Baseline Study 2018 showed that 47 percent of adolescents of age 10-19 face violence in schools. Hence, positive parenting interventions are necessary.

¹⁷ United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects 2018 Report, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/WESP2018_Full_Web-1.pdf. The Government of Tajikistan reports about an average 7% growth annually in recent years.

¹⁸ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/tajikistan> (retrieved on 7 June 2019).

¹⁹ Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf

²⁰ It should be noted that the registered unemployment in Tajikistan amounts to 0.5%.

Shift in identity and social cohesion dynamics:

Beyond economic and social exclusion and inequalities, the collapse of Soviet Union and civil war have led to the quest for new identities and belonging. The relationship between secular and religious spheres in the country are still being shaped; and may impact the future of the national project and social contract. While the increasing presence in religion in society is not a concern, as the UN – World Bank study Pathways for Peace also suggests, young people’s desire for a social community and belonging²¹ lead to their challenging of existing norms that facilitate social cohesion, leading to intergenerational clashes, in a society where religion is defining identities of younger generations more than the older. If combined with socio-economic exclusion, more radical external ideologies might attract some young people in such an environment.

Gender equality and economic empowerment:

The annual “Global Report on the Gender Gap 2018” ranks Tajikistan 123th out of 149 countries assessed²² (worst from those ranked in Europe and CIS countries), and the country’s position has been worsening over years. Women’s and girls’ political, economic and social exclusion is widespread in Tajikistan, with a trend towards re-traditionalization reinforcing traditional gender roles that are detrimental to women’s empowerment and gender equality. This creates new economic dependencies, exacerbates existing gender stereotypes, increases violence against women and excludes women from the political and socio-economic sphere.

Young women find it difficult to be included in the political life of Tajikistan. They make only 19% of the Tajik Parliament members (12 out of 63 MPs). Women are unequally represented in civil service (22%), especially in managerial civil service positions (18.7%). Women make only 7% of high-ranking government officials, and as little as 16% of lowest administrative tiers’ representative bodies (in settlements and villages). Women face also structural exclusion in the economic sphere. Women earn less than men, women-headed small and medium enterprises (SMEs) make less than 1% of all SMEs in the country (only around 2000 enterprises). There is limited investment in women’s vocational education, and most women are employed in low-paid labour industries, such as agriculture, education and healthcare. Many economic indicators of women position in the economy are worsening over years, underlining the increasing gap between men and women in the country. For instance, between 2004 and 2016²³, the disparity between male and female employment rates increased from 6.8 to 19 percentage points. See table below:

	LFS 2004	LFS 2009	LFS 2016
Groups			
employed women	46.60%	43.20%	40.50%
employed men	53.40%	56.80%	59.50%

²¹ UN – WB Pathways for Peace study

²² http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf. The report notes: “Tajikistan takes this year’s bottom spot in the region, slipping 28 places due to a widening Economic Participation and Opportunity gender gap, driven by updated data availability regarding women’s share of legislators, senior officials, and managers as well as labour force participation and estimated earned income” (page 22)

²³ Situation in the labour market of the Republic of Tajikistan ([Положение на рынке труда в Республике Таджикистан \(ww.tj\)](#))

At the social level, social norms and traditions contribute to the women's vulnerability. Although there is no official data, most experts²⁴ agree about existing practices of early, unregistered, polygamous marriages in Tajikistan, which deprive women of legal protection of their rights, and contribute to the exclusion from education, and other life opportunities. Other social phenomena, like massive migration gives rise to the problem of abandoned women, who – without education, employment and capital – often found in poverty and hopelessness.

2. Description of the project

The project has been realized despite significant delays of 9 months in implementation of the project timeline in 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis and the competing priorities of the Government as a result of the pandemic. Consequently, the work plan, including project timeframe could not be agreed until 29 September 2020. This was the main reason for requesting a six-month no-cost extension of the project from June-December 2021.

Despite these initial challenges, a preparatory phase was completed successfully, with implementing partners identified, project staff recruited and redesigning of the project within the context of the post-COVID-19 realities. To accelerate the implementation of the project, overcome challenges posed by the pandemic, and the fact that the two districts are remote, Recipient UN Organisations (RUNOs) applied using digital tools and streamlining business processes.

The project aimed to find a new consensus between the government and communities, particularly of young men and women, on how to promote sustainable and inclusive solutions to socio-economic exclusion, allow young people to inform and take part in policy discussions towards this end, and empower young people to identify their own issues and find solutions. A space should be created for youth to be able to express their views and thoughts on various issues, including religion. It is equally important to support the Government of Tajikistan in identifying the problems and root causes that might lead to violent extremism and help it towards taking action in this area.

The timeliness of the project is strengthened by the political situation favorable for PBF programming, in which prevention of violent extremism is one of the highest priorities of Tajikistan, which adopted and implements the new National Strategy of Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism 2021-2025 but is lacking resources and innovations to achieve all goals. Such windows of opportunity are not frequent in Tajikistan. This entry point is critical for the PBF to step in to develop and catalyze models and solutions of inclusive and comprehensive youth involvement that can be used by the government and other development partners and create entry points for the UN in peacebuilding.

The project responds fully to the national priorities and is closely aligned with the UN engagement in the country. Prevention of violent extremism is already an important priority of the government of Tajikistan. The government in 2021 adopted and started implementation of the new National Strategy of Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism 2021-2025. Towards that end, the Government has established a coordination platform for the Strategy's implementation and adopted an Action Plan which lists activities to achieve the Strategy's goals.

The Strategy and the Action Plan includes among others the following objectives/activities:

- Eliminating the socio-economic prerequisites of extremism and violent extremism (the relevant chapter of the strategy mentions e.g. "Reducing the level of socio-economic marginalization of the population necessitates socio-economic policies directed on the increase of living standards and culture of the population, building motivation to constructive, healthy lifestyle, providing

²⁴E.g. <https://www.bhr.tj/sites/default/files/articles/2018-01/ngo-report-iccpr-2013.pdf>; <http://www.notabene.tj/Doc/Kaz/compl/RU-Domestic-violence-in-Taj-March-2017.pdf>; recent press article: <https://news.tj/ru/node/269638>

opportunities to the socially vulnerable groups of population to adapt and participate in public life, analysis and eliminating the causes of social marginalization and so on”.

- Prevention of extremism and violent extremism among minors and young people (the relevant chapter of the strategy refers among other to the improvement of education and “ensuring the possibility of boys and girls getting an education that meets the present-day requirements for the level of knowledge, allowing to understand political processes, mechanisms of the emergence of public and religious conflicts...”. It also mentions that “An important condition for the prevention of radicalism and extremism among youth is the mobilization of youth itself to preventive work with their peers”
- Addressing gender specific issues, indicating that “the state policy in ensuring gender equality should be focused on yet more strengthening of issues related to the creation of equal opportunities for self-fulfillment in all social spheres, regardless of her sexual identity, enhancing social activity and the role of women in public life, as well as ensuring equality between men and women in marital relations.”

The project helped to connect the Strategy and the Action Plan to the implementation of the youth policy in Tajikistan, enabling inclusive and comprehensive approaches to the prevention of violent extremism. The State Programme on Social Development of Youth of Tajikistan 2019-2021 sets priorities of participation of young people in political, social, and economic life; effective employment and economic independence of youth. This includes empowering women as agents of change in building community resilience as well as combating discrimination of women in society, as well as broader efforts towards gender equality.

Addressing violent extremism envisages addressing socio-economic roots of the risk, thereby has direct relevance to SDG implementation in the country. UN MAPS mission conducted in December 2016 recommended to the Government of Tajikistan to focus on youth engagement and empowerment as a key accelerator for achievement of nationalized SDG goals. There is an opportunity for the government to prioritize youth much more in its policies, especially those related to private sector and job creation. Only through meaningful youth participation and specific attention to young people in the implementation of the SDGs, the risk of leaving them behind can be turned into an opportunity: a catalyst for change, that contributes to peace and development in the country.

The national vision for youth social engagement and economic empowerment is in line with SDG goals and targets, and particularly with SDG 3, 5, 8, 10 and 16 and supported with national efforts to ensure proper data collection, monitoring of development, and ensuring effective financing of youth programming in the framework of SDG 17.

Several UN Agencies are supporting the government through programmatic efforts, including capacity building initiatives through projects and programmes (UNDP, IOM, UN Women, UNODC, UNICEF etc.).

UNDP has extensive experience on implementing activities aimed at preventing violent extremism in several districts. Particularly, Strengthening Community Resilience and Cooperation for Prevention of Violent extremism (PVE) in Central Asia, the regional UNDP project funded by the Government of Japan, with Tajikistan’s budget around 639,000.00 USD. The Project priority was to address social and economic exclusion experienced among at-risk youth of the target areas by providing specific groups of women and men with tailored ‘decent’ employment/entrepreneurship support and on-demand skills development activities. Activities related to the entrepreneurial skills development services for youth, provision of apprenticeship places, youth involvement in the provision of community-level social and economic services have been envisaged within the project, which were synergetic with 1 and 2 Component of the project.

Since 2015 **UNICEF** in Tajikistan, building on its institutional comparative advantages on violence prevention, skills-building and adolescent empowerment, has been implementing a comprehensive peacebuilding programme with a focus on making young boys and girls less susceptible to extremist and nationalist narratives that fuel conflict, and more actively tolerant of other ethnic groups. UNICEF peacebuilding programme has been supported with grants from CSSF/DFID and its involvement in PBF

funded multiagency and multi-country programme “Cross-border Cooperation for Sustainable Peace and Development” in contested border areas between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, UNICEF, within its dedicated Adolescent and youth development programme, support the Government of Tajikistan in development and implementation of youth policies as well as youth participation at local government and national levels.

UN WOMEN (*in Tajikistan and in Central Asia*) has extensive expertise and experience working at community level in building and sustaining peace, targeting women and youth as well as the implementation of projects funded by the PBF and other donors. In this project, UN Women will enjoy partnership with local NGOs (NGO “Gender & Development” as one of its responsible partners) and will engage youth (Y-Peer Volunteers’ network) and sport federations (National Federation of Taekwondo and Kickboxing of RT)

Other projects of international organizations working in the area of prevention of violent extremism

This project is complementary to on-going projects, by leveraging mandates of three Agencies in the same initiative to address multiple problems at the same time. It builds and deepens the experience of the regional project implemented by UNDP, as well as prior work of UNICEF and UN Women by focusing its attention on both pull and push factors, as well as introducing the interregional social cohesion perspective to implementation.

The joint UN project "Empowering Youth for a peaceful Tajikistan" funded by UN Peacebuilding Fund has been implemented by three UN Agencies - UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women and aimed to promote the resilience of Tajikistan’s young people to violent narratives in areas where risks of violent extremism are exacerbated by vulnerability to extreme poverty and outward migration dynamics, through endowing them with capacities, skills, and competencies that open socio-economic opportunities, enable them to participate in political life, and enhance their community participation, sense of belonging and confidence in the government.

The Project was implemented in close partnership with the state Committee for Youth Affairs and Sports, Committee for Women and Family Affairs, General Prosecutor’s Office and Ministry of Education and Science of the RT, authorities in the sub-national government in Kulob, Isfara, Khorog, Baljuvon and Shahrinav districts of Tajikistan targeting youth between the ages of 14 - 30 with specific aims to build resilience among them through:

1. Improving socio-economic opportunities for youth adapted for the labor market, which requires new sets of skills and competencies suitable for innovative sectors of the economy;
2. Building trust and opportunities for youth to engage and empower themselves and their communities;
3. Deploying tailor-made initiatives for groups of youth that face particular exclusion dynamics, and social norms related to gender equality, and women and girls’ empowerment.

The abovementioned goal has been achieved through implementation of the following key Outputs:

Output 1. Adolescents and young people have better competencies and skills that foster their opportunities in social and economic life.

The output aimed to build skills and competencies that allow people to be competitive and better placed in political and economic life, expand their livelihood options, and open new avenues for employment, self-realization, and participation. This output addressed push factors related to the lack of perspectives of young people for self-fulfillment, inadequacy of the education and skills to the modern labor market requirements, and lack of skills that enable to identify extremism propaganda and counteract it. As a result of the output implementation, the young people have been equipped with critical competencies and relevant employable skills corresponding to market demands and thus were able to diversify their livelihood options. The skill development approach was based on the results of the sensemaking exercise to define the existing demand

of the domestic labor market but also to assess potential for promoting new professional and soft skills, in the social, economic spheres and jobs that were more attractive for the young people. Skills development has been promoted through the mix of proven and innovative solutions, including use of the modern technologies and tools.

Output 2. Adolescents and young people have more opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making and peacebuilding processes to strengthen non-violence values and action.

The output, on the one hand, aimed to empower youth to identify their own priorities and generate solutions, feel the power of helping others and agency of changing the community around them. On the other hand, the output capacitated the government staff to support youth development and participation with a view of safeguarding their rights as well as developing and implementing youth-friendly policies and programmes. In this way, the output addressed pull factors that relate to the feeling of not being heard, lack of confidence, sense of purpose, justice and belonging. As the first project output supported young people as receivers of capacity building, this output supported young people as agents of change and promote their actions for the community good. The activities under both outputs were closely interconnected with referral chain created to ensure that activities complement and leverage the effect by providing complex and integrated package of trainings, capacity building and advocacy for the same group of beneficiaries and stakeholders.

As the project is going to end on 31st December 2021, UNDP and RUNOS have planned to commission an final evaluation to identify and document the achievements of project interventions, challenges, lessons learned and best practices. The findings of the evaluation will provide guidance for the way forward for future course of action. Thus, the evaluation report is expected to include specific recommendations for future programming/interventions.

The project information is summarized in below table.

PROJECT INFORMATION	
Project title	Empowering Youth for a Peaceful Tajikistan (EYPT) Project
Atlas ID	00116488
Country	Tajikistan
Region	Central Asia
Date project document signed	29 September 2020
Project dates	Start Valid period September 2020 31 December 2021
Project budget	USD 2 million
Project expenditure ad the time of evaluation	USD
Funding source	UN Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund
Implementing party	UNDP, UNICEF, UN WOMEN
Working district/city	Shahrinav, Baljuvon, Kulob, Isfara, Khorog

3. Evaluation purpose objectives and scope.

Purpose

The purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the achieved results of the project within two output areas mentioned above. The final evaluation should assess the project's performance and achievements vis-à-vis the project's overall objectives on the various sub-national level beneficiaries. Moreover, the evaluation should document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories, and challenges within the project (what worked, and what didn't work and why), as well as strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices. Based on the findings and conclusions from the assessment of the project's achievements, the evaluation should also provide specific and actionable recommendations as to the priority areas that should be considered in further Peacebuilding Portfolio, including interventions that require continued support, successful interventions for expansion, and recommendations on prioritizing interventions to maximize impact.

It should also include actionable recommendations on how to improve project management and maximize ownership by national partners, as well as to inform the future work of participating UN agencies on empowering young people from marginalized communities and their contributing role in peacebuilding and community development.

Objectives

Specifically, the objectives are:

- Ascertain the achievements of the project and its relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact including synergies with other UN support efforts (coherence)
- Assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project in terms of: 1) addressing key drivers of conflict and the most relevant peacebuilding issues; 2) alignment with National Peacebuilding Policy and national priorities of country; 3) whether the project capitalized on the UN's added value in country; and 4) the degree to which the project addressed cross-cutting issues such as conflict and gender-sensitivity in Tajikistan;
- Assess the effectiveness of the activities aimed at empowering young people, both men and women, to participate equally in political, social, and economic life and making young people more resilient to radicalistic and violent narratives
- Analyze how human rights and gender equality principles are integrated in the programme implementation
- Assess to what extent the intervention and its results made a concrete contribution to the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals in particular SDG 16;
- Assess the opportunities for meaningful participation in decision making provided under the intervention aimed at strengthening non-violence values and action
- Review and assess the risks and opportunities (in terms of resource mobilization, synergy and areas of interventions) for youth related PVE projects in future.
- Assess whether the support provided by the PBF has promoted the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS), allowed a specific focus on women's participation in peacebuilding processes, and whether it was accountable to gender equality;
- To assess engagement of the municipal and districts stakeholders in the project, and their understanding, including financial and other commitment for sustainability of activities

- Identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories and challenges within the project, to inform future work of participating UN agencies in the frameworks of adolescents and young men and women empowerment;
- Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices;
- Provide actionable recommendations with respect to UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women's work on youth empowering role and contribution to community development and peacebuilding interventions.
- Evaluate the project's efficiency, including its implementation strategy, institutional arrangements as well as its management and operational systems and value for money;

Scope of Work:

The final evaluation of the project will be conducted at the end of project implementation and will cover the entire duration of the project from September 29, 2020 to December 31, 2021. The evaluation is scheduled between November and March 2022. The evaluation shall cover all aspects of the project.

The evaluation should assess the relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency and intended sustainability of the project interventions in five working cities/districts (Isfara, Kulob, Shahrinav, Baljuvon, Khorog) between September 2020 and December 2021. In addition, the evaluation should indicate if the produced results are in the right direction towards contributing to empowering young people, making them more resilient to violent narratives and promoting youth participation in decision-making through strengthening social entrepreneurship and innovative youth employment opportunities and involvement in local governance and community development jointly with local authorities. Particularly, the evaluation should cover but not limited to the following areas:

- Relevance of the project: review the progress against its purpose, objectives, outputs and indicators, as per the project documents and its components, such as the ToC, Results and Resources Framework, M&E framework, and ascertain whether assumptions and risks remain valid
- Effectiveness and efficiency of implementation approaches: review project's technical as well as operational approaches and deliverables, quality of results and their impact, alignment with national priorities and responding to the needs of the stakeholders;
- Review the project's approaches, in general and with regards to youth empowerment, mainstreaming of gender equality and social inclusion, with particular focus on youth marginalized groups;
- Review and assess the risks and opportunities (in terms of resource mobilization, synergy and areas of interventions) related to future interventions;
- Review external factors beyond the control of the project that have affected it negatively or positively;
- Review planning, management and quality assurance mechanisms for the delivery of the project interventions;
- Review coordination and communication processes and mechanisms with the stakeholders.

The evaluation envisions an onsite data collection mission in 5 project sites in Tajikistan. However, depending on the COVID-19 epidemiological situation in the country and potential travel restriction, online data collection will be considered as an alternative. Two consultants for conducting the evaluation process will be recruited, including:

TEAM LEADER: one International Consultant to lead, coordinate the process and division of labour (with the Team Member), conduct desk review of background documentation, produce inception report, develop the methodology and instruments, prepare workplan, collect data, prepare analytical framework and draft and final evaluation reports

TEAM MEMBER: one national consultant (based in Tajikistan) under the overall guidance of International Consultant to contribute to desk review of background documentation, provide translation services if needed, to conduct all field missions (given the COVID-19 situation), collect information and data, plan

4. Evaluation criteria and key questions

As indicated below, the evaluation will follow the OECD-DAC’s revised evaluation criteria including: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Conflict sensitivity. Partnership, Gender Empowerment and Social Inclusion and Human Rights will be added as cross-cutting criteria. The guiding questions outlined below should be further refined by the consultant and agreed with the evaluation management group integrated by RUNOs designated officers.

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcomes, UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs? • How relevant were the overall design and approaches of the project? • To what extent the project was able to address the needs of the target groups in the changed context? • To what extent are the objectives of the project design (inputs, activities, outputs and their indicators) and its theory of change logical and coherent? Does the project contribute to the outcome and output of the CPD? • To what extent has the project been able to adapt to the needs of the different target groups (including tackling the gender equality and social inclusion aspects) in terms of creating enable environment for inclusive, affordable and people-centered reconstruction policies and actions? • How do beneficiaries perceive the relevance of the project and how have the activities implemented improved their lives? Are there any stories of change?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the key results and changes attained for young men, women and vulnerable groups? • In which areas has the project had greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements? • To what extent the project activities were delivered effectively in terms of quality, quantity, and timing? • What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended outputs? • What were the lessons and how were feedback/learning incorporated in the subsequent process of planning and implementation? • How effective has the project been in enhancing the capacity of the communities and local governments to create enabling environment for inclusive youth economic empowerment and promotion of innovative development?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How efficiently were the resources including human, material, and financial resources used to achieve the above results in a timely manner? • To what extent the project contributed to participation of adolescent and young girls and boys in decision-making of issues concerning them and

	<p>enabled them to contribute to the development of their communities (including social cohesion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent the project could empower the adolescent girls and boys to believe that non-violent means are the best approach to address differences and conflicts in targeted areas. • To what extent the project contributed to socio-economic empowerment of young men and women in targeted areas. • To what extent was the existing project management structure appropriate and efficient in generating the expected results? • To what extent has the project implementation strategy and its execution been efficient and cost-effective? • To what extent were the resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular? • Was the project financially and/or programmatically catalytic? • Has PBF funding been used to scale-up other peacebuilding work and/or has it helped to create broader platforms for peacebuilding?
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well the intervention fit in changed context? • To what extent the intervention is coherent with Government’s policies • To what extent the intervention addressed the synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by UNDP or Government of Tajikistan (internal coherence) • To what extent the intervention was consistent with other actors’ interventions in the same context or adding value to avoid duplication of the efforts (external coherence)
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did the project interventions contribute towards sustaining the results achieved by the project? • What are the plans or approaches of the local authorities and beneficiary communities to ensure that the initiatives will be continued after the project ends? • What could be potential new areas of work and innovative measures for sustaining the results? • To what extent have lessons learned been documented by the project on a continual basis to inform the project for needful change? • What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability of the project? • How has the project worked with local partners to increase their capacity in a sustainable way? • What are the risks facing sustainability of project Outputs and Outcomes?
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the partnerships affected in the project achievement, and how might this be built upon in the future? • Have the ways of working with the partner and the support to the partner been effective and did they contribute to the project’s achievements? • How does partnership with municipality government work? Does it create synergies or difficulties? What type of partnership building mechanism is necessary for future partnership?

Human rights and gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have rural young people, NEET, physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from the work of the project and with what impact? • To what extent the project approach was effective in promoting gender equality and social inclusion - particularly focusing on the marginalized and the poor through knowledge transfer, livelihood action, planning and training? • To what extent has the project promoted positive changes of young men and women and marginalized group? Were there any unintended effects?
Conflict sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the Project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity? • Were RUNOs internal capacities adequate for ensuring an ongoing conflict-sensitive approach? • Was the project responsible for any unintended negative impacts? • Was an ongoing process of context monitoring and a monitoring system that allows for monitoring of unintended impacts established?

5. Methodology:

The evaluation will be a transparent and participatory process involving relevant RUNOs’ stakeholders and partners in Tajikistan. The evaluation is a final programme evaluation and both a summative approach focusing on capturing the lessons learned during the implementation and assessing the achievement of the results at output and outcome levels, as well as a formative, forward-looking approach assessing the applicability of the results will be employed. The evaluation methodology will furthermore follow a Theory of Change approach and employ mixed methods including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches to account for complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate. Methods may include but are not limited to:

- Desk review of relevant documents and data such as project and programme documents, progress reports, financial records, meeting minutes and monitoring reports, results of the baseline assessment, and secondary data or studies relating to the country context and situation
- Online or offline consultations and discussions with the senior management, programme and project management staff of the three participating agencies
- Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys with direct and indirect beneficiaries, implementing partners, donor and other stakeholders
- Offline (field visits) or online session for observation at selected project sites
- Briefing and debriefing sessions with UNDP and RUNOs as well as with other partners. The consultant should ensure triangulation of the various data sources to maximize the validity and reliability of data.

The process/steps mentioned above should ensure that the most appropriate and relevant data are gathered for the above-mentioned objectives. Based on the analysis and findings, the recommendations should be provided for future direction of the initiatives.

The consultant will have to submit the final full report in English. The structure and content of the report should meet the requirements of the UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standard for evaluation in the UN system. The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits, evaluation matrix and

data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and fully discussed and agreed with RUNOs and shared with PBSO for review and approval.

6. Evaluation timeframe and products (key deliverables)

The evaluation is expected to start in November 2021 for an estimated duration of 40 days. This will include desk reviews, primary information collection, field work, and report writing.

Task	Tentative timeframe	Tentative # of days international consultant	Est no of days national consultant
Inception phase November - December 2021			
Desk review of background documentation	TBD	2	2
Inception meeting with EMG and ERG	TBD	1	1
Inception report	TBD	6	2
Data collection phase end of December 2021-January 2022			
Documents review, (online) interviews, interviews, visits to project sites (online/offline)	TBD	12	14
Analysis and reporting phase January – February 2021			
Drafting and presentation of preliminary findings (including one round of revision)	TBD	3	1
Preparation and submission of draft report (including two rounds of revision)	TBD	10	2
Review and submission of final report and communication products (PPT and a brief)	TBD	3	1
Total		37	23

The consultant should submit the following deliverables as described below:

DELIVERABLES	TIME-FRAME (tentative)
An inception report: The evaluation team will present a refined scope, a detailed outline of the evaluation design and methodology, evaluation questions and indicators, and criteria for the approach for in-depth desk review and field work to be conducted in the data collection phase. The report will include an evaluation matrix and detailed work plan. A first draft report will be shared with the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) and, based upon the comments received the evaluation team will revise the draft. The revised draft will be shared with the ERG for feedback. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the final	End of December 2021

<p>inception report. The Inception report will also need to be reviewed and approved by PBSO.</p>	
<p>Presentation of preliminary findings: A PowerPoint presentation detailing the emerging findings of the evaluation will be shared with the Evaluation Management Group for feedback. The revised presentation will be delivered to the ERG for comments and validation. The evaluation team will consider the feedback received when producing the draft report.</p>	<p>End of January 2022</p>
<p>A draft evaluation report: A first draft report will be shared with the EMG and PBSO for initial feedback. The second draft report will incorporate EMG feedback and will be shared with the ERG for identification of factual errors, errors of omission and/or misinterpretation of information. The third draft report will incorporate this feedback and then be shared with the ERG for final validation. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the revised drafts. The draft report will need to be reviewed and approved by PBSO.</p>	<p>End of February 2022</p>
<p>The final evaluation report: The final report will be shared with the EMG and PBSO for their review. The final report will include a concise Executive Summary and annexes detailing the methodological approach and any analytical products developed during the evaluation. The structure of the report will be defined in the inception report. Evaluation team is also responsible for translating final evaluation report to Russian/or Tajik. The final report will need to be reviewed and approved by PBSO.</p>	<p>End of March 2022</p>
<p>Evaluation communication products: Online presentation of the preliminary findings at the closing event of the project in March 2022 (date TBD), a PowerPoint/Prezi presentation of the final key evaluation findings and recommendations, and a 2-pager/infographics on the final key findings, lessons learned and recommendations in a format preferably adjustable for individual project sites both in English and Russian.</p>	<p>End of March 2022</p>

7. Evaluation team composition and required competencies

The evaluation will be carried out by an international evaluation consultant with possible involvement of one additional national consultant. The person involved in any way in the design, management or implementation or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation will not be qualified. The lead evaluator and national consultants will be selected by UNDP CO.

International Consultant

Competencies

- Sensitivity and adaptability to culture, gender, religion, nationality and age
- Strong analytical, writing and reporting abilities
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, ability to lead a team and negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders
- Commitment to quality products and deadlines
- Demonstrated facilitation and communications skills, experience in participatory approaches and ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders
- Ability to produce well-written analytical reports

Qualifications and experience

- At least a master's degree in peacebuilding, social sciences, international relations, migration studies, gender studies or a related area
- At least 7 years of relevant experience conducting evaluations of strategies, policies and/or development programmes and projects
- Proven experience of designing and leading or participating in gender-responsive and human rights-based evaluations utilising participatory approaches and methodologies
- Demonstrated knowledge on areas related to social cohesion, peacebuilding, youth development and PVE;
- Demonstrated experience in the fields of gender equality, youth policies and human rights issues;
- Previous work experience of countries in transition.
- Previous experience working in Central Asia will be considered a strong asset
- Excellent command in different data collection methods including FGDs, KIIs and Social Surveys
- Experience with the United Nations system will be considered an asset
- Fluency in English. Knowledge of Russian or Tajik will be considered an asset

Duty Station: Home based with 1-week travel mission to Tajikistan.

Working days: 37

8. Evaluation ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The consultants must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

9. Management and implementation arrangements

Evaluation management

The evaluation will be a consultative, inclusive, and participatory process and will include a twofold management structure. An Evaluation Management Group (EMG) comprising evaluation officers and focal points and programme managers from each participating agency will be established to oversee the evaluation management, make key decisions and quality assure the different deliverables throughout the evaluation process.

The evaluation management structure will also include an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) that will include civil society organizations and relevant programme partners will be an integral part of the evaluation management structure. The purpose of the ERG will be to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in the design and scope of the evaluation, raising awareness of the different information needs, quality assurance throughout the process and in disseminating the evaluation results.

Under the guidance of the EMG, the evaluation will be carried out by an external evaluation team comprising of an international and a national expert.

The evaluation will remain fully independent. A mission wrap-up meeting during which comments from participants will be noted for incorporation in the final report.

Evaluation purpose, users and intended use

A final external evaluation of the *Empowering Youth for a Peaceful Tajikistan* project is conducted with a special focus on lessons learnt both from programmatic and coordination perspectives. The main purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the programmatic progress and performance of the above described intervention, including from the point of view of *relevance* of the programme objectives, strategy and approach at the local and national levels for empowerment of girls and women affected by migration towards achieving project results; *coherence* with international agreements and conventions as well as synergies and coordination with other initiatives; *effectiveness* of the project in achieving its objectives; organizational *efficiency* and coordination mechanisms in progressing towards the achievement of the project results; and *sustainability* of the results and the *impact* of the intervention in advancing GEWE and participation in community development and peacebuilding initiatives in the target group. The evaluation will also integrate attention to the use of a *human rights*-based approach and *gender equality* principles. In addition, evaluation will contribute to overall accountability and learning processes.

Targeted users of the evaluation are the personnel of the participating UN agencies in Tajikistan, UN Peacebuilding Fund and responsible parties, and the government counterparts at local and national levels, CSOs, and other UN agencies, donor community and development partners present in Tajikistan, and the programme beneficiaries.

The evaluation should identify, and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories, and challenges within the project (what worked, and what didn't work and why), as well as strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices.

The evaluation should also provide specific and actionable recommendations as to the priority areas that should be considered in further Peacebuilding Portfolio, including interventions that require continued support, successful interventions for expansion, and recommendations on prioritizing interventions to maximize impact. It should also include actionable recommendations on how to improve project management and maximize ownership by national partners, as well as to inform the future work of

participating UN agencies on empowering young people from marginalized communities and their contributing role in peacebuilding and community development.

The findings of the evaluation will contribute to effective programming, refining the approaches of participating UN agencies to youth empowerment, learning, capacity building and ability to participate in community development and peacebuilding. It will also be a key input to knowledge management on joint programmes and programmes for youth empowerment. The findings of the evaluation will moreover be used to engage policy makers and other stakeholders at local, national and regional levels in evidence-based dialogues and to advocate and promote the role and contribution of young people for inclusive local development with a particular focus on peacebuilding.

10. Submission of application/expression of interest

Documents to submit as a part of the application should include:

- The CV of the individual evaluator;
- Expression of interest;
- The proposal outlining the proposed methodology for the evaluation, including data collection and analysis techniques, and quality control measures;
- The detailed budget proposal (all-inclusive, including consultancy fees, travel, accommodation, subsistence, data collection and analysis costs, etc.)
- A sample of previous work.

References

Standards for Evaluation in the UN System: www.uneval.org/document/detail/22

Norms for Evaluation in the UN System: www.uneval.org/document/detail/21

Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – towards UNEG Guidance: www.uneval.org/document/detail/980

UNEG Guidance Integrating Human Rights and Gender into Evaluation: www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616

UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator: www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452

UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: www.uneval.org/document/detail/607

UNEG Ethical Guidelines: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102

UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

ANNEX 2: EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Questions	Indicators/Performance Measures	Data Sources (primary and secondary)	Data Collection Tools	Data Analysis Plans
Relevance				
<p>To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcomes, UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?</p> <p>How relevant were the overall design and approaches of the project?</p> <p>To what extent the project was able to address the needs of the target groups in the changed context?</p> <p>To what extent are the objectives of the project design (inputs, activities, outputs and their indicators) and its theory of change logical and coherent? Does the project contribute to the outcome and output of the CPD?</p> <p>To what extent has the project been able to adapt to the needs of the different target groups (including tackling the gender equality and social inclusion aspects) in terms of creating enable environment for</p>	<p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of alignment between project and national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcomes, UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of relevance</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of meeting target groups needs as context changes</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of logic and coherence of objectives and ToC as well as CPD</p> <p>Evidence for the project adapting to diverse needs</p>	<p>Project Documents (Project planning and implementation materials, project reporting, other project documentation)</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner staff, beneficiaries, and stakeholders</p> <p>Country and UN planning documents (e.g. UNDP Country Planning Document (CPD))</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p> <p>Focus group discussion guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>

<p>inclusive, affordable and people-centered reconstruction policies and actions?</p> <p>How do beneficiaries perceive the relevance of the project and how have the activities implemented improved their lives? Are there any stories of change?</p>	<p>Beneficiary perceptions of relevance and outcomes</p> <p>Stories of change</p>			
<p>Coherence</p>				
<p>How well the intervention fit in changed context?</p> <p>To what extent the intervention is coherent with Government’s policies?</p> <p>To what extent the intervention addressed the synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by UNDP or Government of Tajikistan (internal coherence)?</p> <p>To what extent the intervention was consistent with other actors’ interventions in the same context or adding value to avoid duplication of the efforts (external coherence)?</p>	<p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of fit as context changed</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of fit with government policies</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of linkages within the project with other interventions</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of consistency with other interventions</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of avoiding duplication</p>	<p>Project Documents (Project planning and implementation materials, project reporting, other project documentation)</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner staff, beneficiaries, and stakeholders</p> <p>Country and UN planning documents</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p> <p>Focus group discussion guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p>				

<p>What have been the key results and changes attained for young men, women and vulnerable groups?</p> <p>In which areas has the project had greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?</p> <p>What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended outputs?</p> <p>How effective has the project been in enhancing the capacity of the communities and local governments to create enabling environment for inclusive youth economic empowerment and promotion of innovative development?</p> <p>To what extent the project contributed to participation of adolescent and young girls and boys in decision-making of issues concerning them and enabled them to contribute to the development of their communities (including social cohesion)?</p> <p>To what extent has the project empowered adolescent girls and boys to believe that non-violent means are</p>	<p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of key results of project-supported activities (types, places, people)</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of causes of key results</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder views on scaling up or expanding results</p> <p>Evidence for perception or behavioural change through explanation (stories, examples, perceived changes)</p> <p>Evidence for project contributions to capacity improvements</p> <p>Evidence for project contributions to participation</p>	<p>Documents (Project planning and implementation materials, project reporting, other project documentation)</p> <p>Interviews with UNDP, the project, partner, and donor staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p> <p>Focus group discussion guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>
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<p>the best approach to address differences and conflicts in targeted areas?</p> <p>To what extent has the project contributed to socio-economic empowerment of young men and women in targeted areas?</p> <p>To what extent were the resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular?</p> <p>Was the project financially and/or programmatically catalytic?</p> <p>Has PBF funding been used to scale-up other peacebuilding work and/or has it helped to create broader platforms for peacebuilding?</p>	<p>Evidence for project contributions to support for non-violence</p> <p>Evidence for project contributions to socio-economic empowerment</p> <p>RUNO and partner data on allocation of resources</p> <p>Evidence for additional finances or programming linked to the project</p> <p>Evidence for scaling up or contributions to broader peacebuilding</p>			
<p>Efficiency</p>				
<p>To what extent was the existing project management structure appropriate and efficient in generating the expected results?</p> <p>How efficiently were the resources including human, material, and financial resources used to achieve the above results in a timely manner?</p> <p>To what extent the project activities were delivered effectively in</p>	<p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of project management</p> <p>Specific examples of attention to costs, attention to maximizing results</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, stakeholder and beneficiary perceptions of efficiency and timeliness</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, stakeholder and beneficiary</p>	<p>Documents (Project planning and implementation materials, project reporting, other project documentation)</p> <p>Interviews with UNDP, partner, and donor staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p> <p>Focus group discussion guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>

<p>terms of quality, quantity, and timing?</p> <p>To what extent has the project implementation strategy and its execution been efficient and cost-effective?</p> <p>What were the lessons and how were feedback/learning incorporated in the subsequent process of planning and implementation?</p>	<p>perceptions of quality and quantity of delivery</p> <p>Evidence of delivery</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, stakeholder and beneficiary perceptions of cost effectiveness</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder stories of feedback use</p>			
Sustainability				
<p>To what extent did the project interventions contribute towards sustaining the results achieved by the project?</p> <p>What are the plans or approaches of the local authorities and beneficiary communities to ensure that the initiatives will be continued after the project ends?</p> <p>What could be potential new areas of work and innovative measures for sustaining the results?</p> <p>To what extent have lessons learned been documented by the project on a continual basis to inform the project for needful change?</p> <p>What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability of the project?</p>	<p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder expectations about the sustainability of results</p> <p>Evidence for or plans to continue project initiatives</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder ideas for new activities</p> <p>Plausible evidence for expectations that activity results will develop or continue in the future</p> <p>Evidence of documenting and using lessons learned</p> <p>Perceptions of potential actions to strengthen sustainability</p>	<p>Documents (Project planning and implementation materials, project reporting, other project documentation)</p> <p>Interviews with UNDP, partner, and donor staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p> <p>Focus group discussion guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>

<p>How has the project worked with local partners to increase their capacity in a sustainable way?</p> <p>What are the risks facing sustainability of project Outputs and Outcomes?</p>	<p>Evidence for project capacity building with partners</p> <p>Perceptions of risks to sustainability of RUNOs, RCO, partners, beneficiaries, and stakeholders</p>			
Partnerships				
<p>How have partnerships affected the project's achievements, and how might this be built upon in the future?</p> <p>Have the ways of working with the partner and the support to the partner been effective and did they contribute to the project's achievements?</p> <p>How does partnership with municipality government work? Does it create synergies or difficulties? What type of partnership building mechanism is necessary for future partnership?</p>	<p>Evidence of partner and stakeholder ownership</p> <p>Perceptions of how partnerships could be strengthened going forward</p> <p>Perceptions of the effectiveness and contributions of partnerships</p> <p>Evidence that partners, beneficiaries, and stakeholders are planning to sustain activities or results</p> <p>Evidence to explain partnerships with municipal governments</p> <p>Perceptions of synergies and difficulties from partnerships</p> <p>Suggestions for future partnerships</p>	<p>Documents (Project planning and implementation materials, project reporting, other project documentation)</p> <p>Interviews with UNDP, partner, and donor staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p> <p>Focus group discussion guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>
Human rights and gender equality				
<p>To what extent have rural young people, NEET, physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from the work</p>	<p>Evidence for project benefits to rural young people, NEET, physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and</p>	<p>Project Documents (Project planning and implementation materials, project reporting, other project documentation)</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>

<p>of the project and with what impact?</p> <p>To what extent the project approach was effective in promoting gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)-particularly focusing on the marginalized and the poor through knowledge transfer, livelihood action, planning and training?</p> <p>To what extent has the project promoted positive changes of young men and women and marginalized groups? Were there any unintended effects?</p>	<p>stakeholder perceptions of impact</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of effectiveness of approach on GESI</p> <p>Evidence for positive changes</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of unintended effects</p>	<p>RUNO, RCO, partner staff, beneficiaries, and stakeholders</p>	<p>Focus group discussion guide and questions</p>	
Conflict sensitivity				
<p>Did the Project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity?</p> <p>Were RUNOs internal capacities adequate for ensuring an ongoing conflict-sensitive approach?</p> <p>Was the project responsible for any unintended negative impacts?</p> <p>Was an ongoing process of context monitoring and a monitoring system that allows for monitoring of unintended impacts established?</p>	<p>Evidence for explicit attention to conflict sensitivity</p> <p>Evidence for RUNO reviews of project with attention to conflict sensitivity</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of unintended negative impacts</p> <p>Evidence for a process/system of monitoring of unintended impacts by RUNOs/RCO/Partners</p>	<p>Project Documents (Project planning and implementation materials, project reporting, other project documentation)</p> <p>RUNO, RCO, partner staff, beneficiaries, and stakeholders</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p> <p>Focus group discussion guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>
Best Practices & Lessons Learned				

<p>What do RUNO and project staff, partners, beneficiaries, and stakeholders see as best practices from their experience with the project project’s design, implementation, and results?</p> <p>What do RUNO and project staff, partners, beneficiaries, and stakeholders see as Lessons Learned from their experience with the project project’s design, implementation, and results?</p>	<p>Best practices suggested/evidence that these practices produced results</p> <p>Perceptions of lessons learned based on experiences with the project</p>	<p>Documents (Project implementation materials, project and partner reporting, other project and partner documentation)</p> <p>Interviews with RUNOs, project staff, partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p> <p>Focus group discussion guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p>
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ANNEX 3: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Documents

Standards for Evaluation in the UN System: www.uneval.org/document/detail/22

Norms for Evaluation in the UN System: www.uneval.org/document/detail/21

Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – towards UNEG Guidance: www.uneval.org/document/detail/980

UNEG Guidance Integrating Human Rights and Gender into Evaluation: www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616

UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator: www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452

UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: www.uneval.org/document/detail/607

UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102

UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

Project Documents

18 December 2019. Project Document: <https://mptf.undp.org/document/download/28401>

25 May 2021. Project Document (No-cost extension). <https://mptf.undp.org/document/download/27231>

30 June 2020. Semi-Annual Progress Report. <https://mptf.undp.org/document/download/25482>

30 June 2020. Expenditures, Semi-annual Progress Report.
<https://mptf.undp.org/document/download/25483>

31 December 2020. Annual Progress Report. <https://mptf.undp.org/document/download/25858>

25 November 2020. Expenditures, Annual Progress Report.
<https://mptf.undp.org/document/download/25859>

30 June 2021. Semi-Annual Progress Report. <https://mptf.undp.org/document/download/28714>

November 2021. Annual Progress Report. <https://mptf.undp.org/document/download/28713>

November 2021. Expenditures, Annual Progress Report.
<https://mptf.undp.org/document/download/28709>

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Documents

MRD “SOF”. 2021. Project Progress Report for the First Tranche

NGO “Inclusion”. 2021. Project Final Report

NGO “Skills and Prosperity”. 2021. Project Progress Report

NGO “Anis”. 2021. Project Final Report

NGO “Meha. 2021. Project Final Report

NGO “Nur”. 2021. Project Final Report

NGO “Rnjbar”. 2021. Project Final Report

NGO “Safinai Rushd”.2021. Project Final Report

NGO “Subhi Tandurusti”. 2021. Project Final Report

SUE “Youth Exchange Labor”. 2021. Project Final Report

SUE “Young Entrepreneurs Club”. 2021. Project Final Report

SUE “Youth Exchange Labor”.2021. Project Final Report

Branch of Public Organisation (PO) Youth Union in Shahrinav. 2021. Project Final Report

Branch of PO Youth Union in Baljuvon. 2021. Project Final Report

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES REPORTS

INGO ACTED. 2021. Project Interim Report

INGO Fidokor. 2021. Project Progress Report

NGO Gurdofarid. 2021. Project Final Report

MONITORING REPORTS

UNDP, Kulob LIIC. 2021. Monitoring Report (NGO “Subhi tandurusti”)

UNDP, Kulob LIIC. 2021. Monitoring Report (Mini farm in Kulob)

UNDP, Khujand LIIC. 2021. Monitoring Report (NGO “Gurdofarid” and NGO Safinai Rushd)

UNDP, Kulob LIIC. 2021. Monitoring Report (Kulob, mini welding workshop)

UNICEF Documents

Good Neighbors. 2022. Juvenile Justice Project Report

UNICEF. 2021. Programme Document and Project Final Report (PO MSDSP)

UNICEF. 2020. Programme Document and Project Final Report (PO ASTI)

NGO Gurdofarid. 2021. Project Final Report and Programme Document

NGO Youth Initiative of Tajikistan, Final Report and Programme Document

UNICEF. 2020. Documentation Report. For the Adolescent Competency Framework Competency-Based Learning Programme in the Republic of Tajikistan.

UNICEF. 2017. Technical Note. Toward a national framework of competencies for adolescents in Tajikistan.

UNICEF. 2019. Documentation Report. Adapting and testing the Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation to expand competency-based learning and engagement for adolescents in Tajikistan.

UNICEF. Adolescent Peacebuilding Competences Framework (Module)

UNICEF Model of Youth Friendly Local Governance for Participation in decision-making infographics

UN Women Documents

UN Women. 2020. Good practices in gender responsive evaluation. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/good-practices-in-gender-responsive-evaluations>

UN Women Independent Evaluation Office. How to manage gender-responsive evaluations. <https://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/gender%20evaluation/handbook/evaluationhandbook-web-final-30apr2015.pdf?la=en&vs=4246>

UN Women. Concepts and Definitions. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

Independent Analytical Sources

Noah Tucker. 2018. “What Happens When Your Town Becomes an ISIS Recruiting Ground? Lessons from Central Asia about Vulnerability, Resistance, and the Danger of Ignoring Perceived Injustice.” CAP Paper. Washington: George Washington University. https://www.academia.edu/37064117/What_Happens_When_Your_Town_Becomes_an_ISIS_Recruiting_Ground_Lessons_from_Central_Asia_about_Vulnerability_Resistance_and_the_Danger_of_Ignoring_Perceived_Injustice?email_work_card=title

ANNEX 4: LIST OF INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

UNDP

Ms. Zarina Juraeva, Youth Engagement and Social Cohesion (YESC) Officer

Mr. Yusufjon Kholov

Mr. Alisher Karimov, Team Leader, Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights

UNICEF

Ms. Husnoro Dodikhudoeva, Child Protection Officer Adolescent Development and Participation Officer

Ms. Farangez Gulmamadovna Taygunshoeva, Adolescent Development Officer. Skills and innovations

Ms. Mavzuna Nurkhanova, National Adolescent Officer. Skills and Innovations

Mr. Saidahmad Ikromov, Child Protection Officer. Justice for Children

UN Women

Ms. Nushofarin Noziri, National Program Coordinator

Ms. Aziza Hamidova, Country Programme Manager

Ms. Lailo Zamirova, Administration and Finance Assistant

Ms. Zarrina Juraeva, Program Coordinator

Office of the UN Resident Coordinator

Ms. Tunga Ganbold, Peace and Development Advisor (PDA)

Partners

UNDP and UNICEF

Ms. Marifat Shokorova, coordinator, PO “Fidokor”, RP

Ms. Rahbar Majidova, head, PO “Gurdofarid” RP

UN Women

Ms. Nargis Saidova, director Gender and Development, IP

Ms. Nozanin Rasulova, project coordinator, Gender and Development, IP

Stakeholders

Ozar Bakhtiyorov, Center for monitoring of quality of education under the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment

Beneficiaries

Youth in Isfara

ANNEX 5: EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

INTRODUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT

The introduction and consent note introduce the evaluators, the evaluation, and methods to participants in the evaluation to gather the explicit consent of people with participating in the evaluation. The evaluators will recite the following to all prospective interviewees and get their explicit oral consent to participate.

Introduction and Informed Consent

Thank you for talking with me today.

My name is _____. I am working independently for the United Nations to conduct an evaluation of the work conducted by the UN and its partners through the Empowering youth for a peaceful Tajikistan project. The goal of the review is to learn about what has been accomplished through the project, what has worked well, and what has not worked as well. Lessons from this review will be used to help the UN and its partners in future work in Tajikistan and around the world.

The information collected today will only be used for the review. We will not use this information in a way that identifies you as an individual in the report.

I would also like to clarify that your participation in this review is entirely voluntary and that you have the right to withdraw from interview at any point without consequence.

We hope to learn from you from your knowledge and experience with the project and its activities. Are you willing to participate in this study? [Ensure that participant(s) verbally agree to participate]

Do you have any questions for me before we begin with a short list of questions to learn about the ways that you or your organisation may have worked with the project?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

[NOT ALL QUESTIONS WERE ASKED TO IN ALL INTERVIEWS; INTERVIEWS FOCUSED ON THE AREAS AND QUESTIONS MOST RELEVANT TO INFORMANTS' KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE WITH THE PROJECT]

Relevance

How do you see the relevance of the project for Tajikistan, your organization, and your stakeholders and beneficiaries?

FOLLOW UP WITH ...

To what extent would you say the project was in line with national development priorities and UN goals?

How relevant do you see the overall design and approaches of the project in addressing violent extremism?

To what extent would you say the project was able to address the needs of different target groups? Can you give some examples please?

To what extent are were the objectives of the project (inputs, activities, outputs and their indicators) and its theory of change logical and coherent?

How have beneficiaries perceived the relevance of the project?

What could be done differently to improve consistency of the project interventions with the county context/needs of target groups?

Coherence

What did your organisation do under the project to fit activities into the context of Tajikistan and have the components of project fit together?

FOLLOW UP WITH ...

How well would you say the project fits the context of Tajikistan?

To what extent would you say the project supports the Government's policies?

Does and how does the project have synergies and links with other interventions of UN Agencies?

Does and how does the project have synergies and links to interventions of the Government?

To what extent would you say the project is consistent with the interventions of other actors?

What did the project do to add value?

What did the project do to avoid duplication of effort?

What could be done differently to improve synergies?

Effectiveness

What do you see as the key results and changes attained for young men, women and vulnerable groups as a result of the project?

FOLLOW UP WITH ...

In which areas would you say the project has had greatest achievements?

What are the main factors that led to these successes?

What are the main factors that you see as having contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended outputs?

How effective would you say the project has been in enhancing the capacity of the communities and local governments to create enabling environment for inclusive youth economic empowerment and innovative development?

Has – and how much has - the project has contributed to increasing the participation of adolescent and young girls and boys in decision-making on issues concerning them? Can you give some examples?

Has and how much has the project enabled them to contribute to the development of their communities (including in social cohesion)? Can you give some examples?

To what extent has the project empowered adolescent girls and boys to believe that non-violent means are the best approach to address differences and conflicts? Can you give some examples?

To what extent has the project contributed to socio-economic empowerment of young men and women? Can you give some examples?

To what extent were the resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular? Can you give some examples?

Have and how have the activities that have been implemented improved their lives?

What stories of change have come from the project that should feature in the evaluation?

What were the key challenges in addressing project objectives?

What could be done differently to maximize the outcomes?

Are there any unintended outcomes? Positive or negative

Efficiency

Was the project management structure appropriate and efficient in generating the expected results?

FOLLOW UP WITH ...

How efficiently were the resources including human, material, and financial resources used to achieve project results?

To what extent were project activities delivered effectively in terms of quality, quantity, and timing?

To what extent has the project implementation strategy and its execution been efficient and cost-effective?

How was feedback/learning incorporated into planning and implementation?

What can be done differently to improve efficiency of operations?

Sustainability

To what extent have project interventions contributed towards sustaining the results achieved by the project?

FOLLOW UP WITH ...

What are the plans or approaches of the local authorities and beneficiary communities to ensure that the initiatives will be continued after the project ends?

What could be potential new areas of work and innovative measures for sustaining the results?

Was the project financially and/or programmatically catalytic? Why do you think so?

Has PBF funding been used to scale-up other peacebuilding work and/or has it helped to create broader platforms for peacebuilding?

How has the project worked with local partners to increase their capacity? Has this been done in a sustainable way?

What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability of the project?

What are the risks facing sustainability of project supported outputs and outcomes?

Partnerships

Have the ways of working with partners been effective and did they contribute to the project's achievements?

FOLLOW UP WITH ...

How have the project's partnerships positively affected the achievements of the project?

Have, and how have, the project's partnerships negatively affected the achievements of the project?

How did project partnerships with municipality governments work? Did it create synergies or difficulties? What types of partnership building would you say is needed to build future partnerships?

Human rights and gender equality

To what extent have rural young people, NEET, physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from the work of the project? What has been the impact on them to date? Can you give some examples?

FOLLOW UP WITH ...

How did the project approach promote gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)- particularly with the marginalized and the poor? Was project support through knowledge transfer, livelihood actions, planning and training effective in this regard?

To what extent has the project promoted positive changes of young men and women and marginalized groups? Were there any unintended positive effects?

Conflict sensitivity

Did – and if so how did - the Project address issues of conflict and violence?

FOLLOW UP WITH ...

Were UN agencies' internal capacities adequate for ensuring an ongoing conflict-sensitive approach in project implementation? How did UN agencies ensure a conflict-sensitive approach?

Was an ongoing process of context monitoring and a monitoring system that allows for monitoring of unintended impacts established by the project? If so, how did this monitoring work?

Were there any unintended negative impacts of the project? If so, what were these impacts? Did – and how did – the project manage these impacts?

Best Practices & Lessons Learned

What do you see as best practices from your experience with the project project's design, implementation, and results?

What do you see as any key Lessons Learned from your experience with the project project's design, implementation, and results?

Recommendations

What do you recommend for programming support for adolescents and young people in Tajikistan going forward to empower them to participate in political, social and economic life and be more resilient to violent extremist narratives?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

FGD questions were adapted for each discussion based the specific activities and the beneficiaries participating; youth in FGDs will have participated in multiple EYPT activities.

What were the goal of the activities that you participated in, _____ [name of activities that they know] and why were these activities with you supported by the UN?

What would you say worked particularly well with the activities you were engaged in? Why did these practices work well?

Are there things that did not work as well in the activities you engaged in? Why did these practices not work as well?

How sustainable do you think the results of the activities you participated in are? Why are these results sustainable or not sustainable?

Would you say that the work of the project had an effect on the risks of violent extremism in Tajikistan? Why or why not?

What do you recommend based on your experience with the project to support future progress in this area?

ANNEX 6: TABLE OF OUTPUT INDICATORS

Output	Indicator	Target	Final Report	Assessment
1.1 Adolescents and young people have better competencies and skills that foster their opportunities in social and economic life.	1.1.1. # of research papers (reports) prepared that analyse needs, priorities and perceptions of youth, & disseminated to policy makers at the national & local level	1 (UNDP)	1	Achieved
	1.1.2. Number of adolescent girls and boys, young men and women and young girls and boys, including from at risk groups, who have acquired peacebuilding competencies, skills for personal empowerment, social entrepreneurship and employability (professional skills) in targeted areas	2500 (UNICEF)	500 (girls: 275)-social entrepreneurs hips skills 2819(girls: 1541)- peacebuilding competencies	Exceeded
	1.1.3. # of young people engaged into discussions and solutions finding on peacebuilding issues theatre-forums	400 (UN Women) (50% of girls)	480	Achieved (although not clear that 50% girls, Theatre forums attracted a balanced representation of men and women)
	1.1.4. # of young women built their capacities through My safe and peaceful community programme through outreach of AWGs work and local dialogue	2500 (UN Women) (100% young women)	2500 women	Achieved
	1.1.5. # of trained <i>bibiotuns</i> supported and reached out to # of young women with messages on non-violent culture and civic competencies	48 trained <i>bibiotuns</i> reached 2000 (UN women)	48, 2000	Achieved
	1.1.6. # of young people obtained knowledge and skills through # events within various training platforms (hackathons/bootcamps, acceleration and incubation programmes etc.) – that build skills and competencies making young people more resilient to extremist narrative	700 (UNDP) through at least 20 events and incubation support	875, 20	Achieved Awareness raising for 875 adolescents and young people through 20 public awareness events to select 200 with entrepreneurial capacity.
	1.1.7. Number of innovative solutions, social enterprise developed and implemented by adolescent and young boys and girls; # of social entrepreneurship projects designed and supported (through micro-grants)	29 (25 - UNICEF and 4 - UNDP)	49- UNICEF 4- UNDP	Exceeded
	1.1.8. Enhancing capacity of Creative Corners under the Youth centres/ VTIs through equipping them with new competencies related to the innovative economy, to provide them with opportunities for economic empowerment	3 Creative Corners (UNDP)	3 Creative Corners 3-safe space for volunteers (UNICEF)	Exceeded
	1.1.9. # of target youth presented business ideas in the Startup <i>Choihona</i> initiative	25 (UNDP)	24	Almost achieved
	1.1.10. # of projects designed and received funding from small innovation fund to test, launch and expand start-up projects to promote leadership and incentive taking	6 (UNDP, av. amount \$20,000)	11	Exceeded

	among young people in the economic sector			
	1.1.11. Number of young women and girls from the Communities, identified by Active Women's Groups of 8 <i>Jamoats</i> , are supported to get professional skills through educational facilities of the Ministry of Labour	100 (UN Women)	110	Exceeded
	1.1.12. Number of activities, including economic activities, developed by women and girls for their communities (family, school, mahala), supported by the seed funding	24 (UN Women)	16	Almost achieved
	1.1.13. Peace and Safety component is incorporated in the professional vocational training programme of the MoLME RT (incl. career orientation) for young women	(UN Women)	133 trainers trained	Achieved Module is incorporated
	1.1.14. Number of PTAs activated to support pro-peace parenthood models in the community	10 PTA activities, 500 parents engaged (UNICEF)	21 PTAs (81 teachers and 243 parents)	Achieved 21 PTA established in 21 schools
	1.1.15. # of advocacy materials/products developed to promote tolerance, social cohesion and non-violent conflict resolution	6 (UN Women)	6	Achieved
1.2 Adolescents and young people have more opportunities for meaningful participation in decision making to strengthen non-violence values and action.	Indicator 1.2.1 1.2.1. Number of government employees capacitated on work with youth and youth focused policies in targeted areas, and local development policies that engage young people	125 (50 - UNICEF and 75 - UNDP)	UNICEF 428 (237 females) UN DP – 101(28) female)	Exceeded 370 (female:242) government employees trained
	Indicator 1.2.2 1.2.2. Number of young women leaders are capacitated on peacebuilding issues through CWFA's training module for women leaders, conducted in cooperation with CWFA	30 (UN Women)	30	Achieved
	1.2.3. Number of communication platforms or networks supported by the project to facilitate sustained participation of adolescents and youth, especially young women in targeted areas.	8 (UNICEF, UNDP, UN Women)	13 (8- UNICEF, 5- UNDP)	Exceeded
	1.2.4. Number of young people, including from at-risk groups, who have participated in the decision-making within supported platforms (e.g. attended sessions of local councils, meetings of youth councils – within youth-friendly governance model, public hearings, and participated in review and implementation of local development programmes).	2000 young people (UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women)	2267 (1387 females) - UNICEF	Exceeded
	1.2.5. # of youth initiatives introduced in the local development programmes, and local budgets	at least 12 (at least one per district) UNDP	39 issues added into the District Development Plan	Exceeded
	1.2.6. # young people whose capacities on local development and decision-making	300 (UNDP) through 10	839 (females 499)- UNICEF	Exceeded

	were built through # of capacity building events (trainings, workshops etc.)	capacity building events	300	
	1.2.7. # of inter-district youth and duty bearer exchange programmes and study tours	4 2 –UNDP, 2–UNICEF	8 (6-UNICEF and 2 UNDP)	Exceeded
	1.2.8. # of media outputs (publications or brochures) that document best practices and success stories on youth participation in decision-making in local development – disseminated for scale-up in other regions of Tajikistan	2 (UNDP)	5-UNDP 5-UNICEF	Exceeded
	1.2.9. # of volunteer projects supported involving # of young people - volunteers	25 projects involving at least 50 young people (UNICEF, UNDP)	UNICEF-34 social projects UNICEF-141 (74 females) volunteers trained UNDP- 30 (15 females) volunteers trained UNDP-5 projects	Exceeded
	1.2.10. Number of adolescents and young people engaged in peer-to-peer support in targeted areas	1000 (UNICEF)	82 peer moderators (female:43) 6524 adolescents and young people (girls - 3352, boys - 3172) 144 peer supporters (girls - 72) 10493 adolescent (girls- 5036; boys-5457)	Exceeded 82 peers (female:43) trained on topics related to RH (family planning, HIV) and covered 6524 peers (3352 girls and 3172 boys) through interactive exhibition “Join in Circuit” 144 adolescents trained on Adolescent Mental Health and organized awareness raising sessions among 10493 peers at schools
	1.2.11. Number of adolescents in conflict with the law diverted from justice system and rehabilitated through juvenile support services.	70 (UNICEF)	69 (4 females)	Almost achieved
	1.2.12. Number of sport leaders and young volunteers passed the specially tailored Youth programme on life skills counselling for boys and girls, and involved # of young people	20 sports leaders, 800 young people, both girls and boys (UN Women)	20, 800	Achieved

ANNEX 7: TABLE OF OUTCOME INDICATORS

	Indicators	Baseline	Endline	Target (% point increase sought from baseline to endline	Status and comments
Outcome 1: Adolescents and young people, both men and women, have the potential for equal participation in socio-political, social and economic life, and are more resistant to violent narratives.					
INDICATORS	Ia Proportion of adolescent and young girls and boys who consider that they participate in decision-making on issues of concern to them and contribute to the development of their communities (including social cohesion) in targeted districts.	26%	34,3%	10%	Almost met. The overall increase was 8.3%. There was variation by region. In Kulob, Isfara and Khorog the target was met; in Baljuvon and Shahrinav, the proportion declined rather than grew (see the endline report)
	Ib Proportion of adolescent girls and boys who believe that non-violent means are the best approach to address differences and conflicts in targeted areas.	50.8%	45.2%	10%	Not met. Progress is not evident, with a decline by 5.6% in support for non-violent means as the best approach. There is significant variations by region. Greater progress was observed in Isfara and Khorog. In Baljuvon and Kulob support for non-violent means as best declined but still remained comparatively high (see the endline report)
	Ic Proportion of young men and women, who believe they have good access to economic opportunities and social services in targeted areas.	29,8	35,3	15%	Not met, but progress. Progress is 5.5%, less than targeted. However figures from the comparison group from non-project sites shows a decline beliefs that young people have access to economic opportunities. Most significant progress was seen in Isfara, where target was met, in Kulob and Baljuvon, dynamics were slightly negative (see endline report)